

# 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 news reportage

# 新

Pronunciation: *xin* (Putonghua, 1<sup>st</sup> tone), *san* (Cantonese, 1<sup>st</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: new beginning

新 = new: 新年 (*xin nian* = news~year), 新月 (*xin yue* = new-moon = crescent moon), 新生 (*xin sheng* = new~life = born again), 新疆 (*xin-jiang* = new~territory = China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region). 全新 (*quan xin* = complete~new) means brand new. 新聞 (*xin wen* = new~hear/heard) means news, 舊聞 (*jiu wen* = old~hear/heard) means stale news.

通訊社 (*tong xun she* = through~message~societies = news agencies) hire 新聞記者 (*xin wen ji zhe* = news~record~person = reporters) to 跑新聞 (*pao xin wen* = run~news = move around to cover news).

The short-lived 百日維新 (*bai ri wei xin* = hundred-days~maintain~new = Hundred Days's Reform, 1911) failed to save the ailing Qing Dynasty from collapse.

by Diana Yue