

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 outer space

航

Pronunciation: *hang* (Putonghua, 2nd tone), *hong* (Cantonese 4th tone)
Basic meaning: sail, voyage

航 (radical 舟 *zhou* = boat) = 航行 (*hang xing* = sail~move) = boat/plane's voyage. 航線 (*hang xian* = sail/fly~line) = plane's flight route, 航班 (*hang ban* = fly~round) = scheduled flight.

航空公司 (*hang kong gong si* = fly~sky~public~bureau) = airline companies: 星航 (*xing hang* = "Sing"-transliterated~fly) = Singapore Airlines.

China's National Space Administration (國家航天局 *guo jia hang tian ju* = state~home~fly~sky~bureau) develops 航天工業 (*hang tian gong ye* = fly~sky~engineering~specialism = aerospace industries), builds and launches 火箭 (*huo zhan* = fire~arrows = rockets), 衛星 (*wei xing* = guard~stars = satellites), 太空船 (*tai kong chuan* = ultimate~sky~ship = space-ships), trains 太空人 (*tai kong ren* = ultimate~sky~person = astronauts/taikonauts).

by Diana Yue