

Character Builder 您好嗎？

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 medication effects

倦

Putonghua pronunciation: *jüan4*

Cantonese pronunciation: *guen6*

Meanings: tired, fatigue, bored

倦 (亻 = 人 *ren2*, person + 卷 *jüan3*, roll/curled) suggests person's fatigue: 疲倦 (*pi2 jüan4* = weak-tired), 力倦 (*li4 jüan4* = physical-strength-spent), 倦怠 (*jüan4 dai4* = tired-and-lazy). Dedicated teacher 誨人不倦 (*hui4 fren2 bu4 jüan4* = instructs-people-un-fatigued). Diligent learner 孜孜不倦 (*zi1 zi1 bu4 jüan4* = works-hard-works-hard-never-tires/stops).

Traveler settles down after 倦游 (*jüan4 you2* = tiring-journey). Campaigner 厭倦 (*yan4 jüan4* = disgusted-with-tired-of) politics develops 倦意 (*jüan4 yi4* = tired-feeling), contemplates retirement. 鳥倦知還 (*niao3 jüan4 zhi1 huan2* = bird-tired-knows-return) describes person tired of quest returning to home/origin.

Patient under medication 易倦 (*yi4 jüan4* = easy-tired = gets tired easily), 一臉倦容 (*li4 lian3 jüan4 yong2* = one-face-tired-look = shows a tired face).