

# 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:

- 1<sup>st</sup> tone: 1 = diacritical mark — pitch: 5 to 5, highest prolonged
- 2<sup>nd</sup> tone: 2 = diacritical mark / pitch: 3 to 5, middle to high
- 3<sup>rd</sup> tone: 3 = diacritical mark U pitch: 2 to 1 to 4, low to lowest to high
- 4<sup>th</sup> 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

權

Putonghua pronunciation: *qūan2*

Cantonese pronunciation: *kuen4*

Meanings: power, authority, right

權 (radical 木 *mu4*, wood/tree) means 權力 (*qūan2 li4* = power-strength) possessed by 權貴 (*qūan2 guī4* = powerful-nobility/privileged). 維權 (*wei2 qūan2* = defend-right) means 維護人權 (*wei2 hu4 ren2 qūan2* = defend-protect-human-rights). 權威 (*qūan2 wei1* = power-force) means ruler/scholar's authority. 版權 (*ban3 qūan2* = publish-version-right) = copyright.

Generalissimo holds 軍權 (*jūn1 qūan2* = military-power), 位高權重 (*wei4 gao1 qūan2 zhong4* = rank-high-power-weighty = has high position and power). Reformists advocate 分權 (*fen1 qūan2* = sharing-power). Rebels plan 奪權 (*duo2 qūan2* = snatching/seizing-power).

People granted 居留權 (*jū1 liú2 qūan2* = living-staying-right = right of abode/residency) enjoy related 權利 (*qūan2 li4* = power-benefit = rights) but have 義務 (*yì4 wu4* = obliged-duty) to pay taxes.

by Diana Yue