

# 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

求

Pronunciation: *qiu* (Putonghua, 2<sup>nd</sup> tone), *kau* (Cantonese, 4<sup>th</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: seek, need, demand, beg

求 means need/ask. 求婚 (*qu hun* = beg~marry) = propose. 求職 (*qiu zhi* = seek~jobs) = look for employment. 求救 (*qiu jiu* = ask~help) = send SOS. 求生 (*qiu sheng* = seek~live) means struggling to survive. 求死 (*qiu si* = seek~die) means committing suicide. Losers 求和 (*qiu he* = beg~peace = try to equalize). Superstitious emperors 求仙 (*qiu xian* = seek~fairy = seek immortality/fairhood).

Recession changes commodities' 供求規律 (*gong qiu gui lu* = supply~demand~rule~law = pattern of supply and demand). Cheap goods are 求過於供 (*qiu guo yu gong* = demand~exceeds~supply), luxury cars are 供過於求 (*gong guo yu qiu* = supply~exceeds~demand).

To implore, say “求求你!” (*qiu qiu ni* = beg~beg~you!)

by Diana Yue