

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 weddings

嫁

Pronunciation: *jia* (Putonghua, 4th tone), *ga* (Cantonese 3rd tone)
Basic meaning: marry husband

嫁 (*jia*) = 嫁人 (*jia ren* = wed~person/husband) = colloquially 嫁老公 (*jia lao gong* = wed~old-grandpa = wed~husband) = marrying a husband.

聘禮 (*ping li* = state-claim~present) means gifts from 男家 (*nan jia* = man/groom's~family) to 女家 (*nu jia* = woman/bride's~family) prior to the wedding. 嫁妝 (*jia zhuang* = wed~make-up) means bride's dowry. The bride's parents 嫁女 (*jia nu* = marry~daughter) and get a 女婿 (*nu shi* = daughter~husband = son-in-law).

A wife who 嫁雞隨雞, 嫁狗隨狗 (*jia ji sui ji, jia gou sui gou* = marry~chicken~follow~chicken, marry~dog~follow~dog) totally accepts her husband's choice of domicile/career. 嫁禍 (*jia huo* = marry/transfer~misfortune) describes a culprit who successfully makes suspicion fall on someone else.

by Diana Yue