

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

站

Pronunciation: *zhan* (Putonghua, 4th tone), *jaam* (Cantonese, 6th tone)
Basic meaning: stand, stop, station

Verb 站 (radical 立 *li* = stand/establish) means stand.
Noun 站 means stop/station. Horsemen get lodgings/refreshments at 驛站 (*yi zhan* = courier~stops/stations). Drivers fill up at 油站 (*you zhan* = oil~stops = gas stations).

車站 (*che zhan* = car/vehicle~stops) include 巴士站 (*ba shi zhan* = “bus”-transliterated~stop = bus-stops), 小巴站 (*xiao ba zhan* = small~bus~stop = mini-bus stops), 火車站 (*huo che zhan* = fire-car~stop = train stations), 地鐵站 (*di tie zhan* = underground~railway~stops). Sometimes people 排長龍 (*pai chang long* = line~long~dragon = form long queues) at 的士站 (*di xhi zhan* = “taxi”-transliterated~stop = taxi stands).

Before Lunar New Year 廣州站 (*Guangzhou zhan* = Guangzhou Train Terminal) is packed with home-bound migrant workers.

by Diana Yue