

# 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 books

# 編

Pronunciation: *bian* (Putonghua, 1<sup>st</sup> tone), *pin* (Cantonese, 1<sup>st</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: weave, arrange, collate, edit, make, invent

編 (radical 糸 = 絲 *si* = thread/silk) = arranging/grouping. Housewives 編織 (*bian zhi* = weave~knit = knit). Tickets/products have 編號 (*bian hao* = assigned~numbers), 編碼 (*bian ma* = assigned~code). Libraries have 編目 (*bian mu* = arranged~items = catalogues).

Publishers' 編輯 (*bian ji* = collate~edit = editors) 編書 (*bian shu* = edit/produce~books). Newspaper's 總編輯 (*zong bian ji* = chief~editor) writes 社論 (*she lun* = society~discussion/criticism = editorials). 編劇 (*bian ju* = make~drama = scriptwriters) sometimes 改編 (*gai bian* = change~make = adapt) novels for film-making. Liars 編故事 (*bian gu shi* = weave~past~happenings = invent stories).

Choreographers 編舞 (*bian wu* = design~dancing~steps). The ancient Chinese played music on suspended bronze 編鐘 (*bian zhong* = set~of~chimes).