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 MTR


車票 (che piao = train/bus-tickets), 船票 (chuan piao = boat-tickets), 戲票 (xi piao = drama/opera/movie-tickets), 足球票 (zu qiu piao = foot-ball-tickets) are called 飛 (fei, literally “fly”) in Hong Kong.

For big concerts/matches we 訂票 (ding piao = advance-book-ticket) because 黃牛 (huang niu, literally “yellow cow” = ticket touts) may 炒飛 (chao fei, literally “stir-fry-tickets” = jag up 票價 piao jia = ticket-prices).

by Diana Yue