

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 housing markets

供

Pronunciation: *gong* (Putonghua, 1st tone), *gung* (Cantonese, 1st tone)
Basic meaning: supply, buy by installments, pay mortgage

供 = 供應 (*gong ying* = supply~respond) = supply. Reservoirs 供水 (*gong shui* = supply~water), dams 供電 (*gong dian* = supply~electricity). Goods suppliers = 供應商 (*gong ying shang* = supply~merchants/companies). Witnesses 作供 (*zuo gong* = act/do~supply = give evidence).

Grown-up children 供養父母 (*gong yang fu mu* = supply~feed~father~mother = support parents). Some jobs 供吃供住 (*gong chi gong zhu* = supply~eat~supply~live-in = supply board and lodging). Believers 供奉 (*gong feng* = supply~uphold = offer/donate to, worship) idols.

Middleclass people 供房 (*gong fang* = pay~installments~house = pay housing mortgage), 供車 (*gong che* = pay~installments~car = pay car mortgage) by 月供 (*yue gong* = monthly~installments). Unemployed, they 斷供 (*duan gong* = stop/break~pay~installments = default mortgage).