

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

力

Pronunciation: *li* (Putonghua, 4th tone), *lik* (Cantonese, 6th tone)
Basic meaning: strength, force, power, might

力氣 (*li qi* = strength~air/energy) = physical strength. 大力士 (*da li shi* = big~strength~men, e.g. Samson) lift weights. Tennis-players train 體力 (*ti li* = body~strength), 腕力 (*wan li* = wrist~strength), jump/hit with 力度 (*li du* = strength~degree = force).

水力 (*shui li* = water~power), 風力 (*feng li* = wind~power) generate 電力 (*dian li* = electric~power). 人力資源 (*ren li zi yuan* = man~power~capital~source) = manpower resources.

Politicians cultivate 權力 (*quan li* = right~power = power). Radicals 力爭 (*li zheng* = bravely/persistently~fight for) social justice. Stupid people use 蠻力 (*man li* = brute~force). Wise people 借力打力 (*jie li da li* = borrow~force~hit~force = re-direct force of enemy's blow to hit back at enemy).

by Diana Yue