

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 fever



Putonghua pronunciation: *yūn1, yūn4*

Cantonese pronunciation: *wan4*

Meaning: dizzy, giddy, dizziness, vertigo, faint, swoon

暈 (radical 日 *ri4*, sun) means 暈眩 (*yūn4 xuan4* = dizzy-eyes-dizzy/dazzled = dizziness). 暈車 (*yūn4 che1* = dizzy-car) = feel dizzy on car-ride. 暈船 (*yūn4 chuan2* = dizzy-boat) = feel dizzy on boat-ride.

畏高症 (*wei4 gao1 zheng4* = fear-heights-disease = acrophobia) patient 暈高 (*yūn4 gao1* = dizzy-height = feels dizzy on heights). Insulted senior 氣極暈倒 (*qi4 ji2 yūn1 dao3* = angry-most-faint-fall = is so angry he fainted), 暈死 (*yūn1 xi3* = faint-die = passes out).

頭暈 (*tou2 yūn1* = head-dizzy) = feel dizzy. Feverish patient 暈沉沉 (*yūn4 yūn4 chen2 chen2* = dizzy-dizzy-heavy-heavy = feels dizzy and dense). 頭暈腦脹 (*tou2 yūn1 nao3 zhang4* = head-dizzy-brain-swollen) means feeling headache/fever or feeling confused/foggy about orientation/situation.

by Diana Yue