

# 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.

## This week: Words about management

理

Pronunciation: *li* (Putonghua, 3<sup>rd</sup> tone), *lei* (Cantonese, 5<sup>th</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: regard, attend, handle, arrange, manage, treat, tackle

Verb 理 means putting things in order. Housewives 理家 (*li jia* = manage~home = keep house). Barbers/hairstylists 理髮 (*li fa* = handle/treat~hair = cut/dress hair). Traffic police 管理交通 (*guan li jiao tong* = control~manage~cross~through = oversee/direct traffic).

Mechanics 修理 (*xiu li* = repair~handle) cars. Invalids 調理身體 (*tiao li shen ti* = balance/harmonize~treat~body = rest/treat/improve body). CFOs 理財 (*li cai* = manage~money = manage company's finance). Presidents 日理萬機 (*ri li wan ji* = daily~attend-to~ten-thousand~matters).

不理 (*bu li* = no~regard/attend) means not acknowledging someone/something's presence. 不理障礙 (*bu li zhang ai* = no~regard~block~obstacle) means going ahead despite obstacles. 愛理不理 (*ai li bu li* = love/like-to~attend~not~attend) describes girl's half-keen, half-rejecting attitude to boy.

by Diana Yue