

Character Builder

您好嗎？交

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 friendship

Pronunciation: *jiao* (Putonghua, 1st tone), *gaau* (Cantonese 1^{2t} tone)
Basic meaning: meet, cross, convey, intercourse, communicate, befriend

交通 (*jiao tong* = cross-through) = transportation/traffic. 交流 (*jiao liu* = cross-flow) = exchanging ideas. 性交 (*xing jiao* = sex-cross) is sexual intercourse.

Businessmen make deals (交易 *jiao yi* = convey-exchange) and close deals (成交 *cheng jiao* = complete-transactions). Enemies/rivals 交手 (*jiao shou* = exchange-hands) = fight/compete. Friends 交往 (*jiao wang* = meet-go) = mix/interact. 交際手腕 (*jiao ji shou wan* = meet-communicate-hand-wrist) means socializing skills.

交友 (*jiao you* = meet-friends) = making friends: 深交 (*shen jiao* = deep-friend = deep friendship), 忘年交 (*wang nian jiao* = forget-year/age-friend = a much older/younger friend), 手帕交 (*shou pa jiao* = handkerchief-friend = women's intimate girlfriends).

by Diana Yue