

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 museums

藝

Pronunciation: *yi* (Putonghua, 4th tone), *ngai* (Cantonese 6th tone)
Basic meaning: art, skill

藝 = skill: 廚藝 (*chu yi* = kitchen/cooking~skills). In ancient China, 六藝 (*liu yi* = six~skills) means mastery of 禮 (*li* = rites/ethics), 樂 (*yue* = music), 射 (*she* = archery), 御 (*yu* = chariot-riding), 書 (*shu* = calligraphy), 數 (*shu* = mathematics).

藝 also = 藝術 (*yi shu* = art~method) = fine arts, e.g. 畫藝 (*hua yi* = painting~art = art of painting). 文藝 (*wen yi* = writing~art) = literature and the arts. 藝術品 (*yi shu pin* = art~method~object) = objet d'rt. 第八藝術 (*di ba yi shu* = number~eight~art~method) = the eighth art = cinematography/film.

藝高人膽大 (*yi gao ren dan da* = art~high~person~gall-bladder/guts~great/big) describes a daring performance by a skilled master, e.g. an acrobat.

by Diana Yue