

# 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

# 效

Pronunciation: *xiao* (Putonghua, 4<sup>th</sup> tone), *haau* (Cantonese, 6<sup>th</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: effect, reaction

效 = 效果 (*xiao guo* = effect~result). Medicine/ advice is 有效 (*you xiao* = has effect = effective/ fruitful) or 無效 (*wu xiao* = no~effect = ineffective/ fruitless).

Company's 加薪 (*jia xin* = add~salary = salary-raise), 裁員 (*cai yuan* = cut~member = sacking/downsizing) 即時生效 (*ji shi sheng xiao* = this~time/moment~yield~effect = are carried out immediately). Reforms 立竿見影 (*li gan jian ying* = stand~bamboo-pole~see~shadow = show effect immediately), raising 效率 (*xiao lu* = effect~efficiency), 效益 (*xiao yi* = effect~benefit/gain). 骨牌效應 (*gu pai xiao ying* = bone~tile~effect~echo = domino effect) = 連鎖效應 (*lian suo xiao ying* = linked~chain~effect~echo = chain effect/reaction). 蝴蝶效應 (*hu die xiao ying* = butterfly effect) explains chaos theory.