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 dressmaking

結 (radical 繃 = 絲 si = silk)
Pronunciation: jie (Putonghua, 2nd tone), git (Cantonese, 3rd tone)
Basic meaning: tie, knot, end, gel, form

結 means knot/ending/form. Sewing finishes with打結 (da jie = hit-knot = tying knots). 解開死結 (jie kai si jie = untie-open-dead-knot) means break up a deadlocked situation. 結束 (jie shu = tie-knot-bind) means end. 結業 (jie ye = end-work) means terminate business or finish schooling. 結論 (jie lun = end-treatise) means conclusion.


by Diana Yue