

# 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 the beaches

# 潮

(radical 氵 = 水 *shui* = water)  
Pronunciation: *chao* (Putonghua, 2<sup>nd</sup> tone), *chiu* (Cantonese, 4<sup>th</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: tide, surge, humid

潮 means tide: 潮水 (*chao shui* = tidal~water), 潮汐 (*chao xi* = morning-tide~evening-tide), 海潮 (*hai chao* = sea/ocean~tides). 漲潮落潮 (*zhang chao luo chao* = swell~tide~fall~tide) = high and low tides. 潮流 (*chao liu* = tidal~stream) = mode/trend. 潮濕 (*chao shi* = tide~wet) means humid.

潮 = spate/period: movie's 高潮 (*gao chao* = high~tide = climax), career's 低潮 (*di chao* = low~tide = depressed period), stock-market's 狂潮 (*kuang chao* = mad~tide = surge). 新潮 (*xin chao* = new~tide/wave) means unconventionally chic. 落潮 (*luo chao* = fall~tide) means waning of mode/movement's popularity.

罷工浪潮 (*ba gong lang chao* = stop~work~waves~tides) = surging strikes. 心事如潮 (*xin shi ru chao* = heart~things~resemble~tides) means surging/restless thoughts/emotions.