

# 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 cartoons

Pronunciation: *hua* (Putonghua, 4<sup>th</sup> tone), *wa* (Cantonese 2<sup>nd</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: drawing, painting

Verb 畫 *hua* = draw/paint. Noun 畫 = 圖畫 (*tu hua*) = picture~painting. 畫家 (*hua jia* = paint~masters) means painters. 畫像 (*hua xiang* = painting~resemblance) means portraits. 畫廊 (*hua lang* = painting~corridor = art galleries) hold 畫展 (*hua zhan* = painting~exhibitions).

西洋畫 (*xi yang hua* = west~ocean~painting) means western-style painting, 中國畫 (*zhong guo hua* = middle~kingdom~painting) means Chinese-style painting. 水墨畫 (*shui mo hua* = water~ink~painting) is traditional Chinese painting done with brush and ink-wash on silk/paper.

眉目如畫 (*mei mu ru hua* = eyebrows~eyes~resemble~painting) describes a woman's beautiful eyes and brows. 畫龍點睛 (*hua long dian jing* = paint~dragon~dot~eyes/pupils = giving the dragon eyes) means adding the final, most illuminating touch/words to a painting/description/comment.

by Diana Yue