

# 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 thunderstorms



Pronunciation: *yu* (Putonghua, 3<sup>rd</sup> tone), *yue* (Cantonese 5<sup>th</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: rain

雨天 (*yu tian* = rain~sky/day) means rainy day. 晴天 (*qing tian* = sunny~sky/day) means sunny day.

In 雨季 (*yu ji* = rain~season), when the sky 下大雨 (*xia da yu* = fall~big~rain = rains heavily), people wear 雨衣 (*yu yi* = rain~coats), 雨鞋 (*yu xie* = rain~shoes), take 雨傘 (*yu shan* = umbrellas). 雷雨 (*lei yu* = thunder~rain) = rain with thunders, 微雨 (*wei yu* = tiny~rain) = drizzle.

降雨量 (*jiang yu liang* = descend~rain~amount) = precipitation volume. Farmers pray for 風調雨順 (wind~harmonious~rain~smooth-going = smooth weather all year). 風風雨雨 (*feng feng yu yu* = wind~wind~rain~rain) means hurting rumours/troubles. 風雨同舟 (*feng yu tong zhou* = wind~rain~same~boat) means fending hardships together.

by Diana Yue