

# 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 museums

# 藏

Pronunciation: *cang* (Putonghua, 2<sup>nd</sup> tone), *chong* (Cantonese 4<sup>th</sup> tone)

Basic meaning: gather, collect, keep, hide

藏 = 收藏 (*shou cang* = gather-keep) = collect, collectors are 收藏家 (*shou cang jia* = gather-keep-master). 藏品 (*cang pin* = keep-object) = collection. 寶藏 (*bao cang* = treasure-collection) = treasure. 珍藏郵票 (*zhen cang you piao* = precious-collection-postage-stamps) = philatelic collection. 拍賣行 (*pai mai hang* = hit/bang-sell-company) = auction house.

家藏 (*jia cang* = family-keep) = family heirloom. 館藏 (*guan cang* = house-collection) = museum collection. 御藏 (*yu cang* = emperor-collection) = palace/royal collection. An objet d'art's provenance is its 來源 (*lai yuan* = come-source = origin) and 收藏史 (*shou cang shi* = collection-history/record).

深藏不露 (*shen cang bu lu* = deep-hide-no-expose) describes someone who does not reveal his likes/dislikes/views/knowledge.

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