

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 autumn

涼

Pronunciation: *liang* (Putonghua, 2nd tone), *leung* (Cantonese, 4th tone)
Basic meaning: cool, coolness

秋涼 (*qiu liang* = autumn-cool) = cool autumn weather. 涼風 (*liang feng* = cool-winds/breezes) bring 涼意 (*liang yi* = cool-idea/feeling). 乘涼 (*cheng liang* = ride-cool = strolling/staying in cool/shady open places), 沖涼 (Cantonese *chung leung* = Putonghua *chong liang* = splash-cool = taking shower/bath) make us 涼快 (*liang kuai* = cool-pleasant).

涼拌 (*liang ban* = cool-mix-ingredients) are cold dishes. Cantonese 涼茶 (*leung cha* = Putonghua *liang cha* = cool-tea) is strong medicinal herbs tea that clears toxic body-heat. Foods of 寒涼 (*han liang* = cold-cool) nature, e.g. crabs, should be eaten sparingly.

Ungrateful/heartless people are 涼薄 (*liang bo* = cool-thin/harsh), 涼血 (*liang xue* = cool-blooded). Their downfall makes us 心涼 (*xin liang* = heart-cool = feel nice/vindicated).

by Diana Yue