

# 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 pirates



Pronunciation: *dao* (Putonghua, 4<sup>th</sup> tone), *do* (Cantonese, 6<sup>th</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: steal, rob, robber

Criminals 盜竊 (*dao qie* = rob~steal). Lawless places are 盜賊如毛 (*dao zei ru mao* = robbers~thieves~are-like~hairs = full of thugs). Bonnie and Clyde are 大盜 (*da dao* = big~robbers). 盜版 (*dao ban* = robber~edition) CD/DVD are pirated editions.

海盜 (*hai dao* = sea~robbers = pirates) 劫船 (*jie chuan* = rob~ships), hold 人質 (*ren zhi* = person~abductee = hostages). 戰艦 (*zhan lan* = war~battleships = warships) 圍剿 (*wei jiao* = surround/contain~pursue~attack) until pirates 投降 (*tou xiang* = turn-to~surrender = surrender).

Fools 掩耳盜鈴 (*yan er dao ling* = cover~ears~while~stealing~bell = commit obvious offences thinking no one notices). 盜亦有道 (*dao yi you dao* = robbers~also~have~rules/morals = are fair/just/kind) describes men like Robin Hood.

by Diana Yue