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 crime


欺世盜名 (qi shi dao ming = deceive-world-steal-name/reputation) describes glorified cheats/hypocrites. 掩耳盗鈴 (yan er dao ling = cover-ears-steal-bell) means committing glaring offences and foolishly believing that nobody has noticed.

by Diana Yue