

# 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 MTR

票

Pronunciation: *piao* (Putonghua, 4<sup>th</sup> tone), *piu* (Cantonese, 3<sup>rd</sup> tone)

Basic meaning: ticket

票 substitutes money: 鈔票 (*chao piao* = copy/ substitute~ticket = paper notes), 支票 (*zhi piao* = draw~ticket = cheques), 股票 (*gu piao* = share~ticket = share certificates). Regular commuters 買月票 (*mai yue piao* = buy~monthly~tickets). Oldsters/ children get 半票 (*ban piao* = half-price~tickets). Voters 投票 (*tou piao* = throw~ticket = cast votes).

車票 (*che piao* = train/bus~tickets), 船票 (*chuan piao* = boat~tickets), 戲票 (*xi piao* = drama/opera/ movie~tickets), 足球票 (*zu qiu piao* = foot~ball~ tickets) are called 飛 (*fei*, literally “fly”) in Hong Kong.

For big concerts/matches we 訂票 (*ding piao* = advance-book~ticket) because 黃牛 (*huang niu*, literally “yellow cow” = ticket touts) may 炒飛 (*chao fei*, literally “stir-fry~tickets” = jag up 票價 *piao jia* = ticket~prices).

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