

Character Builder 您好學？

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 love

容

Putonghua pronunciation: *rong2*

Cantonese pronunciation: *yung4*

Meaning: hold, contain, tolerate

容 (宀, house + 谷 *gu3*, valley) means 容納 (*rong2 na4* = hold-accept = accommodate/contain). 容器 (*rong2 qi4* = contain-er) has 容量 (*rong2 liang4* = contents/load's-volume). Cowboy state 容許 (*rong2 xu3* = allows-permits) gun-purchase, 容忍 (*rong2 ren3* = accepts-tolerates) shooting crimes.

Monastery 收容 (*shou1 rong2* = accepts-accommodates) escapee seeking 容身之處 (*rong2 shen1 zhi1 chu4* = contain-body-'s-place = shelter). 間不容髮 (*jian4 bu4 rong2 fa3* = space/crack-no-accommodate-hair-on-head) describes extremely short/narrow time/space available for escape.

寬容大量 (*kuan1 rong2 da4 liang4* = broad-volume-big-quantity = generous/forgiving) people say: 愛是包容 (*ai4 shi4 bao1 rong2* = love-is-wrap-contain = Love is tolerant). But drug-trafficking is 天理不容 (*tian1 li3 bu4 rong2* = divine-reason-no-tolerate = wrong/intolerable).

by Diana Yue