

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 swindlers

騙

Pronunciation: *pian* (Putonghua, 4th tone), *pin* (Cantonese, 3rd tone)
Basic meaning: fool, cheat, swindle, con

騙 = 欺騙 (*qi pian* = deceive~swindle) means swindle/con: 騙財 (*pian cai* = cheat-and-take~money). Tricks/lies/fiction 騙人 (*pian ren* = fool~people). 愚人節 (*yu ren jie* = fool~person~festival) is April Fool's Day.

騙子 (*pian zi* = swindle~person = swindlers/con-men) 吹牛 (*cui niu* = blow~bull = bluff), 拍馬屁 (*pai ma pi* = pat-horse~fart/ass = are sycophants), organize 騙局 (*pian ju* = swindle~game/set-up). 天仙局 (*tian xian ju* = sky/heavenly~fairy~set-ups) use pretty girls as bait.

Everyone knows 十賭九騙 (*shi du jiu pian* = ten~gamble~nine~swindle = nine out of ten gamblers cheat), but 旁觀者清, 當局者迷 (*pang guan zhe qing, dang ju zhe mi* = aside~watch-er~clear, involve~game~er~engrossed/drugged/unclear = outsiders see clearly, those involved don't).