

# 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 dancing

姿

(radical 女 *nu* = woman)

Pronunciation: *zi* (Putonghua, 1<sup>st</sup> tone), *ji* (Cantonese, 1<sup>st</sup> tone)

Basic meaning: pose, poise, posture

姿 = 姿勢 (*zi shi* = pose~attitude) = posture: 坐姿 (*zuo zi* = sitting~posture), 站姿 (*zhan zi* = standing~posture). Knights show 英姿 (*ying zi* = heroic/dashing~posture) on horseback. Swimmers demonstrate various 泳姿 (*yong zi* = swimming~movements).

姿容 (*zi rong* = poise~visage) = 姿色 (*zi se* = poise~color) = women's looks. Handsome men/women have 風姿 (*feng zi* = wind~pose = impressive air/carriage). Waltzing couples show off 舞步 (*wu bu* = dancing~steps), 翩翩舞姿 (*pian pian wu zi* = flutter~flutter~dance~gestures/movements = light/floating dance movements).

Models/actors/politicians 擺姿態 (*bai zi tai* = pose~posture~attitude = do poses, put up attitudes). Hedonists want life to be 多姿多彩 (*duo zi duo cai* = many~gestures~many~colors = full of variety).

by Diana Yue