

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 dieting

戒

Pronunciation: *jie* (Putonghua, 4th tone), *gai* (Cantonese, 3rd tone)
Basic meaning: abstain, cut, quit

戒 = abstain from. Diabetic patients 戒糖 (*jie tang* = abstain-from~sugar), 戒煙 (*jie yan* = quit~cigarettes), bear 戒心 (*jie xin* = alert~heart = wariness) towards over-eating. Monks observe 戒律 (*jie lu* = abstinence~rules), e.g. 齋戒 (*zhai jie* = fasting/vegetarian~abstinence), dare not 破戒 (*po jie* = break~abstinence-rules).

Moralists preach 戒驕 (*jie jiao* = restraint-from~arrogance), 戒貪 (*jie tan* = restraint-from~greed/corruption). Addicts try to 戒酒 (*jie jiu* = cut/quit~alcoholic-drinks), 戒賭 (*jie du* 3rd tone = quit~gambling), 戒毒 (*jie du* 2nd tone = quit~poisonous-drugs).

During 戒嚴 (*jie yan* = forbid~strict = curfew), police 戒備 (*jie bei* = alert~ready = remain on-guard). Heroes hunting down villains 大開殺戒 (*da kai sha jie* = big~break~killing~rule = kill with no restraint).