

# 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 recessions

失

Pronunciation: *shi* (Putonghua, 1<sup>st</sup> tone), *sat* (Cantonese, 1<sup>st</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: lose, loss

失 = lose: 失望 (*shi wang* = lose~prospect = disappointed), 失明 (*shi ming* = lose~brightness/sight = go blind), 失職 (*shi zhi* = fail~post/duties = err in work), 失蹤 (*shi zong* = lose~trail = disappear).

In recession, the stock market 失守 (*shi shou* = lose/fail~defense = drops dramatically). Speculators/thieves 失手 (*shi shou* = lose~hand = get caught). Banks 信心大失 (*xin xin da shi* = believe~heart~big~lose = confidence drops dramatically), causing 信貸崩潰 (*xin dai beng kui* = confidence~lending~break~disrupt = credit crunch). Entrepreneurs' businesses 失敗 (*shi bai* = lose~defeated = fail/breakdown). Millions 失業 (*shi ye* = lose~job).

Stockholders 患得患失 (*huan de huan shi* = fear~gain~fear~loss = feel unsure/uneasy = don't know how to go forward).

by Diana Yue