

# 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:

1<sup>st</sup> tone: 1 = diacritical mark — pitch: 5 to 5, highest prolonged

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

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

4<sup>th</sup> 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 Qing Dynasty



Putonghua pronunciation: *jiang1*

Cantonese pronunciation: *geung1*

Meanings: boundary, border, frontier, limit, territory

疆 means border/territory: fields'疆界 (*jiang1 jie4* = territorial~boundaries), country's疆土 (*jiang1 tu3* = border~land = national territory). Army/navy guard 邊疆 (*bian1 jiang1* = frontier~territories), 海疆 (*hai3 jiang1* = sea/ocean~territories). Unfortunate soldier 戰死疆場 (*zhan4 si3 jiang1 chang3* = fight-dead~ territory~field = die fighting on battlefield).

Qing Dynasty conquered northwestern疆域 (*jiang1 yu4* = territory~region = region), named it 新疆 (*Xin1 Jiang1* = new~region = Xinjiang), also called 回疆 (*Hui2 jiang1* = Hui~territory) because population was 回族 (*Hui2 zhu2* = Hui~race) worshipping 回教 (*Hui2 jiao4* = Chinese-Islamic~religion).

封疆大吏 (*feng1 jiang1 da4 li4* = bestowed~territory~big~official) means imperially-appointed high official ruling region/province. Subjects wish emperor 萬壽無疆 (*wan4 shou4 wu2 jiang1* = ten-thousand~age~no~limit = everlasting longevity).

by Diana Yue