

# 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 Chinese national anthem



Putonghua pronunciation: *hou2*

Cantonese pronunciation: *hou3*

Meanings: roar, howl, thunder, bellow, yell

Sharing radical 口 (*kou3*, mouth), 吼 (*hou3*, roar), 嚎 (*hao2*, howl) have similar meaning: 獅吼 (*shi1 hou3* = lion~roars), 虎吼 (*hu3 hou3* = tiger~roars), 狼嚎 (*lang2 hao2* = wolf~howls).

狂風怒吼 (*kuang2 feng1 nu4 hou3* = mad~wind~angry~roar) = gale bellows furiously. In flood, 黃河怒吼 (*Huang2 He2 nu4 hou3* = The Yellow River thunders/roars).

Army trumpet 吼響 (*hou3 xiang3* = blares~aloud). Angered people 吼叫 (*hou3 jiao4* = roar~yell). National anthem calls: China is endangered! 每個人被迫著發出最後的吼聲! (*mei3 ge4 ren2 bei4 po4 zhe0 fa1 chu1 zui4 hou4 de0 hou3 sheng1* = each~every~person~is~forced~to~issue~out~most~last~'s~roar~sound = We must shout unanimously, for the last time!) 起來 (*qi3 lai2* = rise~come = Arise!)