

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 elections

黨

Pronunciation: *dang* (Putonghua, 3rd tone), *dong* (Cantonese 2nd tone)
Basic meaning: gang, party

黨 means gang: 童黨 (*tong tong* = child) means teenage gangs. 黑手黨 (*hei shou dang* = black~hand~gang) means the Mafia. 拆白黨 (*chai bai dang* = undo~white~gang = cheat~gang) means con-men.

黨 also means party: 民主黨 (*min zhu dang* = people~master~party) = Democratic Party. 共和黨 (*gong he dang* = common~harmony~party = republic~party) = Republican Party.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is 中國共產黨 (*zhong guo gong chan dang* = Middle~Kingdom~common~property~party), in short 中共 (*zhong gong*). 黨路線 (路線 *lu xian* = way/line) means party line. 黨員 (*dang yuan* = party members) are “同志” (*tong zhi* = same~will/aspiration = comrades). 清黨 (*qing dang* = party~cleanse) means a party purge.