MANDARIN LEARNING MATERIALS

Designing from the learner’s side of the desk

I am a Mandarin learner myself. I build these decks for my own study and for a beginner learner at home, lesson by lesson alongside our Mandarin course. Being a language learner in Taiwan shapes how I design for my English students too: I know what it feels like when a slide gives you the answer before you have had a chance to think.

How every vocabulary set works

Slide 1: the word alone, in large characters, with no pinyin and no translation. The learner looks at the character and tries to recall it before getting any help.

Slide 2: pinyin and meaning, then three short sentences in characters only. The sentences use A1–A2 grammar and are things people really say in Taiwan: downloading a bus app, paying with LINE Pay, deciding to take the MRT.

Slide 3: the same three sentences with pinyin, as a check.

Why I hold pinyin back

If pinyin appears at first sight, learners end up reading pinyin, not Chinese. Holding it back by one slide keeps the eye on the characters, and the reveal gives instant feedback. It is the same principle I use in my English decks: try first, then check.

What surrounds the vocabulary

Each lesson ends with a recall quiz, an answer key for self-checking and a short slide that counts the words learned. Grammar decks follow the textbook rule by rule and show correct and incorrect word order side by side. For the beginner at home, I also built an HTML quiz game whose pinyin toggle is off by default.

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Lesson 1 · “Excuse Me, How Do You Get to Shida?” · vocabulary

23 words and phrases for asking and giving directions. Shown: the title slide and the three-slide sequence for xiàzài (to download).



WHY I DESIGNED IT THIS WAY

Directions are a newcomer’s first real need, so every example points to real places and tools in Taiwan: the Taiwan Tourist Shuttle app, LINE Pay, the Taichung city bus timetable, a night-market map. The same three-slide rhythm runs through all 23 words, so the learner’s attention goes to the language, not to a new layout.

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Lesson 1 · Recall quiz and answer key

23 quiz slides give an English cue and a sentence with a gap; the learner says the word, then checks the answer key.



WHY I DESIGNED IT THIS WAY

Recall is harder than recognition, and it is what makes words stick. Each quiz slide gives an English cue, a Taiwan-context sentence with a gap, and a pinyin hint at the bottom for when the learner is stuck. The answer key lists every word with its pinyin, so the learner can check without me. The last slide counts the words learned, because seeing “23 new words” is real motivation for a beginner.

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Lesson 2 · “Take the MRT Instead!” · vocabulary

34 words, each in the same three-slide sequence. Shown: háishì (or / had better) from first look to pinyin check, and the sentence slide for hǎohǎo de (properly, well).



WHY I DESIGNED IT THIS WAY

A new lesson gets a new color, here green, so the learner knows at once which lesson a slide belongs to. The example sentences recycle the lesson’s own situations, such as choosing between coffee and tea, deciding to take the MRT, or asking whether someone is free today or tomorrow, so vocabulary and the textbook dialogue reinforce each other.

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Lesson 2 · Grammar deck

43 slides on six grammar points: emphatic negation (yìdiǎn yě bù), suggestions with háishì…ba, state verb + yìdiǎn, AABB reduplication, polite negation with bú tài, and bù / biān for regions and sides.



WHY I DESIGNED IT THIS WAY

Each point opens with the pattern as the textbook states it, with pinyin and an English gloss. Correct and incorrect word order then appear side by side, so the most common mistake is visible before the learner makes it. Practice asks the learner to finish one speaker's line in a short dialogue, because beginners need to hear and use grammar in conversation, not only analyze it.

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Vocabulary set · Garbage and recycling

19 words for one of the most local routines of daily life in Taiwan: taking out the garbage, recycling and following the rules. Shown: lèsè (garbage) and the sentence slide for zěnmebàn (what now?).



WHY I DESIGNED IT THIS WAY

Garbage collection in Taiwan has its own vocabulary and its own rules, and every newcomer meets it in the first week. Words like dào (to take out), huíshōu (to recycle) and guīdìng (rule) come with sentences a learner can use that same evening. The set ends with zěnmebàn, the phrase you need when the garbage truck has already left.

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