

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 housing markets

價

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

Commodities have 價錢 (*jia qian* = price~money = marked price), 市價 (*shi jia* = market~price). Sellers and buyers 討價還價 (*tao jia huan jia* = ask~price~return~price = haggle).

Recession makes companies' 股價 (*gu jia* = stock~prices) and 市場指數 (*shi chang zhi shu* = market~place~point~number = market index) plunge. Stores launch 大減價 (*da jian jia* = big~reduce~price = big sales). Speculators buy houses at 拍賣價 (*pai mai jia* = bang~sell~price = auction price).

Frugal people appreciate 價廉物美 (*jia lian wu mei* = price~cheap~object~beautiful/good) products. Depending on your 價值觀 (*jia zhi guan* = price~worth~view = opinion on values), 無價之寶 (*wu jia zhi bao* = no~price~'s~treasure) can mean priceless gems/rarities or health/love.

by Diana Yue