

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 meetings

決

Pronunciation: *jue* (Putonghua, 2nd tone), *kuet* (Cantonese, 3rd tone)
Basic meaning: dismiss obstacles, break, determined, decide, decisive

決 (radical 冫 = 水 *shui* = water) means water bursting: floods cause 決堤 (*jue ti* = water-breaks-embankment/dam). Thus 決 also means determined/decided/decisive: 決心 (*jue xin* = break/firm~heart = determination), 決裂 (*jue lie* = break~split = sever friendship/partnership), 決定 (*jue ding* = break/firmly~determine = decide), 裁決 (*cai jue* = adjudicate~decide = court judgment).

Converts 決志 (*jue zhi* = decide~will = pledge their faith). Leaders make 決策 (*jue ce* = final-strategy/decision). Procrastinators 議而不決, 決而不行 (*yi er bu jue, jue er bu xing* = discuss~and~not~decide, decide~and~not~act).

Saying “決不!” (*jue bu* = “Definitely no!”) indicates downright denial/refusal. 決一死戰 (*jue yi si zhan* = decide~one~death~battle) = fight with determination to win or die.

by Diana Yue