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 the Cold War

Pronunciation: *dou* (Putonghua, 4th tone), *dau* (Cantonese, 3rd tone)
Basic meaning: fight, compete, struggle against, persecute

Hong Kong expressions: Discount stores 鬥平 (*dou ping* = Cantonese “dau peng” = compete-cheap-price), smart guys 鬥叻 (*dou li* = Cantonese “dau lek” = compete-smart).