

# 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 money

元

= 圓

Pronunciation: *yuan* (Putonghua, 2<sup>nd</sup> tone), *yuen* (Cantonese, 4<sup>th</sup> tone)

Basic meaning: dollar

元 (*yuan*, fundamental = 圓 *yuan*, round) is unit of many currencies: RMB, 港元 (*Gang yuan* = Hongkong~dollar/HKD), 日元 (*Ri yuan* = Japanese~dollar = yen), 韓圓 (*Han yuan* = 韓圓 *Han huan* = Korean~round/dollar = won), 美元 (*Mei yuan* = US~dollar/USD), 歐羅 (*Ou luo* = "Euro"-transliterated = 歐元 European~dollar). 銀圓 (*yin yuan* = silver~round/dollar) are silver coins.

元高 (*yuan gao* = dollar~high), 元低 (*yuan di* = dollar~low) means USD's fluctuation. 百萬富翁 (*bai wan fu weng* = hundred~ten-thousand~rich~old-man = millionaire)'s worth is highest in 英鎊 (*Ying bang* = English/British~pound).

千元大鈔 (*qian yuan da chao* = thousand~dollar~big~banknote = \$1000 note/bill) can buy many items in 十元店 (*shi yuan dian* = ten~dollar~stores).

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