

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

假

Pronunciation: *jia* (Putonghua, 4th tone), *ga* (Cantonese 3rd tone)
Basic meaning: vacation, leave

Summer holidays are 暑假 (*shu jia* = heat-leave). When schools 放暑假 (*fang shu jia* = release-heat-leave = are on summer vacation), teachers can 請假 (*qing jia* = invite-leave) = 告假 (*gao jia* = report-leave) = take vacation/leave.

Employees have 有薪假期 (*you xin jia qi* = have-salary-leave-period = paid leave): 病假 (*bing jia* = sick-leave), 年假 (*nian jia* = year-leave = annual leave), 產假 (*chan jia* = produce-leave = maternity leave). 銷假 (*xiao jia* = end-leave) means reporting duty after leave.

Public holidays are 公眾假期 (*gong zong jia qi* = public-masses-leave-period). Bank holidays are 銀行假期 (*yin hang jia qi* = silver/money-institution-leave-period), Golden Week is 黃金週 (*huang jin zhou* = yellow-gold-week).

by Diana Yue