

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 education

校

Pronunciation: *xiao* (Putonghua, 4th tone), *haau* (Cantonese 6th tone)
Basic meaning: school

A 學校 (*xue xiao* = school) has 校園 (*xiao yuan* = school~garden = campus), 校長 (*xiao zhang* = school~leader = principal), 校訓 (*xiao xun* = school~motto), 校歌 (*xiao ge* = school~song/anthem). 母校 (*mu xiao* = mother~school) = alma mater.

Oxford is 牛津 (*niu jin* = cow/ox~stream). Cambridge is 劍橋 (*jian qiao* = sword~bridge). Ivy League schools are 長春藤盟校 (*chang chun teng meng xiao* = forever~spring~climber~alliance~schools).

軍校 (*jun xiao* = army~school) = military academy. 黨校 (*dang xiao* = party school) taught CCP history and doctrine to cadres. During the Cultural Revolution, intellectuals were sent to farms called 五七幹校 (*wu qi gan xiao* = May 7 Cadre School) for labor and re-education.

by Diana Yue