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 Middle East

東

Pronunciation: dong (Putonghua, 1st tone), dung (Cantonese, 1st tone)  
Basic meaning: east (also see Character Builder 9 April 2008)

西方國家 (xi fang guo jia = west-side-state-home = western countries) call regions east of them 東方 (dong fang = east-side = the East/Orient): 遠東 (yuan dong = the Far East), 中東 (zhong dong = the Middle East).


波斯灣 (bo si wan = “Persia”-transliterated-bay = Persian Gulf) states are rich in 石油 (shi you = rock-oil = petroleum).

by Diana Yue