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 hiking

越 (yue)

Pronunciation: yue (Putonghua, 4th tone), yuet (Cantonese, 6th tone)
Basic meaning: cross, pass, overtake

越 = 越過 (yue guo = pass-over). Athletes giving 卓越 (zhuo yue = outstanding.excels = excellent) performance may 超越 (chao yue = go-beyond-pass = surpass) past records. Aggressive executives 越過上級 (yue guo shang ji = pass-over-high-grade = go over boss's head) to get things done.

Seeing green-light, pedestrians 越過 (yue guo = crossing) streets/railway-lines. Runners in 越野賽 (yue ye sai = cross-country-race) 翻山越嶺 (fan shan yue ling = turn-over-hills-cross-over-ranges). Race-car champion 駛越 (shi yue = drives-past) final post to win. Birds easily 飛越 (fei yue = fly-over) rooftops/cities. 越洋 (yue yang = cross-ocean) flights take long hours.

Jews celebrate 逾越節 (Yu Yue Jie = over-cross-festival = Feast of the Passover) in March-April.

by Diana Yue