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 museums

展 = 展览 (zhan lan = unfurl/show-look = exhibitions) are held in 展览厅 (zhan lan ting = exhibition-room/hall = showrooms). 展品 (zhan pin = show-objects = exhibits) are explained in 說明書 (shuo ming shu = say-clear-books = show guides).

博物館 (bo wu guan = broad-objects-house) means museums. 畫廊 (hua lang = paintings-corridors) means art galleries. 個展 (ge zhan = one-show), group exhibitions are 聯展 (lian zhan = unite-show). 環球展出 (huan qiu zhan chu = circle-ball/globe-exhibit-out) means exhibition going on world tour.

珠寶展覽 (zhu bao zhan lan = pearl-treasure-exhibition) = jewelry show. 威尼斯雙年展 (wei ni si shuang nian zhan = Venice-transliterated-pair/two-year-exhibition) is the Venice Biennale.

by Diana Yue