

More Fun and Less Stress in Learning Mandarin!

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Striving to motivate students to communicate more confidently in Mandarin? Frustrated that you don't have enough time or space to oversee the speaking practice or oral testing? Worried about that some students are too shy to speak in front of others? Wishing that you could create a learning environment that engages the students while easing their stress? If you have any of the above concerns, then you may benefit from some of the following solutions—free, user/viewer friendly online resources that will make your teaching more interesting and students' learning more fun and less stressful!

1. Voki

What is Voki?



- A free service (you can pay for a Voki classroom for \$29.99 per year)
- Allowing the user to create personalized, speaking avatars, a digital representation of a person or being
- Fun and interesting for students to play with it and record their voices
- Adding own voice via phone, microphone, text-to-speech or uploading a file
- Ability to share recorded "Voki-videos" with others
- Easy to embed to blogs, web pages and social networking sites, or email
- A great tool for foreign languages learning or any curriculum area

What is good for classroom use?

- Students can use Voki to create a class introduction, record a message and use an avatar that resembles themselves or their personas.
- Students can connect and exchange Voki recordings with classmates, and even with students in other schools.
- Students can use Voki to speak "in character" for different role-play assignments.
- Students can use Voki as a "practice-run" for formal speaking tasks or tests.
- Students can write, read, revise, and speak to an audience or listen to others.
- Students can orally share their "writing pieces" or projects.

- Students can keep track of their progress (as part of their E-portfolio).
- Teachers can get shy students involved or to share comments with other students.
- Teachers can give task instructions in Voki to get students' attention, or record listening materials for pronunciation and comprehension exercises.
- Teachers can listen to students' recordings and keep their work from Voki at one place.

Want to give Voki a try? Please go to <http://www.voki.com>, watch the tutorial video, log in with your email address and password, and create your own avatar!

2. Vocaroo

Vocaroo



Vocaroo - The premier voice recording service.

Or upload?

What is Vocaroo?

- A free audio recording tool based online where students record messages, similar to Voki
- Allowing the user to record the voice, embed to blogs, web pages and social networking sites, or email recordings to the teacher or others
- Easy to record and save recordings onto your computer
- Easy to create an email folder to save all recordings but it lasts for only 1 or 2 months unless downloading it to your computer (Voki saves forever)
- No time limit to the recording (Voki has a one-minute recording limit)

What is good for classroom use?

- It can do basically all that Voki is able to do for speaking and listening tasks.
- It is easier for students to get to work, but not as fun as Voki.
- It is better for higher level students who can do longer speeches or other verbal practices.
- It also has the uploading function but cannot create avatars or recordings via phone, or text to speech.
- Teachers can provide comments right after listening to the recording.

Ready to try out? Please go to <http://www.vocaroo.com>, Click on the "Click to Record" button, click on "Allow" to give permission to use your computer's microphone, speak into the microphone and click on "Click to Stop" when you are done. Review your recording and redo if necessary. Click "save" and send the email.

3. <http://www.quizlet.com>: a free online site where teachers can create vocabulary practice for students. For example, the teacher can type all the new words from a lesson in characters and he/she can choose to show both pinyin and English meanings of the words. Then, the computer will automatically change the list into fun, challenging exercises (*speller and learn*), test, and games (*scatter and space race*) for students to practise and master the vocabulary.

Voki demo:

1. My version: text to speech:

<http://www.voki.com/php/viewmessage/?chsm=93b26e26b560183259de559981dde75c&mId=1752530>

2. Student version: a recording of their survey results about occupation choices:

<http://voki.com/pickup.php?scid=7992082&height=267&width=200> (Michelle's)

<http://voki.com/pickup.php?scid=7995681&height=267&width=200> (Carolyn's)

Vocaroo demo:

1. Oral presentation on a famous Chinese novel:

<http://vocaroo.com/i/s1R8ujlct6Ak>

2. A conversation on shopping:

<http://vocaroo.com/i/s1bpglYFLokQ> (buying stationery)

<http://vocaroo.com/i/s05kKtLqorVz> (buying TV)

Quizlet demo:

<http://quizlet.com/21193047/mandarin-10-lesson-17-vocab-practice-flash-cards/>