

Character Builder

您好學？

The basic unit of the Chinese language is the *zi* (字), i.e. a Chinese word. Each *zi* has a written form (called a character, made up of strokes), a sound (made up of consonant and vowel) and a meaning (or multiple meanings). When we speak or write Chinese, we string *zi* together to form terms, phrases and sentences.

In Putonghua (the spoken form of Modern Standard Chinese) each *zi* is pronounced in one of four tones:

1st tone: 1 = diacritical mark — pitch: 5 to 5, highest prolonged

2nd tone: 2 = diacritical mark / pitch: 3 to 5, middle to high

3rd tone: 3 = diacritical mark U pitch: 2 to 1 to 4, low to lowest to high

4th tone: 4 = diacritical mark \ pitch: 5 to 1, highest to lowest

To pronounce each *zi* below, follow its pinyin and the given tone number. Light-sound words, which have no definite pitch, carry no diacritical mark and are marked by 0.

This week: Words about hospitalization

養

Putonghua pronunciation: *yang3*

Cantonese pronunciation: *yeung5*

Meaning: give birth to, breed, raise, rear, foster, nurture, support, conserve

養 (羊 *yang2*, sheep/goat + 食 *shi2*, eat/feed) = sire/raise/support. Couple 養孩子 (*yang3 hai2 zi0* = breed-child-diminutive = have/raise children), 養家 (*yang3 jia1* = raise/support-family). Children/donors 供養 (*gong1 yang3* = pay/donate-to-support) parents/deity. 領養 (*ling3 yang3* = lead-rear) means adopt foster son/daughter.

Teachers 培養 (*pei2 yang3* = develop-nurture) new talents. Farmers 飼養 (*si4 yang3* = feed-breed) livestock, 養殖 (*yang3 zhi2* = raise-breed) oysters for 養珠 (*yang3 zhu1* = cultured-pearls). Countries 養兵 (*yang3 bing1* = keep/train-soldiers/army). Patients 養傷 (*yang3 shang1* = rest-to-nurse-wounds), 養病 (*yang3 bing4* = rest-to-cure-illness). 養老金 (*yang3 lao3 jin1* = support-old-gold = old-age pension) 養活 (*yang3 huo2* = sustain livelihood of) seniors in 療養院 (*liao2 yang3 yuan4* = heal-feed/sustain-institution = sanatorium).

by Diana Yue