

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 guerrilla warfare

游

Pronunciation: *you* (Putonghua, 2nd tone), *yau* (Cantonese, 4th tone)
Basic meaning: move, roam, swim

游 = 遊 = swim/move freely: 游泳 (*you yong* = swim~swim), 遊戲 (*you xi* = roam~game = play games). Tourists visit 旅遊點 (*lu you dian* = travel-roam~point = tourist spots), 遊山玩水 (*you shan wan shui* = roam~mountain~play~water = tour/admire natural scenery). Jobless people 游蕩 (*you dang* = roam~drift = loiter).

Leisure-seekers 雲遊四海 (*yun you si hai* = cloud-travel~four~seas = roam the world). Alice 漫遊 (*man you* = aimless~travel = wanders) in Wonderland. Evasive speakers 遊花園 (*you hua yuan* = tour~flower~garden = beat about the bush). 仙遊 (*xian you* = fairy~travel/gone) is euphemistically saying someone “has died”.

打游擊 (*da you ji* = fight~move~attack) means guerrilla warfare or eating/working anywhere whenever one can.

by Diana Yue