

Character Builder

您好嗎？球

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 soccer

球

Pronunciation: *qiu* (Putonghua, 2nd tone), *kau* (Cantonese 4th tone)
Basic meaning: ball

球 = ball/sphere. 地球 (*di qiu* = land~sphere) = planet Earth.

In Chinese sports language, 足球 (*zu qiu* = foot~ball = soccer), 籃球 (*lan qiu* = basket~ball), 排球 (*pai qiu* = row~ball = volleyball) are 大球 (*da qiu* = big~balls), 乒乓 (*ping pang* = ping~pong = table-tennis), 羽毛球 (*yu mao qiu* = feather~fur~ball = badminton) are 小球 (*xiao qiu* = small~balls).

球壇盛事 (*qiu tan sheng shi* = ball~altar/platform~grand~event) means great happening on the soccer scene. 球王 (*qiu wang* = ball~king = king of soccer), e.g. Pele, has many 球迷 (*qiu mi* = ball~infatuated = fans). Hong Kong people say 波 (*bo* = transliterated~ball) for 球: 賭波 (*du bo* = gamble~ball) = soccer betting.

by Diana Yue