

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 music

聽

Pronunciation: *ting* (Putonghua, 4th tone), *teng* (Cantonese 1st tone)
Basic meaning: hear, listen

聽 (radical 耳 *er* = ear) = 聽見 (*ting jian* = hear) or 聆聽 (*ling ting* = listen). Music-lovers 聽音樂 (*ting yin yue* = listen~sound~music = listen to music) on 唱片 (*chang pian* = sing~piece/dish = records/CDs), 隨身聽 (*siu shen ting* = follow~body~listen = Walkman) and iPod. Chinese opera-lovers 聽戲 (*ting xi* = listen~drama), meaning they go to see operas for the arias. Audience are 聽眾 (*ting zhong* = listen~group/masses).

好聽 (*hao ting* = good~listen) describes good music. 難聽 (*nan ting* = difficult~listen) describes awful music/sounds or offensive words. 聽不懂 (*ting bu dong* = listen~no~understand) describes incomprehensible language or cryptic verbal statements.

不聽話 (*bu ting hua* = no~listen~words = disobedient) describes a naughty kid.

by Diana Yue