

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

(radical 氵 = 水 *shui* = water)

灌

Pronunciation: *guan* (Putonghua, 4th tone), *goon* (Cantonese, 3rd tone)
Basic meaning: inject liquid, irrigate

灌 = 灌下 (*guan xia* = force-pour-down/into): 灌水 (*guan shui* = pour/force-water down throat/hole). Soil/plants need 澆灌 (*jiao guan* = sprinkle-pour = watering). Farmlands need 灌溉 (*guan gai* = pour-irrigate = irrigation).

Drivers should 全神灌注 (*quan shen guan zhu* = whole-spirit/attention-pour-inject = fully concentrate) when driving. Teachers 灌輸 (*guan shu* = pour~convey) knowledge/ideas to students. 灌頂 (*guan ding* = pour-water~head-top) = Buddhist baptism ceremony for blessing converts.

灌腸 (*guan chang* = force-pour-into~intestine) = enema. 灌醉 (*guan zui* = force~drink-wine~intoxicate) means pressing someone to drink wine/liquor till he/she is drunk. Girls charm men by 灌迷湯 (*guan mi tang* = pour~charm~soup = saying complimentary/luring words). 灌湯餃 (*guan tang jiao* = pour~broth~dumpling) are dumplings sealed with broth.

by Diana Yue