

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 accidents



Putonghua pronunciation: *ji 2*

Cantonese pronunciation: *gap 1*

Meanings: urgent, emergency

傷者 (*shang1 zhe3* = injured-person) 暈倒 (*yun1 dao3* = faint-fall = faints), 休克 (*xiu1 ke1* = “shock”-transliterated = falls into a coma), needs 急救 (*ji2 jiu4* = urgent-rescue = first-aid): 人工呼吸 (*ren2 gong1 hu1 xi1* = man~work~exhale~inhale = artificial respiration), 心肺復甦 (*xin1 fei4 fu2 su1* = heart~lungs~re~wake = cardiopulmonary resuscitation), 輸血 (*shu1 xue4* = transport-blood = blood transfusion).

救傷車 (*jiu4 shang1 che1* = rescue-wounded-vehicle = ambulance) rushes 急病 (*ji2 bing4* = urgent-illness = acute illness) patients to 急症室 (*ji2 zheng4 shi1* = urgent-illness/ case~room = emergency ward) for 搶救 (*qiang3 jiu4* = snatch/ quick~rescue = emergency treatment).

人急智生 (*ren2 ji2 zhi4 sheng1* = person-urgent/pressed~clever~grows/comes): In emergency situations we instinctively become/act smart.

by Diana Yue