

Character Builder

您好嗎? 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 wedding day

迎

Putonghua pronunciation: *ying2*

Cantonese pronunciation: *ying4*

Meaning: facing, welcome, receive

迎 (radical 辶 *chuo4*, walk) means 迎接 (*ying2 jie2* = welcome-receive). Scenic 黃山 (*Huang2 Shan1* = Yellow-Mountain)'s 迎客松 (*ying2 ke4 song1* = beckoning-to-guests-pine-trees) 迎風而立 (*ying2 feng1 er2 li4* = facing-wind-and-stand = stand braving the wind).

Freshmen attend 迎新派對 (*ying2 xin1 pai4 dui4* = welcome-newcomers-"party"-transliterated). Prostitutes lead 迎送生涯 (*ying2 song4 sheng1 ya2* = welcome-see-off-life-limit = life with men/customers coming and going). Seeing tanks 迎面 (*ying2 mian4* = head-on) coming, soldiers 迎敵 (*ying2 di2* = face/fight- the-enemy),

Groom 迎娶 (*ying2 qū3* = welcome-wed) bride, throws banquet to 迎合 (*ying2 he2* = welcome-match = please) in-laws. 迎賓 (*ying2 bin1* = welcome-guest = receptionists) chime: “歡迎您!” (*huan1 ying2 nin2* = cheerfully-welcome-you = “Welcome!”)

by Diana Yue