

# 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 jurisdiction

罪

Pronunciation: *zui* (Putonghua, 4<sup>th</sup> tone), *juí* (Cantonese, 6<sup>th</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: sin, crime, offence

罪 = sin/crime. 法治 (*fa zhi* = law~rule = rule of law) forbids/punishes 罪行 (*zui xing* = crime~behaviour/acts = crimes).

犯罪 (*fan zui* = violate~law) = commit crime. 罪犯 (*zui fan* = crime~committer = law-offenders) are charged for 罪名 (*zui ming* = crime~name = offences), e.g. 貪污罪 (*tan wu zui* = greed~dirt~crime = corruption). They 認罪 (*ren zui* = admit~crime = plead guilty) or 不認罪 (*bu ren zui* = no~admit~crime = plead not guilty). If 定罪 (*ding zui* = confirmed~crime = found guilty), they receive 刑罰 (*xing fa* = sentence~punishment = sentence).

Sodom and Gomorrah are 罪惡之城 (*zui e zhi cheng* = sins~vices~'s~cities). 罪人 (*zui ren* = sin~person = sinners) go to Hell.

by Diana Yue