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 management

理 Pronunciation: li (Putonghua, 3rd tone), lei (Cantonese, 5th tone)
Basic meaning: regard, attend, handle, arrange, manage, treat, tackle

Verb 理 means putting things in order. Housewives 理家 (li jia = manage-home = keep house).
Barbers hairstylists 理髮 (li fa = handle/treat-hair = cut/dress hair). Traffic police 管理交通 (guan li jiao tong = control-manage-cross-through = oversee/direct traffic).
不 理 (bu li = no-regard/attend) means not acknowledging someone/something's presence. 不 理障礙 (bu li zhang ai = no-regard-block-obstacle) means going ahead despite obstacles. 愛理不理 (ai li bu li = love/like-to-attend-not-attend) describes girl's half-keen, half-rejecting attitude to boy.