

# 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 auto-racing

# 速

Pronunciation: *su* (Putonghua, 4<sup>th</sup> tone), *chuk* (Cantonese, 1<sup>st</sup> tone)  
Basic meaning: speed, fast, quick

快速 (*kuai su* = fast~speed) = fast. 光速 (*guang su* = light~speed) means 速度 (*su du* = fast~degree = speed) of light. DHL/FedEx do 速遞 (*su di* = fast-pass-on = express delivery).

時速 (*shi su* = hour~speed) = speed k/mph On highways, cars enter 快線 (*kuai xian* = fast-line = fast lane) to 超車 (*chao che* = exceed~car = overtake other cars), cops watch out for 超速 (*chao su* = exceed speed = speeding).

Smart generals 速戰速決 (*su zhan su jue* = quick~battle~quick~settle/done = quickly defeat enemy). Students of 速成班 (*su cheng ban* = fast~complete/succeed~class = crash courses) often 欲速不達 (*yu su bu da* = want~quick~no~arrive = no patience, no gain).

by Diana Yue