

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 sleep

(shape resembles square field)



Pronunciation: *tian* (Putonghua, 2nd tone), *tin* (Cantonese, 4th tone)
Basic meaning: farmland, field for growing crops

Farmers 種田 (*zhong tian* = sow~fields), 耕田 (*geng tian* = plough~fields): 稻田 (*dao tian* = rice/padi~fields), 麥田 (*mai tian* = wheat~fields), 良田 (*liang tian* = good~fields), 瘦田 (*shou tian* = lean~fields), 梯田 (*ti tian* = ladder~field = terraced fields).

田地 (*tian di* = fields~land) = cultivated land. 田野 (*tian ye* = field~wild) = mix of farmland/wilderness. 田徑賽 (*tian jing sai* = field-path-competition) = tracks race. “農家樂” (*nong jia le* = farm~family~enjoyment) are eateries in 田園 (*tian yuan* = farmlands~groves/gardens = pastoral) settings.

肥田料 (*fei tian liao* = fat/nourish~field~material) = fertilizers. Kids say 米田共 (*mi tian gong* = rice~field~together) for 糞 (*fen* = faeces), splitting 糞 into three words.

by Diana Yue