

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 cartoons



Pronunciation: *tu* (Putonghua, 2nd tone), *t0* (Cantonese 4th tone)
Basic meaning: picture

圖形 (*tu xing* = picture~form) means graphic form. 圖案 (*tu an* = picture~plan/scheme) means visible patterns. 插圖 (*cha tu* = insert~picture = illustrations) are explained by 圖片說明 (*tu pian shuo ming* = picture~piece~say~clear = captions).

地圖 (*di tu* = land~pictures) = maps. A country's 版圖 (*ban tu* = area~picture) is its mapped territory. 海圖 (*hai tu* = sea~pictures) = nautical charts. 星圖 (*xing tu* = stars~picture) = star atlases.

藍圖 (*lan tu* = blue~picture) means blueprints/plans. We congratulate someone opening a new shop/company by saying “Wish you 大展鴻圖 (*da zhan hong tu* = big~unfurl~grand~plan)!” 圖窮匕現 (*tu qiong bi xian* = picture/scroll~exhausted/unfurled~dagger~appears) means when cover-up fails the deceiver's intention is exposed.

by Diana Yue