

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 Taiwan

省

Pronunciation: *sheng* (Putonghua, 3rd tone), *saang* (Cantonese, 2nd tone) Basic meaning: save, economize, province

省 (verb) = 節省 (*jie sheng* = squeeze~skip) = economize. 省錢省力 (*sheng qian sheng li* = save~money~save~strength) describes something low-priced and simple to upkeep.

省 (noun) means a province in China, e.g. 福建 (Fujian), 台灣 (Taiwan). 省會 (*sheng hui* = province~metropolis) = a province's capital, e.g. 廣東省 (Guangdong Province)'s 廣州 (Guangzhou = Canton). 省長 (*sheng zhang* = province~leader) = provincial governor.

A Chinese person's 籍貫 (*ji guan* = nationality/province~link = place of origin) means his ancestors' native 省 (*sheng* = province), 縣 (*xian* = county), 市 (*shi* = town) which he also identifies with. 外省人 (*wai sheng ren* = outside~province~person) means someone from another province with cultural and linguistic roots unlike our own.

by Diana Yue