**Kite**

**fēng zheng**

**Character information**
The word for kite is made up from two characters. The first means wind and the second means a stringed instrument. The character for wind has changed over time from a simple drawing.

**Stamp information**
- **Issued:** 2015
- **Value:** 1.20 ¥, yuan
- **Description:** from a set of 6 stamps which together form the shape of a fan and celebrate the Beginning of Spring in the 24 seasonal periods. This stamp has a kǎi qìng míng written on it which means clear and bright.

**Suggested activities:**
- Find out about the 24 seasonal periods.
- Make a kite.
- Fly a kite.

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**Dragon**

**lóng**

**Character information**
The character for dragon has changed over time from a simple picture.

**Stamp information**
- **Issued:** 1987
- **Value:** 8 分, fén
- **Description:** from a set of 4 stamps showing different kites.

**Suggested activities:**
- Learn a dragon dance.
- Make a dragon mask.

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**The Summer Palace**

**yì hé yuán**

**Character information**
Although translated as 'The Summer Palace', the Chinese meaning is the 'Garden of Preserving Harmony'. The character for garden is a phonogram. Phonogram characters have one part which links to the meaning and one part which links to the sound.

- 元 - yuan = the sound part
- 口 - enclosure = the meaning part
- 园 - together the character for garden

**Stamp information**
- **Issued:** 2008
- **Value:** 6 ¥, yuan
- **Description:** 'The Summer Palace' on a stamp in a miniature sheet.

**Suggested activities:**
- Find out about the history of 'The Summer Palace'.
- Compare the photo of the palace with the image on the stamp.

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**Chinese flag**

**zhōng guó guó qí**

**Character information**
- 中 - middle
- 国 - kingdom or country
- 中国 - middle kingdom which means China
- 国旗 - country flag

**Stamp information**
- **Issued:** 1950
- **Value:** 800 ¥ (Chinese dollars)
- **Description:** from a set of 5 stamps all showing the same picture but with different values celebrating the 1st anniversary of the People's Republic of China.

**Suggested activities:**
- Draw the Chinese flag.
- Find out about the history of the flag.
large seal characters
da zhuàn
大篆

Character information
The large seal characters are early pictograms and ideograms.
大
big
篆
seal

There are many examples of the seal characters in these activity cards. There are also other ancient characters from different times, for example: oracle bone script; bronze script; small seal characters etc.

Stamp information
Issued: 2003
Value: 80 分
Description: from a set of 2 stamps showing different ancient characters.

Suggested activities:
• Try writing these ancient characters:

brush painting
máo bǐ huà
毛笔画

Character information
Brushes are made from hair with bamboo handles. The character for brush is made up from the characters for bamboo and hair. The character show means painting.

竹
bamboo - written like this
毛
hair
笔
brush (also means pen and pencil)

Stamp information
Issued: 1997
Value: 50 分
Description: from a set of 6 stamps celebrating the centenary of the birth of Pan Tianshou a famous Chinese artist.

Suggested activities:
• Look at and compare different brush paintings.
• Create a picture in brush painting style.

golden pheasant
hóng fù jīn jī
红腹锦鸡

Character information
The literal translation for this bird describes it.
红
red
腹
belly
锦
bright
鸡
chicken

Stamp information
Issued: 2008
Value: 1.20 元
Description: from a set of 6 stamps showing different Chinese birds.

Suggested activities:
• Find out about the golden pheasant – their range, habitat and diet.
• Find out the Chinese characters for the other colours on the golden pheasant.

phoenix
fēng huáng
凤凰

Character information
Note that you have to look very closely at some Chinese characters because some of them look very similar. The first character looks very like the character for wind but it is different.

凤
fēng phoenix
风
fēng wind

Stamp information
Issued: 1987
Value: 30 分
Description: from a set of 4 stamps showing different kites.

Suggested activities:
• Find out about the legend of the phoenix.
• Make your own imaginary animal.
plane

Character information
The word for plane is made up from two characters. The first means fly and the second means a machine.

飛
fly

機
machine

The original character for fly is a simple picture of a crane flying with its feathers spread out.

Stamp information
Issued: 1996
Value: 60分
Description: from a set of 4 stamps celebrating economic growth in Hong Kong.

Suggested activities:
• Find out how long it takes to fly to Beijing.
• Find out the time difference between UK and China.

printing

Character information
The word for printing is made up from two characters. The first means to print and the second means to brush or to paint. The character for ‘to print’ has not changed very much over time.

印

Stamp information
Issued: 2005
Value: 2.405 Hong Kong dollars
Description: from a set of 4 stamps on Chinese inventions. The other stamps show paper making, gunpowder and an early compass.

Suggested activities:
• Make your own paper.
• Using rubber stamps or block printing create a bookmark or card.

giant panda

大 熊 猫
dà xióng māo

Character information
The literal translation is big bear cat.

大
big – a man 人, standing with outstretched arms

熊
bear – the original character may have been a drawing of a bear but the modern character includes characters meaning a body with dagger like claws 旨 along with the fire character 火 which links to the sound.

猫
cat – a phonogram character. Phonogram characters have one part which links to the meaning and one part which links to the sound animal 王 and mão 猫

Stamp information
Issued: 1983
Value: 8分
Description: from a set of 3 stamps which are believed to be the first stamps with giant pandas on them.

Suggested activities:
• Find out about the giant panda – their range, habitat, diet and young.

compass

指 南 针
zhǐ nán zhēn

Character information
The word for compass is made up from three characters. The first means finger and also to point at, the second means south and the third means needle. The literal translation of compass is ‘to point at the south with a needle’.

指
finger – also means ‘to point at’

南
south

针
needle

Stamp information
Issued: 2005
Value: 1.405 Hong Kong dollars
Description: from a set of 4 stamps on Chinese inventions. The other stamps show printing, paper making and gunpowder.

Suggested activities:
• Find out how to use a compass and map to navigate.
Mount Gongga

Character information
The character for mountain has changed over time from a simple picture of a mountain.

Stamp information
Issued: 1965
Value: 8 fén
Description: from a set of 5 stamps celebrating Chinese mountaineering achievements. Mount Gongga is the highest mountain in the Sichuan province, China.

Suggested activities:
- Find out the height of Mount Gongga.
- Compare Mount Gongga to the highest mountain in the world - Mount Everest.

Terracotta army

Character information
The literal translation for the terracotta army is 'soldier and horse figures buried with the dead. The character for horse has changed over time from a simple picture of a horse.

Stamp information
Issued: 1990
Value: 8 fén
Description: from a set of 2 stamps celebrating the 10th anniversary of the discovery of bronze chariots in Emperor Qin Shi Huang's tomb.

Suggested activities:
- Find out about the Emperor Qin and the terracotta army.

Zodiac

Character information
The literal translation for zodiac is to resemble (be similar to) life.

Stamp information
Issued: 2005
Value: 80 fén
Description: Chinese zodiac animals

Suggested activities:
- Find out about the legend of the Chinese zodiac.
- Name all the Chinese zodiac animals.
- Find out which animal you resemble.

White river dolphin

Character information
River dolphin is also jīng tún - which is literally river dolphin but this species of white river dolphin is known as bái jī tún.
The character for white is similar to the character for sun but with a small mark showing the sun is just rising and the light is white.

Stamp information
Issued: 2000
Value: 2.60 yuan
Description: from a set of 10 stamps on Chinese wildlife

Suggested activities:
- Find out about the white river dolphin including how endangered it is.
- Find out the Chinese character for the colour black.
**Chinese chess**

*xiàng qí*

**Character information**
The literal translation for xiàngqi is elephant chess. There are various theories as to why it is called elephant chess:
- ancient pieces were made of ivory;
- the game is a battle between two armies and elephants were used in ancient wars;
- the word for a government minister and elephant in Chinese sound the same and it was a minister who first wrote about the game.

The character for elephant has changed over time from a simple picture.

**Stamp information**
- Issued: 1999
- Value: 3.105 Hong Kong dollars
- Description: from a set of 4 stamps to celebrate the International Year of the Elderly. This stamp shows an older person teaching someone how to play Chinese chess.

**Suggested activities:**
- Find out how to play Chinese chess.
- Play a game of Chinese chess.

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**water pollution**

*shuǐ wū rǎn*

**Character information**
The word for pollution is made up from two characters. The first means dirty and the second means contamination. The other character means water and has changed over time from a simple picture.

**Stamp information**
- Issued: 2002
- Value: 1.50 元 yuan
- Description: from a set of 8 stamps about environmental protection. The other stamps include images for forest protection, mineral resources protection, biodiversity protection, and air pollution.

**Suggested activities:**
- Find out about how water pollution is affecting the environment.
- Find out what you can do to help.

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**orchid**

*lán huā*

**Character information**
The word for orchid is made up from two characters. The first means orchid and the second means flower. The character for flower is a phonogram. Phonogram characters have one part which links to the meaning and one part which links to the sound.

- 化 hua – the sound part (鴨, hua means change)
- 花 huā - the meaning part (草, huā means grass or plant - the meaning part
- 花 huā - together the character for flower - huā

**Stamp information**
- Issued: 1988
- Value: 20分 fěn
- Description: from a set of 4 stamps showing different species of orchids.

**Suggested activities:**
- Find out how to care for an orchid plant.
- Make a paper orchid flower.

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**Confucius**

*Kǒng zǐ*

**Character information**
Kǒngzǐ is the Chinese name given to the famous philosopher Confucius. The character 子 zi is a very common character and appears in many other characters and words. It has the meaning child but is not the modern Chinese word for child. The same character 子 zi but with the neutral tone (no tone) 子 is often placed after some nouns (naming words) to complete the word.

- 子 zi has original meaning of child
- 子 zi placed after some nouns
- 子 zi child

**Stamp information**
- Issued: 2010
- Value: 3 元 yuan
- Description: from a set of 3 stamps showing the temple, mansion and cemetery of the Chinese philosopher Confucius.

**Suggested activities:**
- Find out about the Chinese philosopher Confucius.
- Look up some famous Confucius quotes.
Confucius Institute

孔子学院

Character information
Kǒng zi xué yuán is the Chinese name given to the famous philosopher Confucius. The last two characters mean an education institute. 学 means to learn. The following is a fun way to remember this character:

点赞 (zhān dian) means to like something.

Stamp information
Issued: 2012
Value: 3 元
Description: from a set of 2 stamps about the Confucius Institute. Confucius Institutes are all around the world to promote the Chinese language and culture.

Suggested activities:
- Find your nearest Confucius Institute.
- Find your nearest Confucius Classroom.

rock paintings

岩画

Character information
The literal translation is cliff paintings. The first character means cliff and is made up from the two characters meaning mountain and rock. The character 画 means painting.

山 (shān) means mountain.

石 (shí) means rock.

Stamp information
Issued: 1998
Value: 50 分
Description: from a set of 3 stamps showing rock paintings discovered at Helan Mountains.

Suggested activities:
- Find out about the Helan Mountains.
- Find out how old the rock paintings are.

bamboo

竹子

Character information
The character for bamboo has changed over time from a simple picture.

Stamp information
Issued: 1993
Value: 5 分
Description: bamboo stamp in a miniature sheet.

Suggested activities:
- Find out about the bamboo plant – how it grows and parts of the plant.
- Find out how much bamboo a giant panda eats in one day.

green peafowl

绿孔雀

Character information
The word for peafowl is made up from two characters 绿 and 孔雀. The first means opening and the second means a small bird so the full translation is 'a small bird’s tail that opens up'. The other character 绿 means green. There are two characters for bird in Chinese: 鸟 niǎo – meaning a bird with long tail feathers and 孔 kǒng – meaning a small bird with a short tail. 孔雀 is combined with the character for small to form the character 孔雀 meaning small bird.

Stamp information
Issued: 2004
Value: 6 分
Description: peacock and peahen on a stamp in a miniature sheet.

Suggested activities:
- Find out about the green peafowl – their range, habitat and diet.
- Make a colourful peacock tail.
Shanghai  

Character information
Shanghai is the largest city in China. It is on the east coast. Shanghai means on the sea.

Stamp information
Issued: 1996
Value: 100 分
Description: from a set of 6 stamps showing different pictures of Shanghai.

Suggested activities:
• Find out about the city of Shanghai.
• Find out the name of the capital city of China.

calligraphy  

Character information
The literal translation for calligraphy is book law or method.

Stamp information
Issued: 2000
Value: 8 Macau Pataca (currency of Macau, China)
Description: Chinese calligraphy on a stamp in a miniature sheet.

Suggested activities:
• Find out how to correctly hold a calligraphy brush and learn about stroke order.
• Write some Chinese characters with a brush and ink following the correct stroke order.

tiger  

Character information
The word for tiger is made up from two characters. The first means old and the second means tiger. The character for tiger has changed over time from a simple drawing.

Stamp information
Issued: 2004
Value: 80 分
Description: from a set of 2 stamps on the south China tiger.

Suggested activities:
• Find out how many species of tiger live in China.
• Find out about tigers – their range, habitat, diet and young.

cowrie  

Character information
The character for the cowrie shell has changed over time from a simple picture.

Stamp information
Issued: 1981
Value: 4 分
Description: from a set of 8 stamps on ancient Chinese coins.

Suggested activities:
• Find out the exchange rate for Chinese yuan to the British pound.
• Play a game of buying and selling with some shells.
**tea**

Character information
A fun way to remember the character for tea is to break it up into its three different parts:

草 or 草

to gather or collect

小 or 小

small

Gather the tea plant for a small cup of tea.

Stamp information
Issued: 1994
Value: 50分 fên
Description: from a set of 4 stamps showing Yixing unglazed teapots.

Suggested activities:
- Try some different Chinese teas.
- Look for different styles of Chinese teapots.

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**football**

Character information
The two characters that make up the word for football are foot and ball. The character for foot sort of looks like a man with a large foot. The original character for the foot may have been a drawing of the lower leg with a foot but it hasn’t changed much from the ancient seal script.

Stamp information
Issued: 1959
Value: 8分 fên
Description: from a set of 16 stamps celebrating the 1st National Games.

Suggested activities:
- Find out Chinese words for some other sports:
  - basketball
  - tennis
  - table tennis
  - badminton
  - rugby
  - volleyball

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**willow tree porcelain**

Character information
The willow pattern porcelain became really popular in the UK in the 18th century. The designs copied early Chinese paintings. The last two characters mean porcelain. The first means willow and the second character means tree. The character for tree is a phonogram. Phonogram characters have one part which links to the meaning and one part which links to the sound. The traditional character for tree is 女 which contains the sound part. However the character in simplified form is 木.

木 or 木

wood/tree – the meaning part

木 or 木

shu or shù

sound part

Stamp information
Issued: 2000
Value: 8 Macau Pataca (currency of Macau, China)
Description: a circular stamp in a miniature sheet on ceramics.

Suggested activities:
- Decorate a paper plate with a willow tree pattern.
- Find out about the story behind the willow tree porcelain.

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**Zheng He**

Character information
Zheng Hé 郑和 was born as Mǎ Hé 马和. He was captured as a slave but he worked hard and served the prince. He became a general and then an admiral with a large navy. He explored many countries. He served under three emperors and achieved many great things.

He also means ‘and’ or ‘together with’. Historically it also means ‘harmony’ which helps explain the character. The character is made up from two characters – mouth and grain. If the mouths are filled with grain then everything is in harmony.

粮 or 粮

grain

口 or 口

mouth

Stamp information
Issued: 1985
Value: 20分 fên
Description: from a set of 4 stamps celebrating the 580th anniversary of Zheng Hé’s first voyage to western seas.

Suggested activities:
- Find out about the famous admiral and explorer Zheng Hé.
China stamp game
China stamp game

Suggestions on how to use the information and activity cards:

1. Class or individual activity: Mix the cards and place face down. Pick one of the cards at random, read the information and do one or more of the suggested activities.

2. Class activity: deal a card out to all pupils (there are 33 cards in total). Each pupil reads their card and does one or more of the suggested activities. This is ideal for a homework project. Each pupil can share the information they learned with the rest of the class.

3. Class or group game: requires counters and dice. Lay out the cards face down on the floor in a game board style - see suggestion below. Place the start (diān) and finish (zhōng) cards at either end. You will need some items to use as large coloured counters. Roll a dice and move the number of places. Turn over the card when landed on. Read the information and do one or more of the suggested activities. Continue play until every card has been landed on or until time allows. Pass over cards that have already been turned over.

Chinese knot

zhōng guó jié

中国结

Character information
The Chinese knot is a good luck charm and the character is made up from the two characters meaning silk and lucky.

縷
silk
吉
lucky

Stamp information
Issued: 2005
Value: 80 fén
Description: a greeting stamp featuring the decorative Chinese knot.

Suggested activities:
- Learn how to make a simple Chinese knot.
- Find out about the history of the Chinese knot.