Trading Characters

Aim: To practice writing characters, with focus on radicals and phonetics
Level: Elementary or whenever students know enough characters to make it feasible (at least 100)
Time: 10-20
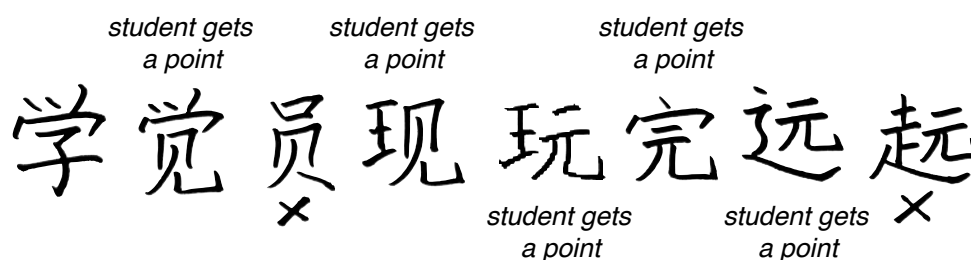**Materials:** Paper and pens or chalk and blackboard
Arrangement: Groups of 3 or more students

Description

A game of character writing where students take turns writing characters that share radicals or phonetics.

In Class

1 Students sit so that everyone can see the blackboard.

2 Either students or the teacher chooses an initial character (preferably a fairly complex character with multiple common elements, in other words, 一 would not be a great choice).

3 The first player writes another character that has a part (radical, phonetic, other) that occurs in the other character.

4 If the character is correct, the student gets a point.

5 The next student writes another character based on the new character. Gaining a point if correct.

6 For each new character, if necessary, the teacher judges whether the shared 'part' qualifies. (e.g. 冰 and 冷 work because the two dots are a radical, but would you allow 力 and 九 because they have a 撇 stroke?) If it doesn't, no point is awarded and play passes to the next student working from the previous character, not the new one.

7 Characters cannot be repeated.

8 If there is no possible character that can be made from the one in play, the teacher can pick a radical for the next student to work with.

9 If someone makes a mistake, the game pauses. If another student can correct the mistake, they gain a point.

10 The game continues until an appointed time. The player with the most points wins.

student gets a point   *student gets a point*   *student gets a point*

学 觉 员 现 玩 完 远 赻

student gets a point   *student gets a point*

Example
Variations

✓ To keep things from dragging, you can set a time limit for students to write a new character. If they fail, no points are awarded and the play passes to the next student.

Notes

The teacher should resist the urge to quickly supply the correct character when a student makes a mistake. Instead, they can simply indicate that something is wrong and allow other students a chance to correct. If students still can't do it, the teacher can supply a correction. Teachers need to find that tricky balance between letting students think and letting precious class time go to waste.