

# 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 auto-racing

賽

Pronunciation: *sai* (Putonghua, 4<sup>th</sup> tone), *choi* (Cantonese, 3<sup>rd</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: race, competition

Auto-manufacturers e.g. 寶馬 (*bao ma* = treasure-horse, BMW's Chinese name), 法拉利 (*fa la li* = "Ferrari"-transliterated), 本田 (*ben tian*, kanji for "Honda") make 跑車 (*pao che* = run-car = sports cars).

To optimize performance for 賽車 (*sai che* = compete/race-car = auto-racing), cars' 懸吊系統 (*xuan diao xi tong* = suspend-hang-system = suspension), 煞車掣 (*sha che zhi* = stop-car-handle = brake), 變速箱 (*bian su xiang* = change-speed-box = transmission), 引擎 (*yin qing* = lead-hold = "engine"-transliterated), 輪胎 (*lun tai* = wheel-"tire"-transliterated) are adjusted

Amateurs try 小型賽車 (*xiao xing sai che* = small-model-race-car = kart-racing). Professionals join 一級方程式 (*yi ji fang cheng shi* = one/first-grade-formula = Formula 1) races.