

# Character Builder 您好學? 呀

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 New York

股

Putonghua pronunciation: *gu3*

Cantonese pronunciation: *goo2*

Meaning: top-leg, part, share, stocks and shares

股 (radical 月 = 肉 *rou4*, flesh/meat) means part/share. Company 上市 (*shang4 shi4* = up/onto-market = goes public), issues 股份 (*gu3 fen4* = part-share = shares). Shares are bought/sold on 股票市場 (*gu3 piao4 shi4 chang3* = stock/ share-certificate-market-place), i.e. 股市 (*gu3 shi* = stock market). Shareholders hold shares in form of 股票 (*gu3 piao4* = stock-ticket = 證券 *zheng4 juan4* = proof-ticket = stock/share certificates), e.g. 一萬股藍籌 (*yi1 wan4 gu3 lan2 chou2* = 10,000-shares-blue-chips).

股票經紀 (*gu3 piao4 jing1 ji3* = stock-brokers) frequent New York's 證券交易所 (*zheng4 juan4 jiao1 yi4 suo3* = stock-certificate-cross-exchange-office = stock exchange), i.e. NYSE on 華爾街 (*hua2 er3 jie1* = "Wa" - transliterated-street = Wall Street).

by Diana Yue