Character Builder

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 Victoria Harbour

景

Putonghua pronunciation: jing3
Cantonese pronunciation: ging2
Meanings: vista, view, scenery

景 = 景色 (jing3 se1 = view~colour) = 景觀 (jing3 guan1 = view~sight) = view: 海景 (hai3 jing3 = sea~view), 山景 (shan1 jing3 = mountain/hill~view). 景物 (jing3 wu4 = view~things) = visible landscape/things.

景點 (jing3 dian3 = view~spot) = tourist spots. 好風景 (hao3 feng1 jing3 = good~wind~view) means picturesque landscape.
風景畫 (feng1 jing3 hua4 = wind~view~drawing/painting) = landscape painting. 實景拍攝 (shi2 jing3 pai1 she4 = real~view~shoot~take) = filming on site.

景象 (jing1 xiang4 = view~image) means good/bad social scene.
景氣 (jing3 qi4 = view~breath/energy) = economic wellness, 不景氣 (bu4 jing3 qi4 = no~view~breath/energy) = economy slowing down. 良辰美景 (liang2 chen2 mei3 jing3 = good~hour~lovely~scenery) is time for romance.

by Diana Yue