

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 hiking

志

Pronunciation: *zhi* (Putonghua, 4th tone), *ji* (Cantonese, 3rd tone)
Basic meaning: will, determination

意志 (*yi zhi* = idea-determination) = will. 志向 (*zhi xiang* = will-direction) = aim. Athletes need 意志力 (*yi zhi li* = idea-determination-power = will-power).

Aspiring youths 立志 (*li zhi* = erect/establish-aim = decide/vow) to fulfill 志願 (*zhi yuan* = aim-wish = resolution) of becoming soldier/athlete/artist etc., believe 有志者事竟成 (*you zhi zhe shi jing cheng* = has-will-person-acts-eventually-succeed = when there's a will there's a way). 少年得志 (*shao nian de zhi* = young-years-obtain-aim) describes young people already enjoying fame/success.

Converts 決志 (*jue zhi* = determine-aim = confirm faith). Martyrs 以死明志 (*yi si ming zhi* = by-dying-clearly-show-resolution). China sent 志願軍 (*zhi yuan jun* = aim-willing-army = volunteer army) to the Korean War.