

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 celebrations

Putonghua pronunciation: *qing4*

Cantonese pronunciation: *hing3*

Meaning: rejoice, celebrate, congratulate, joyous occasion, festivity, blessing

慶 (radical 广 *an1*, house) means 慶祝 (*qing4 zhu4* = rejoice-celebrate), 喜慶 (*xi3 qing4* = happy-joyful occasions), 慶賀 (*qing4 he4* = praise-congratulate), 慶典 (*qing4 dian3* = celebration-ceremonies). Peasants 慶豐收 (*qing4 feng1 shou1* = celebrate-abundant-harvest). Graduates attend 校慶 (*xiao4 qing4* = school's-anniversary-celebrations).

Winners 慶捷 (*qing4 jie2* = celebrate-victory), 慶功 (*qing4 gong1* = celebrate-conquest/success). 國慶節 (*guo2 qing4 jie2* = nation's-celebrations-festival = National Day) 普天同慶 (*pu3 tian1 tong2 qing4* = a[all]-heavens-together-rejoice = is celebrated by a[all]). Patient 慶幸 (*qing4 xing4* = rejoice-fortunate = feel fortunate/relieved) cancer vanished.

積善之家，必有餘慶 (*ji1 shan4 zhi1 jia, bi4 you3 yu2 qing4* = accumulate-goodness-'s-family, definitely-has-remnant-blessings) means philanthropic family will inherit forefathers' blessings.

by Diana Yue