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 music

Pronunciation: ting (Putonghua, 4th tone), teng (Cantonese 1st tone)
Basic meaning: hear, listen

聴 (radical 耳 er = ear) = 聽見 (ting jian = hear) or 聆聽 (ling ting = listen). Music-lovers 聽音樂 (ting yin yue = listen-sound-music = listen to music) on 唱片 (chang pian = sing-piece/dish = records/CDs), 隨身聽 (siu shen ting = follow-body-listen = Walkman) and iPod. Chinese opera-lovers 聽戲 (ting xi = listen-drama), meaning they go to see operas for the arias. Audience are 聽眾 (ting zhong = listen-group/masses).

好聽 (hao ting = good-listen) describes good music. 難聽 (nan ting = difficult-listen) describes awful music/sounds or offensive words. 聽不懂 (ting bu dong = listen-no-understand) describes incomprehensible language or cryptic verbal statements.

不聽話 (bu ting hua = no-listen-words = disobedient) describes a naughty kid.

by Diana Yue