

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 elections

選

Pronunciation: *xuan* (Putonghua, 3rd tone), *suen* (Cantonese 2nd tone)
Basic meaning: choose, select, elect, election, contest

選 = 選擇 (*xuan ze* = select-pick) = choose/chosen/choice. 選民 (*xuan min*) can mean “chosen-people” (as in “God’s chosen people”) or “choosing-people” i.e. voters.

選舉 (*xuan ju* = select-raise/nominate) = elections. To 競選 (*jing xuan* = compete-select) means running/competing for office. 競選人 (*jing xuan ren* = compete-person = candidates), unless they 退選 (*tui xuan* = retreat-election = withdraw), either 當選 (*dang xuan* = get-elected = win election) or 落選 (*luo xuan* = fall-elected = lose election).

選手 (*xuan shou* = picked-hand/candidate) means contestants, e.g. 游泳選手 (*you yong xuan shou* = swimming athletes in contest). 世界小姐選美 (*shi jie xiao jie xuan mei* = world-boundary-little-sister-elect-beauty = world miss contest beauty) is Miss World Contest.