

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 Genesis

創

Putonghua pronunciation: *chuang4*

Cantonese pronunciation: *chong3*

Meanings: create found

創 means 原創 (*yuan2 chuang4* = original-make = create), 創立 (*chuang4 li4* = create-stand = found), requires 創思 (*chuang4 si1* = creative-idea = originality), 創造力 (*chuang4 zao4 li4* = found-make-power = creativity).

Artist 創作 (*chuang4 zuo2* = create-work = does creative work). Business talent 創業 (*chuang4 ye4* = create-profession = founds business/enterprise), 創新 (*chuang4 xin1* = create-new = makes innovations).

猶太人 (*You2 Tai2 ren2* = “Judah”-transliterated-people = Jews) read the Torah (= “摩西五經” = *Mo1 Xi1 Wu3 Jing1* = “Moses”-transliterated-five-classics = the Five Books of Moses). First book “創世紀” (*chuang4 shi4 ji4* = create-world-record/period = Genesis) contains 創世神話 (*chuang4 shi4 shen2 hua4* = create-world-god-talk = creation myth).

by Diana Yue