

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 Victory Harbour

Pronunciation: *fan* (Putonghua, 2nd tone), *faan* (Cantonese 4th tone)
Basic meaning: sail, sailing boat

帆船 (*fan chuan* = sail~boats) range from 西班牙大帆船 (*xi ban ya da fan chuan* = Spain-transliterated~big~sail~boat = Spanish galleons) to Chinese 舢舨 (*shan ban* = sampans) in Victoria Harbour. 帆影 (*fan ying* = sails~shadows) means sailing boats, poetically speaking.

Jeans are made of 帆布 (*fan bu* = sail~cloth = denim). 帆船運動 (*fan chuan yun dong* = sail~boat~turn~move = sailing~sport) = yachting. 滑浪風帆 (*hua lang feng fan* = slide~wave~wind~sail) means wind-surfing. 青島 (*Qingdao*) will host the 2008 奧運會 (*ao yun hui* = Olympics-transliterated~sports~meet = Olympics) 帆船賽 (*fan chuan sai* = sail~boat~competitions = sailing events).

一帆風順 (*yi fan feng shun* = one~sail~wind~smooth) describes someone's smooth road to success.

by Diana Yue