

# 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 soccer

# 賽

Pronunciation: *sai* (Putonghua, 4<sup>th</sup> tone), *choi* (Cantonese 4<sup>th</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: compete, match

賽 = 比賽 (*bi sai* = compare~compete) means match/race. 英超聯賽 (*ying chao lian sai* = “Eng”-transliterated-united~league~matches) means the English Premier League.

賽果 (*sai guo* = match~results) of 世界盃 (*shi jie bei* = world~territory~cup = World Cup) and 歐洲盃 (*ou zhou bei* = “Eu”-transliterated~continent~cup = European Cup) 決賽 (*jue sai* = decide~match = finals) make international headlines.

球證 (*qiu zheng* = ball~witness = referees/refs) punish 犯規 (*fan gui* = violate~rule = fouls) by giving 角球 (*jiao qiu* = corner~ball = corners) or 十二碼 (*shi er ma* = ten~two~yards = twelve yards penalty kicks) while fans 喝采 (*he cai* = shout~cheer = cheer) or 喝倒采 (*he dao cai* = shout~reverse~cheer = boo).

by Diana Yue