

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 drugs

迷

Pronunciation: *mi* (Putonghua, 2nd tone), *mai* (Cantonese, 4th tone)

Basic meaning: lose sight of, confuse, infatuate

迷 = lose sight/focus/aim: 迷糊 (*mi hu* = confuse-gruel = sight/mind blurred), 迷惘 (*mi wang* = confused~dispirited), 迷失 (*mi shi* = lose direction/aim). We 迷路 (*mi lu* = lose~path/way) in 迷宮 (*mi gong* = confuse~palace = maze). Beautiful women are 迷人 (*mi ren* = cast-spell/infatuate~people = charming/captivating).

迷藥 (*mi yao* = blur/faint~drug) = *dope*. 幻覺 (*huan jue* = hallucination~sense) = hallucinations. Hallucinogens are 致幻劑 (*zhi huan ji* = cause~hallucination~dose) = 迷幻藥 (*mi huan yao* = confuse~hallucination~drugs = psychedelic drugs). Pop-art uses 迷彩 (*mi cai* = confuse~multi-color = psychedelic colors).

迷信 (*mi xin* = confuse~believe) means superstition/superstitious. 歌迷 (*ge mi* = song~infatuated = music-fans), 影迷 (*ying mi* = electric-shadow/movie~infatuated = movie-fans) worship idols.

by Diana Yue