

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 summer

泳

Pronunciation: *you* (Putonghua, 3rd tone), *wing* (Cantonese 6th tone)
Basic meaning: swim

People 游泳 (*you yong* = swim) in 泳衣 (*yong yi* = swim~clothes = swimsuit), 泳褲 (*yong ku* = swimming~trunks), 比基尼 (*bi ji ni* = "bikini" transliterated) and take 日光浴 (*ri guang yu* = sun-light~bath = sun-baths) at 海灘 (*hai tan* = sea~beaches) and 泳池 (*yong chi* = swimming~pools). Kids 玩水 (*huan shui* = play~(with)~water), watched by 拯溺員 (*zheng ni yuan* = rescue~drown~members = lifeguards).

泳手 (*yong shou* = swim~hands = swimming athletes) compete in 背泳 (*bei yong* = back~swim = back-strokes) and other 泳式 (*yong shi* = swimming~styles).

Swimmers 水肺潛水 (*shui fei qian shui* = water~lungs~dive~water = SCUBA dive) to see 珊瑚礁 (*shan hu jiao* = coral reefs).

by Diana Yue