

Character Builder 您好嗎？

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

敵

Pronunciation: *di* (Putonghua, 2nd tone), *dik* (Cantonese 6th tone)
Basic meaning: enemy

敵 = 敵人 (*di ren*) = enemy/opponent. Hostile is 敵視 (*di shi* = enemy~look), hostility is 敵意 (*di yi* = enemy~feeling). 敵對 (*di dui* = enemy~facing) = opposing, 敵軍 (*di jun*) = enemy troops. 天敵 (*tian di* = sky/nature~enemy) means natural predator.

棋逢敵手 (*qi feng di shou* = chess~meet~enemy~hand) means meeting your match. 輕敵 (*qing di* = light/belittle~enemy) means under-rating your opponent.

Sixteen-word motto of PLA guerillas: 敵進我退，敵駐我擾，敵疲我打，敵退我追 (*di jin wo tui, di zhu wo you, di pi wo da, di tui wo zui* = “Enemy advances, we retreat. Enemy camps, we harass. Enemy tires, we attack. Enemy retreats, we pursue”).

by Diana Yue