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 money

元 (yuan, fundamental = 圓 yuan, round) is unit of many currencies: RMB, 港元 (Gang yuan = Hongkong-dollar/HKD), 日元 (Ri yuan = Japanese-dollar = yen), 韓圓 (Han yuan = 韓圓 Han huan = Korean-round/dollar = won), 美元 (Mei yuan = US-dollar/USD), 歐羅 (Ou luo = “Euro”-transliterated = 歐元 European-dollar). 銀圓 (yin yuan = silver-round/dollar) are silver coins.

元高 (yuan gao = dollar-high), 元低 (yuan di = dollar-low) means USD’s fluctuation. 百萬富翁 (bai wan fu weng = hundred-ten-thousand-rich-old-man = millionaire)’s worth is highest in 英镑 (Ying bang = English/British-pound).

千元大鈔 (qian yuan da chao = thousand-dollar-big-banknote = $1000 note/bill) can buy many items in 十元店 (shi yuan dian = ten-dollar-stores).

by Diana Yue