

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 books

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Pronunciation: *zuo* (Putonghua, 4th tone), *jok* (Cantonese, 3rd tone)
Basic meaning: do, work, invent, create

工作 (*gong zuo* = work~do) = work.
Factories/systems 運作 (*yun zuo* = turn~work = function). Fishermen 出海作業 (*chu hai zuo ye* = out~sea~do~work/trade = sail out to work). 作家 (*zuo jia* = do~master = writers), 作曲家 (*zuo qu jia* = do~musical~work~master = composers) 創作 (*cang zuo* = create~do = do creative work). 作者 (*zuo zhe* = do~person) = author.

作品 (*zuo pin* = work~item/product) = work/opus: 原作 (*yuan zuo* = original~works), 譯作 (*yi zuo* = translated~works), 名作 (*ming zuo* = famous~works).

Rebels 作反 (*zuo fan* = do~reverse/overturn = revolt). Kids 作弄 (*zuo nong* = do~play = play tricks on) teachers. 天作之合 (*tian zuo zhi he* = heaven~created~'s~union) describes well-matched couples/partners.

by Diana Yue