

# 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 Victoria Harbour

深

Pronunciation: *shen* (Putonghua, 1<sup>st</sup> tone), *sam* (Cantonese 1<sup>st</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: deep, depth

深 = 深度 (*shen du* = deep~degree) = 深淺 (*shen qian* = deep~to~shallow) = depth. 水深 (*shui shen* = water~deep) means depth of water. The Chinese name “深圳” (Shenzhen) literally means “deep ditch”.

深 = adjective/adverb 深深 (*shen shen* = deep~deep): 深夜 (*shen ye* = deep~night), 深思 (*shen si* = deep~think = seriously ponder), 深愛 (*shen ai* = deeply~love). 深刻 (*shen ke* = deep~incise) describes impressions/analysis. 深不可測 (*shen bu ke ce* = deep~no~can~measure/guess = unfathomable) describes an abyss or mysterious/profound ideas.

China national principles are “深挖洞，廣積糧，不稱霸” (*shen wa dong, guang ji liang, bu cheng ba*), i.e. deeply~dig~holes (defense), widely~accumulate~grain (economy), no~claim/become~hegemony (foreign policy).

by Diana Yue