

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 friendship

助

Pronunciation: *zhu* (Putonghua, 4th tone), *joh* (Cantonese 6th tone)
Basic meaning: help

助 = 幫助 (*bang zhu* = aid-help) = 幫忙 (*bang mang* = aid-busy). 助手 (*zhu shou* = help~hand) means assistant. 助理 (*zhu li* = help-handle) means “assistant” in a job title, e.g. 助理秘書 (*zhu li mi shu* = assistant secretary). 自助餐 (*zi zhu can* = self~help~feast) means a buffet.

助戰 (*zhu zhan* = help~battle) means helping one side to fight, 助威 (*zhu wei* = help~power) means championing it by waving/shouting. 援助 (*yuan zhu* = aid-help) means monetary/tangible help, e.g. 經濟援助 (*jing ji yuan zhu* = economic aid).

拔苗助長 (*ba miao zhu zhang* = pull~young~shoot~help~grow) means promoting a person or expanding a plan prematurely, foolishly believing good results will ensue.

by Diana Yue