

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 residency



Putonghua pronunciation: *jū1*

Cantonese pronunciation: *gui1*

Meanings: house, residence, domicile, abode, reside, dwell, occupy

Ideogram 居 (尸 *shī1*, unmoving body + 古 *gǔ3*, ancient = always stationed) means 居住 (*jū1 zhū4* = occupy-reside). 居民 (*jū1 mín2* = residing~people) = residents. 隱居 (*yīn3 jū1* = vanish-reside) = live as hermit.

居所 (*jū1 suǒ3* = residing~place) = dwelling/domicile. 居無定所 (*jū1 wú2 dìng4 suǒ3* = reside~no~stable~place) describes homeless or unpredictable traveler. 公民 (*gōng1 mín2* = public/civil~person = citizens) have 居留權 (*jū1 liú2 quán2* = live~stay~right = right of abode).

When applying for 居港權 (*jū1 gǎng3 quán2* = reside-in~Hongkong~right = residency in Hongkong), remember 長安不易居 (*cháng2 ān1 bú4 yì4 jū1* = Chang~An~no~easy~to~live): Hongkong, like big metropolis Chang-an (i.e. today's 西安, *Xī1 Ān1*), is expensive, not easily affordable!