

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



Pronunciation: *shan* (Putonghua, 4th tone), *sin* (Cantonese 3rd tone)
Basic meaning: fan

扇 = fan. The verb 搵 (*shan*) = 搖扇 (*yao shan*) = wave fan. 搵涼 (*shan liang* = fan~cool) means waving fan to cool oneself. 搵動 (*shan dong* = fan~move) means inciting listeners with words. 扇 also means thin movable rectangle: a door = 一扇門 (*yi shan men* = one~fan~door).

Hand-held fans include 摺扇 (*jie shan* = folded~fans), 團扇 (*tuan shan* = round~fans), 葵扇 (*kui shan* = palm-leaf~fans), 羽扇 (*yu shan* = feather~fans). 電風扇 (*dian feng shan* = electric~wind~fans) means electric fan, with 扇葉 (*shan ye* = fan~leaves = fan blades).

秋後扇 (*qiu hou shan* = autumn~afterwards~fan = fan after autumn) is the sad fate of those dumped after their period of usefulness is over.

by Diana Yue