

# 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 summer

熱

Pronunciation: *re* (Putonghua, 4<sup>th</sup> tone), *yit* (Cantonese 6<sup>th</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: hot, heat

炎熱 (*yan re* = fiery-hot) describes climate/weather. 熱帶 (*re dai* = hot~belt) means equator, 亞熱帶 (*ya re dai* = sub-hot-belt) means the sub-tropics.

熱鬧 (*re nao* = hot-noisy) means full of people/noise/fun. 熱愛 (*re ai* = hot~like/love) means loving something dearly. 熱戀 (*re lian* = hot~love) means madly loving someone. 狂熱 (*kuang re* = mad-hot) means craze/fanaticism.

熱門 (*re men* = hot-door) means a horse/competitor sure to win therefore carrying heavy stakes. 冷門 (*leng men* = cold-door) means the opposite. 熱辣辣 (*re la la* = hot~spicy-hot~spicy-hot) describes temperature-hot or spicy-hot food, sexy girls, hot topics, scorching criticism. 打得火熱 (*da de huo re* = hit/clash~so~fiery-hot) describes a man and a woman in a hot relationship.

by Diana Yue