

# 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 education

# 教

Pronunciation: *jiao* (Putonghua, 4<sup>th</sup> tone), *gaau* (Cantonese 3<sup>rd</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: teach, teaching, religion

教, with radical 文 (*wen* = letters), is inseparable from writing, hence teaching is 教書 (*jiao shu* = teach~books). Teachers are 教師 (*jiao shi* = teach~masters) or 老師 (*lao shi* = old/venerated~masters).

Education is 教育 (*jiao yu* = teaching~breeding). 教化 (*jiao hua* = teach~transform) is education and acculturation. 有教養 (*you jiao yang* = has~teaching~breeding) describes a well-bred person. 有教無類 (*you jiao wu lei* = has~teach~no~categories) means willingness to teach all students, talented or untalented.

Religion is 宗教 (*zong jiao* = sect~teaching). 傳教士 (*chuan jiao shi* = spread~religion~scholars = missionaries) preach to 教徒 (*jiao tu* = religion~disciples = converts). 教訓 (*jiao xun* = teach~lecture) means tenets or teaching someone a lesson by scolding/beating him.

by Diana Yue