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 auto-racing

路 Pronunciation: lu (Putonghua, 4th tone), lo (Cantonese, 6th tone) Basic meaning: road

賽車道 (sai che dao = race-car-roads = race circuits) have 直路 (zhi lu = straight-road), 彎角 (wan jiao = bends-corners), 坡度 (po du = slope-degree = gradients), smooth/rough 路面 (lu mian = road-surfaces).

In 越野賽 (yue ye sai = across-countryside-racing = cross country rallies) cars go on 泥路 (ni lu = mud/dirt-roads), cross 崎嶇地貌 (qi qu di mao = hilly-uneven-land-shape/features = hilly/rough terrain).

Cars 加速 (jia su = increase-speed), 減速 (jian su = reduce-speed), 超前 (chao qian = over-forward = overtake) each other. In 末段 (mo duan = last-section = the last section/lap), winner 領先 (ling xian = lead-before = leads), dashes to 終點 (zhong dian = final-dot = finishing point).

by Diana Yue