

# 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 death

魂

(radical ↑ = 心 *xin* = heart)  
Pronunciation: *yi* (Putonghua, 4<sup>th</sup> tone), *yik* (Cantonese, 1<sup>st</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: remember, reminisce, reminiscences

憶 = 記憶 (*ji yi* = memorize~remember) = 回憶 (*hui yi* = go-back~remember = reminisce). Memory is 記憶力 (*ji yi li* = remember~power). 回憶錄 (*hui yi lu* = go-back~remember~records) means memoirs.

Oldies 憶童年 (*yi tong nian* = remember~child~years = reminisce on childhood days), 憶亡友 (*yi wang you* = remember/miss~dead~friends). On 紀念日 (*ji nian ri* = commemorate~remember~day = anniversaries) we 追憶 (*zui yi* = trail/chase~remember = think about) past events. 歷史 (*li shi* = experience~record = history) contains a nation's 集體記憶 (*ji ti ji yi* = collect~body/group~memorize~remember = collective memory).

Chinese government asks Tibetans to 憶苦思甜 (*yi ku si tian* = remember~bitterness~think-about~sweetness = compare the bitter past with today's improvements).

by Diana Yue