

# 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 confections and sweets

潤

Pronunciation: *run* (Putonghua, 4<sup>th</sup> tone), *yun* (Cantonese, 6<sup>th</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: moist, luxuriant, nurture

潤 (radical 氵 = 水 = water) describes turf/skin/body enriched by water/oil/nourishment. Snow/rain 潤澤萬物 (*run ze wan wu* = moisten~enrich~ten-thousand-things = nurtures the world). Broth 滋潤 (*zi run* = enrich~moisten = enriches) the body. Cough drops 潤喉 (*run hou* = smoothen~throat/voice) = soothe the throat. Lubricants 潤滑 (*run hua* = moisten/oil~smooth = lubricate) hinges/wheels.

Rough drafts need editor's 潤色 (*run se* = enrich~color = polishing). Writers commissioned to write books/articles receive 潤筆 (*run bi* = enrich~pen = honorariums).

Divas have 甜潤 (*tian run* = sweet~rich) singing voices. Plump ladies are complimented as 珠圓玉潤 (*zhu yuan yu run* = pearl~round~jade~glossy/rich). 愛情滋潤 (*ai qing zi run* = love~affection~enriched~moistened = being in love) makes men/women look radiant.