

The Photocopiable Templates consist of the six sheets with “**blacked out**” areas on pages 14 – 19 of the VPC Book. You can either photocopy them onto transparency sheets OR print them by first downloading the file on at www.verypracticalchinese.com.

I came up with the idea of these templates when mulling over the idea of how to test myself while studying. Everyone is familiar with the ad-hoc scrap paper route, which while not always a bad way to go (in fact I advocate using two blank sheets of paper in the Flashcards/Pinyin Together Study Plan) is sometimes just a pain in the butt, as a devoted student ultimately finds him/herself manoeuvring scraps of paper over a text that sooner or later resemble the beginnings of an origami crane.

Each of the 6 templates fit over the dialogue page of the VPC book. You can use them in a variety of ways to enhance your study time, and while I’m sure clever you is able to figure out many ingenious uses for these templates on your own, here are a few of my ideas for your perusal:

Photocopiable Template A) Black out Pinyin

Black out the Pinyin while completing the “Fill in the Pinyin” sheets, available our website [here](#). For a challenge, do while just looking at the character, or start by listening to the audio, pausing the fill in the sounds you hear. Also, for the more advanced, black out the Pinyin to practice “sight reading”. Record yourself reading the dialogue out loud. Play back the recording, (with a teacher/native speaker present is ideal) while alternating with the VPC Audio and make note (i.e. **circle**) the discrepancies between the two. Always remember (it’s a cliché for a reason) that practise makes perfect!

Photocopiable Template B) Black out Characters

If you shift page 14 down, you can use the same template to block out the Chinese Characters. You can use this template in conjunction with the Line-by-Line Flashcards. Read the Pinyin, arrange the flashcards (working on a large surface such as a pool/dining room table works well) and shift sheet down to check your work before shifting it back in place to go onto the next line. You can also black out the Characters and then type the dialogue, although given the predictive text function this isn’t a huge challenge. It is, however, a good way to get your feet wet with writing.

Photocopiable Template C) Black out English Gloss

The third template (page 15 of the VPC Book) is good to use with new dialogues with which you are still a tad unfamiliar. Use them in conjunction with the VPC Audio tracks or on their own. Write the English translation in the right hand box AND, if you find it helps (some do), write the “word by word” definition in the space underneath the pinyin in the dialogue line. Check the Word Bank on the opposite page, and/or the Study Guide, or Pinyin-English glossary at the back of the book for the correct meanings, and the dialogue page for the correct translation.

Photocopiable Template D) Black out Chinese Characters and English Gloss

This template is good for typing practice...type the first line of the dialogue in Chinese, then switch to English and type the translated meaning underneath. Switch back to Chinese characters to type the second line and so on. It's good for practising your sight reading at the beginning, before you really have the sounds/tones for each character down pat and you need to read the Pinyin. Treat this as an in between step, however, as ultimately you should aspire to reading the characters themselves.

Photocopiable Template E) Black out Pinyin and English Gloss

This is slightly more challenging than Template D, because you need to remember how to “spell the Pinyin for each character. You can check the Characters as you go or just once in a while when you are unsure of one. As mentioned above, this is the best (i.e. most challenging) template to use when you are practicing your sight reading – there are no crutches, just you **READING** Mandarin (which is **VERY** exciting, don't you think? 😊) As per above, remember that recording yourself is the best way to hear the way you really sound, not the way you think you sound.

Photocopiable Template F) Black out Pinyin

Good for when you know the dialogue well! See if you can re-create the dialogue with the [VPC Line-by-Line Flashcards](#), using the English as a hint.

Photocopiable Template G) Black out “odd lines” and H) Black out “even lines”

This is a good one to use when listening to the “ABAB” number (you hear “A”, there's a space for you to answer the “B” line, or your version of it, you hear “A”). Particularly useful when you want to improvise!