

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

Pronunciation: *wen* (Putonghua, 2nd tone), *man* (Cantonese, 4th tone)
Basic meaning: hear

聞 = 耳 (*er* = ear) + 門 (*men* = door) = hear/heard. 聞知 (*wen zhi* = hear-know) means knowing from heard sources. After 聞道 (*wen dao* = hear~Word/truth), truth-seekers are enlightened/converted.

出爐新聞 (*chu lu xin wen* = out-from~oven-news) means last-minute news. 聞人 (*wen ren* = heard-about/news~persons = celebrities) make 頭條新聞 (*tou tiao xin wen* = head-line-news). 風聞 (*feng wen* = wind~heard) = gossip. 傳聞證供 (*chuan wen zheng gong* = pass-around~heard-proof-supply/confess) = hearsay evidence.

Well-travelled/well-exposed people are 見聞廣博 (*jian wen guang bo* = see~hear~broad~expansive = know many things over the world). When we meet VIPs for the first time, we say “久聞大名!” (*jiu wen da ming* = “long~heard~your~big~name!”)

by Diana Yue