

Character Builder 您好學? 呀

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 group tours

旅

Putonghua pronunciation: *lǚ3*

Cantonese pronunciation: *lui5*

Meaning: travel, journey, sojourn, trip, itinerary, route, traveler, brigade

旅 (radical 方 *fang2*, square) means people/army moving: 旅客 (*lǚ3 ke4* = traveling-guest = traveler/sojourner), 旅程 (*lǚ3 cheng2* = travel-route), 旅伴 (*lǚ3 ban4* = traveling-companion). Army unit 旅 = brigade. 勁旅 (*jing4 lǚ3* = strong-army/team) e.g. Manchester United. 軍旅生涯 (*jūn1 lǚ3 sheng4 ya2* = army-travel-life-rim/horizon) describes army soldier's unsettled life. 旅遊 (*lǚ3 you2* = travel-leisurely-roaming) = tourism. 旅行社 (*lǚ3 xing2 she4* = tour-travel-society = travel agencies) organize 旅行團 (*lǚ2 xing2 tuan2* = tour-travel-group = group tours). Poet sighs: 天地者，萬物之逆旅 (*tian1 di4 zhe3, wan4 wu4 zhi1 ni4 lǚ3* = heaven-earth, ten-thousand-thing-s' transit-inn = The universe is just an inn for all things = We are all temporary dwellers in our universe).

by Diana Yue