

# 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 sleep

夢

Pronunciation: *meng* (Putonghua, 4<sup>th</sup> tone), *mung* (Cantonese, 6<sup>th</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: dream

Falling asleep = 入夢 (*ru meng* = enter~dream): 好夢 (*hao meng* = good/sweet~dreams), 惡夢 (*e meng* = evil/bad~dreams = nightmares). 夢想 (*meng xiang* = dream~think) = fancies: 發財夢 (*fa cai meng* = raise/get~wealth~dream), 選美夢 (*xuan mei meng* = select~beauty~dream = winning beauty contest). 做白日夢 (*zuo bai ri meng* = make~white~day~dream) = daydreaming.

Somnambulists 夢遊 (*meng you* = dream~tour = sleepwalk). Young men 夢遺 (*meng yi* = dream~spermatorrhea = ejaculate sperms in sleep). 同床異夢 (*tong chuang yi meng* = share~bed~different~dreams) describes couples having different aspirations/secret.

The legend 黃粱夢 (*huang liang meng* = yellow~millet~dream) says a man married, had children, became rich/powerful all in a short dream while millet was cooked for dinner.