

# 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 jewelry**

珠

Pronunciation: *zhu* (Putonghua, 1<sup>st</sup> tone), *jue* (Cantonese, 1<sup>st</sup> tone)

Basic meaning: pearl

珍珠 (*zhen zhu* = precious~pearl) = pearls: 真珠 (*zhen zhu* = natural~pearls), 養珠 (*yang zhu* = bred/cultured~pearls). 採珠人 (*cai zhu ren* = pick/harvest-pearl-person = pearl divers) fish for 珠貝 (*zhu bei* = pearl-clams) containing 南洋珠 (*nan yang zhu* = South~Seas~pearls).

珍珠項鍊 (*zhen zhu xiang lian* = pearl-neck~chain = pearl necklaces) are classy. Women love 珠寶展覽 (*zhu bao zhan lan* = pearl-treasure-exhibit-look = jewelry shows).

Girls' tears are 珠淚 (*zhu lei* = pearly-tears). Dark-skinned beauties are 黑珍珠 (*hei zhen zhu* = black~pearls). 珠圓玉潤 (*zhu yuan yu run* = pearl-round-jade-moisture-enriched) describes plump women. 人老珠黃 (*ren lao zhu huang* = person-aged-pearl-yellow/lustreless) describes faded looks of women past their prime.

by Diana Yue