

# Character Builder 您好嗎？攻

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 World Cup matches

攻

Putonghua pronunciation: *gong1*

Cantonese pronunciation: *gung1*

Meanings: offensive, attack

攻 = 攻擊 (*gong1 ji2* = offensive~attack). 守 = 防守 (*fang2 shou3* = guard~defensive). Slander/libel involves 人身攻擊 (*ren2 shen1 gong1 ji1* = human~body~offensive~attack = personal attacks).

In 戰爭 (*zhan4 zheng1* = war~dispute = war), invaders launch 攻勢 (*gong1 shi4* = attack~force = offensive), 進攻 (*jin4 gong1* = advance~attack) opponent's territory, 攻打 (*gong1 da3* = attack~hit) cities.

In 足球賽 (*zu1 qiu2 sai4* = foot~ball~competition = soccer matches), 中鋒 (*zhong1 feng1* = center~point/blade = center forward), 翼鋒 (*yi4 feng1* = wing~point/blade = winger) 射球 (*she4 qiu2* = shoot~ball = strike), 入球 (*ri4 qiu2* = enter~ball = score goals). Brazil's World Cup team 攻無不克 (*gong1 wu2 bu4 ke1* = attack~no~not~conquer = conquers all opponents).