

Character Builder 您好嗎？

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 Moses crossing the Red Sea

領

Putonghua pronunciation: *ling3*

Cantonese pronunciation: *ling5*

Meanings: collar, lead, main point, receive, rule

Noun 領 means 衣領 (*yi1 ling3* = clothes' collar). Verb 領 means 帶領 (*dai4 ling3* = bring-lead = lead). Fast runner 領先 (*ling3 xian1* = lead-ahead = takes the lead). 領航 (*ling3 hang2* = lead-voyage) = navigate. 領袖 (*ling3 xiu4* = collar~sleeve) means leader.

領 also means receive/rule. Winner 領獎 (*ling3 jiang3* = receives-prize). Scholar explores 領域 (*ling3 yu4* = given-area = areas) of knowledge, 領悟 (*ling3 wu4* = receive-epiphany = understands) truths. 領土 (*ling3 tu3* = received/ruled-land) = country's territory. 領事 (*ling3 shi4* = govern-affairs) = consul.

Moses 領導 (*ling3 dao3* = led-guided) Israelites against Egypt's 法老 (*fa3 lao3* = "Pharaoh"-transliterated). 領軍人才 (*ling3 jun1 ren2 cai2* = lead-army-person-talent) = person talented/skilled/qualified to head army/work-team.

by Diana Yue