



of Zhuyin is that the learner must first memorise all of the characters that represent the Zhuyin alphabet.

Another thing to consider is that Pinyin-based learning materials are far more widely available than Zhuyin based materials. This means that you are more likely to find something that interests your child in Pinyin than in Zhuyin. Ultimately the decision on whether you learn in Pinyin or Zhuyin will most likely be the school's, not yours, but it is something to be aware of.

Whether it's Pinyin or Zhuyin, there may be times when your child could benefit from some extra support, information or simply having the language brought to life outside of the classroom.

Unlike my school days, when I had to rely on only a hardback dictionary and a grammar book to help my language learning, there are oodles and oodles of resources out there to bolster your child's Mandarin learning. No doubt your child's Chinese teachers will have their own favourite animated books, podcasts, apps, movies and Chinese "readers", or books for early-stage learners, to recommend. Here are some of our favourite resources:

Quizlet

This online learning tool works well both for students using Pinyin and those opting for Zhuyin.

Whether you like it or not, learning Mandarin requires the memorisation of lots of characters. It can be hard to do this alone. Quizlet is a mobile app that can aid in the process as it trains and tests students. Truly designed for the digital age, as well as digitally rendering paper predecessors such as flashcards and vocabulary lists, it is full of fun games and audio exercises that will blow the minds of anyone schooled more than a few years ago – for instance in "Gravity", definitions scroll vertically down the screen in the shape of asteroids. The user must type the term that goes with the definition before it reaches the bottom of the screen.

Quizlet has become a hugely popular resource – it now boasts more than 100 million user-generated sets of digital flashcards – that allows you to track your progress in learning just about any subject, from medical students learning anatomy and Spanish students learning verbs to, of course, Mandarin students getting to grips with dozens and dozens of characters.

www.quizlet.com

Pleco

Pleco is an English and Chinese dictionary application for iOS and Android devices and a tool any Mandarin student shouldn't be without. Pleco can work with Pinyin, Zhuyin, English words and handwriting. It has many sets of dictionaries, (from Oxford, Longman, FLTRP, Ricci etc), audio recordings from two different native speakers, and has flashcard functions and document readers that look up words in a document. Pleco is a free application with in-app purchases, additional functions and large dictionaries (English, French, German, Mandarin, Cantonese and classical Chinese).

www.pleco.com

Stroke Order

This website, created by the Ministry of Education in Taiwan, helps you learn how to write characters in the correct way. It's a learning programme to master the stroke order of frequently used Chinese characters and covers radicals, Zhuyin and Pinyin while also featuring teaching resources including the basic rules of stroke order.

stroke-order.learningweb.moe.edu.tw