TAIWAN’S FREE ONLINE MANDARIN LEARNING RESOURCES

BY EDUCATION DIVISION TECO IN AUSTRALIA

Do you want to learn Mandarin language? Difficult characters and pronunciation keeping you from improving? No worries. In Taiwan, there are many online Mandarin language resources open for global learners. All resources listed here are free and available to help you access high-quality, online Mandarin language lessons.

Online resources are not designed to replace the need for face-to-face language lessons. It is here to support anyone interested in studying in Taiwan. Lessons are designed for different levels of experience and approved by professionals to ensure the content is of high quality.

Adorable Taiwan - Intermediate Level
是誰在說話--可愛的台灣
This course uses four scenic locations in Taiwan as the main topics. Besides an emphasis on teaching vocabulary, grammar and text comprehension, each lesson will feature a non-human protagonist, retelling the past and present of each location. Starting from the north and heading south, each lesson combines the historical, cultural and modern faces of these landmarks. Provider: The National Taiwan University VIEW LESSON

Fall in Love with Mandarin
Learn everyday Chinese Mandarin and discover Taiwan culture in the process. This course will introduce you to the fundamentals of everyday speaking Mandarin, teaching you basic vocabulary for a range of daily situations. The course will also take you on a tour of Taiwanese culture, placing the Mandarin language in the context of the daily life of the island. Provider: The National Chiao Tung University VIEW LESSON

A selection of videos uploaded by the Taiwan Mandarin Educational Resources Centre to give easy access to global Mandarin learners exploring all possibilities to learn through Taiwan's enormous range of resources. Provider: Taiwan Mandarin Educational Resources Centre VIEW LESSON
This lesson focuses on practical conversations designed for 12 learning scenarios such as greetings, shopping, ordering meals, asking for help, etc. You may like to learn before your departure to Taiwan. Download APP Provider: Taiwan Mandarin Educational Resources Centre VIEW LESSON

FUN MANDARIN with WENWEN Laoshi
Wen Wen Laoshi came to Australia as a teaching assistant in 2014 under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Education. She enjoyed her time at Melrose High School and made lifelong friends with the school community. Ever since her return, she has been delivering Mandarin classes at the National Chung Hsing University. Now she is going high-tech, turns to Youtube to deliver lessons on practical phases, cultural exchanges with her foreign students, and cultural tourism. If you ever wonder how a Mandarin course is delivered at one of Taiwan’s 62 Mandarin language centres, it’s worthwhile to give it a go. VIEW LESSON

TaiwanLIFE is a lifelong learning platform providing MOOCs from various academic institutions. It is generally for domestic users. For international users, it is an eye-opening experience to browse through what Taiwan can offer in education. There is a dedicated category for language learners in which of course includes Mandarin language.

Podcast
A few podcasts selected for learners who are interested to familiarise themselves on the island’s way of living and news.

Mandarin in 300 Sentences
There are 10 themes designed to relate to Taiwan’s daily life, which will enable the learners to familiar themselves with useful phrases, and speak Mandarin naturally. Provider: The National Open University VIEW LESSON
MY MANDARIN LEARNING TIPS FROM BEGINNER TO TOCFL LEVEL 5

BY BEN FISHER 胡鬱
2021 MOE TAIWAN SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Learning Mandarin is a life-long pursuit. I have been studying Mandarin on-and-off since 2012, beginning with my very first university course, Chinese Introductory 1 at Monash University. Since then, I’ve studied mandarin in Australia, China and Taiwan. I first came to Taiwan after graduating from Monash in 2018, on a brief stopover to Beijing. I ended up staying for four months, and never went to Beijing as planned.

In 2019 I was fortunate enough to receive a Ministry of Education Huayu Enrichment Scholarship to take full-time Mandarin classes in Taipei, and this year, 2021, have been awarded the Taiwan Scholarship to pursue a Master of Chinese Literature at National Taiwan University. Taiwan is a great place to study Mandarin, for students of any level. Language schools are generally associated with universities, which offer their library services, clubs, social events, and often the opportunity to enroll in university courses for credits. Taiwanese people are incredibly friendly, and Taiwan’s open, multicultural society feels familiar as an Australian.

We all learn best at our own pace, and in our own ways. I tend towards a more traditional approach to language learning: getting immersed in the native environment, speaking as much as possible, and not relying too much on technology. That can be hard in a digital age, but it’s worth the effort. That said, some resources and strategies can be helpful to push you through to the next level.

For beginners, using flashcards will allow you to memorise and revise effectively, flashcard apps can help you keep track of your studying schedule. If you’re still in Australia - or stuck in lockdown - but want to try out the native language environment, virtual worlds such as Chinese Island, developed by the Chinese Studies Department at Monash University, can help you to do so.

For intermediate and advanced students, I found that using a Mandarin dictionary for native speakers helped me to start thinking in Mandarin, and understanding the language on its own terms, independent of my mother tongue. I use the MOE Online Mengdian Dictionary, as it is based on the Ministry of Education’s Guoyu Dictionary and is easy to navigate.

If you’re preparing for advanced exams such as the TOCFL Level 5-6, it’s best to get a grasp of your strengths and weaknesses. If you’re in Taiwan, register for the pre-test and see how you go. It’s relatively inexpensive and you sometimes get a souvenir for completing it! While preparing for the Level 5 exam, I knew that my listening comprehension was not up to scratch, so each day after class I would listen to Taiwanese public news for an hour or two, without looking at any visual material, and after a few months the results were clear.

My first professor always stressed that learning Mandarin shouldn’t be rushed, and it can’t be crammed. The first record in the Analects, written by the disciples of Confucius, says: “To learn and then practice time and again, isn’t that also a kind of joy?” (學而時習之，不亦說乎). Settling into your own learning pace, reflecting on your progress and balancing discipline with unbridled curiosity can be key in the long run.

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Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Australia collaborates with the Taiwanese Association of Canberra, Australia (TACA) Mandarin School to host two sets of language and cultural experience classes for students and adults in August and October.

The first term is set on the theme of Taiwan’s beloved food culture while the second term focuses on the way of everyday living. It’s open for Mandarin language learners age 16 and up at beginner and intermediate levels in Canberra.

One of the highlights of this course is the pre-commercial cultural materials acquired through collaboration with Taiwan’s young designers and Shang Hsin tea room in Dadaocheng.

As the oldest district in Taipei city known for gathering talents of local artisans, Dadaocheng remains an inspiration to young creators that many old fashion stores are keen to renew their products and services to be more approachable.

Beauty’s New Trick (美人新計) was originally created in 2019 an award winning Taiwan design for tea packaging. Young designers used anime/manga style to tell the story of Formosa tea. Yet it integrates a sense of modernity into Taiwan’s tea-drinking traditions with a twist to refashion the healing power of Chinese herbs.

Manga, the Japanese illustration style popularised by animations has seeped into the pop culture of Taiwanese youngsters over the last 5 decades. The use of animated characters as product mascots has been a growing trend, for instance, Taiwan’s historical city Tainan used manga icons - Xiaoman & Sway-Shin to take tourists sightseeing its historical landmarks and heritage sites.

Here in Canberra you will see that signature manga style applied to tea packaging. To combine the tea packaging and enjoyment of selected tea as a unique cultural and visual experience, participants will have the chance to taste the freshness of Taiwanese tea accompanying a demonstration of tea serving and etiquette.

Apart from tea tasting, 5 classes of term 1 will gradually introduce Taiwan’s food culture from traditional eateries to convenience store; recipes will be shared to learners to recreate authentic tastes at home. Participants will learn how to communicate in Mandarin on the Taiwanese food culture and everyday life through activities such as tea tasting, trying snacks, making flip books, tile coasters etc.

To conclude term 1 in September during the mid-autumn festival celebration, stories of the moon festival will be presented with a variety of cakes to enjoy which are custom baked by a Canberra based Taiwanese bakery.

For more information and register at the QR code or the website [link](#).

Photo credit: Islander Design Taiwan