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 animal symbolism

狗 (gou = dog) symbolizes servile/cheap/base/inferior character. 畫虎不成反類犬 (hua hu bu cheng fan lei quan = draw-tiger-un-successful-however-resemble-dog) means launching grand plans but results are no where near the aim.

狗 means no good. Ridiculous arguments are 狗屁不通 (gou pi bu tong = dog-fart-not-reasonable). “Son-of-a-bitch!” is “狗娘養的!” (gou niang yang de = dog-mother-born-raised).

 Hunters use 獵犬 (lie quan = hunting-hounds).
 Politicians use 走狗 (zou gou = running-dog = lackeys).  狡兔死，走狗烹 (jiao tu si, zou gou peng = tricky-hare-dead-[so]-running-dog-cooked) is a cruel truth: abettors no longer useful are destroyed/eliminated. 狗肉 (gou rou = dog-meat) is called 香肉 (xiang rou = fragrant-meat — smells/tastes delicious!)

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