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 computers

顯 = 顯現 (xian xian) = appear. 明顯 (ming xian = bright/clear-appear) means obvious. 顯像 (xian xiang = show-image) means image-display.

Computers use visual display units (顯示器 xian shi qi = appear-show-machines = 螢幕 ying mo = fire-fly/fluorescence-screen) to show 字 (zi = words), 圖 (tu = pictures), 影像 (ying xiang = shadow-likeness = images). LCD (liquid crystal display) is 液晶顯像 (yi jing xian xiang = liquid-crystal-show-image).

Using 滑鼠 (hua shu = slip-mouse = mouse) to move 游標 (you biao = swim/move-mark = cursor), we click on 圖標 (tu biao = picture-mark = icons) to access 軟件 (ruan jian = soft-piece = softwares), 檔案 (dang an = cabinet-record = files).

by Diana Yue