

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 borrowing arrows

Putonghua pronunciation: *you4*

Cantonese pronunciation: *you5*

Meanings: lure, bait

誘 = 言 (*yan2*, words) + 秀 (*xiu4*, beautiful) = lure with sweet words. 引誘 (*yin3 you4* = lead-lure) = 誘惑 (*you4 huo4* = lure-delude/mislead) = temptation. Hunter uses bait to 誘捕 (*you4 bu4* = lure~catch) prey.

Good food/music is 誘人 (*you4 ren2* = lure~people = tempting). Schemers use 色誘 (*se1 you4* = color/prettiness~lure = trap using pretty girls), 利誘 (*li4 you4* = gain-lure = trap using money/benefits). Sex-maniacs 誘姦 (*you4 jian1* = lure~rape) girls.

蜀 (*Shu2*) Kingdom's prime-minister 諸葛亮 (*Zhu1 Ge2 Liang4*) understands 兵不厭詐 (*bing1 bu4 yan4 zha4* = army/war~no~tired-of~deceit = In warfare, deceit is always an option), ordered fleet to 誘敵深入 (*you4 di2 shen1 ru4* = lure~enemy~deep~enter = lure enemy to penetrate).

by Diana Yue