

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 museums



Pronunciation: *gu* (Putonghua, 3rd tone), *goo* (Cantonese 2nd tone)
Basic meaning: ancient, antique

古 = ancient: 古人 (*gu ren* = ancient-people), 古代 (*gu dai* = ancient-epoch/era = ancient times), 古物 (*gu wu* = ancient-objects). However, 古老 (*gu lao* = ancient-old) just means old-fashioned, 古怪 (*gu guai* = ancient-strange) means odd.

古典 (*gu dian* = ancient-classic) describes classical scholarship/art. 古董 (*gu dong* = ancient-thing) = 古玩 (*gu wan* = ancient-play) = antiques/curios: 古玉 (*gu yu* = ancient-jade), 古錢 (*gu qian* = ancient-coins), 古琴 (*gu qin* = ancient-qin/Chinese-lute). 古城 (*gu cheng* = ancient-city), 古墓 (*gu mu* = ancient-tomb), 古戰場 (*gu zhan chang* = ancient-battle-ground) are 古跡 (*gu ji* = ancient-sites).

博古通今 (*bo gu tong jin* = broad-ancient-know-today) means learned in both historical and modern topics.