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 autumn


落霞 (luo xia = sunset-colored-clouds) accompany 落日 (luo ri = fall-sun = setting sun). Wishes sometimes 落空 (luo kong = fall-empty = evaporate). Losers 淪落 (lun luo = sink-fall = sink low in life).

In autumn we watch 落葉 (luo ye = fallen-leaves), 落花 (luo hua = fallen-flowers), feel 失落 (shi luo = lost-fallen = listless/low). 瓜熟蒂落 (gua shou di luo = squash/melon-ripen-tip-of-stalk-fall) describes mature pregnancy and child-birth.

Pronunciation: lou (Putonghua, 4th tone), lok (Cantonese, 6th tone)
Basic meaning: drop, fall

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