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 zis together to form terms, phrases and sentences.

This week: Words about guerrilla warfare


Leisure-seekers 雲遊四海 (yun you si hai = cloud-travel-four-seas = roam the world). Alice 漫游 (man you = aimless-travel = wanders) in Wonderland. Evasive speakers 遊花園 (you hua yuan = tour-flower-garden = beat about the bush). 仙遊 (xian you = fairy-travel/gone) is euphemistically saying someone “has died”.

打游擊 (da you ji = fight-move-attack) means guerrilla warfare or eating/working anywhere whenever one can.

by Diana Yue