

## US English Vowels: Diagnostic assessment

Circle the letter by the word you hear pronounced for each item (x 7.7). Scoring: -0 = 100; -1 = 92; -2 = 85; -3 = 77; -4 = 69; -5 = 62; -6 = 54; -7 = 46; -8 = 38; -9 = 31; -10 = 23; -11 = 15; -12 = 7%.

1. a. pit  
b. Pete
2. a. taught  
b. tote  
c. tot  
d. towed
3. a. fool  
b. full  
c. fall
4. a. rot  
b. rod  
c. right  
d. ride
5. a. cop  
b. cup  
c. cob  
d. cub
6. a. sad  
b. sat  
c. said  
d. set  
e. sate
7. a. like  
b. lock  
c. lark
8. a. lug  
b. luck  
c. lock
9. a. low  
b. law
10. a. brawn  
b. brown
11. a. time  
b. tum  
c. Tom
12. a. shame  
b. Shem  
c. sham
13. a. jaw  
b. Joe

子音 1—看音標就知道發音			
音標	字母	發音	
b	b	有聲ㄅ	
d	d	有聲ㄉ	
g	g	有聲ㄍ	
f	f	ㄈ	
h	h	輕輕哈氣	
l	l	ㄌ	
m	m	ㄇ	
n	n	ㄋ；ㄣ	
r (ɹ)	r	ㄦ	
s	s	ㄙ	
v	v	有聲 f	
w	w	ㄨ（如：「ㄨ」ㄣ）	
z	z	有聲 s	
子音 2—可能送氣、不送氣（皆為無聲）			
音標	字母	發音	例子
p	p	[p] ㄅ	spy
		[pʰ] ㄅˊ	pay
t	t	[t] ㄊ	style
		[tʰ] ㄊˊ	take
k	k, c	[k] ㄎ	sky
		[kʰ] ㄎˊ	kick
/s/ 後之 /p/、/t/、/k/ 不送氣。（師德 13）			
子音 3—dʒ, tʃ, ʃ, ʒ			
音標	字母	發音	例子
dʒ	g	用ㄉ唸ㄗ	change
	j		just
	-dge		edge, bridge
tʃ	ch	用ㄊ唸ㄘ	church
	-stion		question
	-ture		mature
	-tch		catch, witch
ʃ	sh	用ㄕ唸ㄊ	shock
	-tion		exhibition
	-tial		confidential
	-su-		assure, sure, tissue
ʒ	-sion	有聲的 ʃ	television
	-age		garage
	g, j		genre（法語外來語）
	-su-		measure, usual

音檔：<http://www.gotoabc.url.tw/kk/kklist.htm>

子音 4—特殊符號/組合			
音標	字母	發音	例子
j	y-	一（如：「一」ㄙ）	yes, year
ŋ	-ng	「ㄋ」、「ㄣ」	song
	-nk	[-ŋk]	thank
	-nc-		extinct
	-nqu-		conquer (師德 9、10)
θ ð	th	輕咬舌尖送氣 θ: 無聲 (有重音實詞) ð: 有聲 (虛詞)	three the (師德 13)
z ks gz	x	[z] 字首 [ks] 後接子音；後接 母音但該音節無重音 [gz] 後接母音且該音 節有重音	xylophone expect, oxen  example (師德 14)
kw	qu-	ㄅㄨ(ㄘ)	question
母音 1—單母音 (單元音)			
音標	發音		例子
i	一		feet
ɪ	舌頭位置比較低/後； 行軍「『一』、二」		fit (師德 3)
ɛ	直「接」，收下巴； 「英」後 (台語)		said
æ	嘴巴張大的 ɛ，比 ɛ 長很多		sad
ɑ	ㄚ		box
ɔ	ㄛ仔 (台語，唸成一個音節)		dog
u	ㄨ；「路」		too
ʊ	ㄨ；「倫」		took (師德 11)
ʌ	像 ə，音較長、舌頭較低		mother
ə	ㄘ (發呆音)；央音		about
ə	發音同；台式標準國語儿； ʒ出現在有重音音節		sister
ʒ			bird
母音 2—雙母音 (複元音)			
音標	發音		例子
aɪ	ㄞ一		sigh
eɪ	ㄟ一		name
aʊ	ㄞㄨ		how
oʊ	ㄛㄨ		toe
ɔɪ	ㄛ一 (ㄛ唸得短一點)		boy
ju	字母 "U" 的名稱		cue

## 1. 上表說明：

上一頁的 IPA 表只適用於美式標準英文  
提及的注音符號也只適用於台式標準國語  
(捲舌沒有北京腔那麼捲)

## 2. IPA 與 KK

IPA, International Phonetic Alphabet 國際音標  
KK 是 IPA 的其中一個分支

KK 與 IPA 的主要差異：

[o] → [ou]

[e] → [eɪ]

[r] → [ɹ]

<http://homepage.ntu.edu.tw/~karchung/intro%20page8.htm>

## 3. // 和 [] 的差異

// 音位 → 認定的、粗略的

[] 同位音 → 實際上的語音、標示細節

音位不是一個實際的語音。一個音位可以有數種不同的發音，但是語言使用者心理上認定這幾種發音是等同的。音位內的這些不同發音，稱為同位異音或音位變體。

(上表的「音標」欄屬「音位」)

<http://homepage.ntu.edu.tw/~karchung/intro%20page%2014.htm>

<http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E9%9F%B3%E4%BD%8D>

例：

/t/ 音位的同位異音可能有很多個

take → [tʰ]

water → [r] tap (像很短的 [d])

waste → [ɹ] 不除阻

## 4. 重音符號

當一個單字的音節數>1，要在重音音節左上角加上重音符號 (ˈ)。

## 5. [ɪ] [æ] [ɛ]

[ɪ, ɛ, æ] + [ŋ, g] → 變得較接近 [i] [e] [ə]

其變作介於兩者之間的音：[ɪ̯] [æ̯] [ɛ̯]

因為 [ɪ, ɛ, æ] + [g, ŋ] 的單字就算念得像 [i] [e] [ə] 也不會造成意思誤解，因為只會有一個可能的單字。如：在 [k] 之前，[ɪ] 和 [i] 發音不同，就會是不同的字—week [wik], wick [wɪk]。但在 [ŋ] 前沒有那種「需要 [ɪ] 和 [i] 發音不同而意義不同」的單字，所以就算念成 [ɪ] 和 [i] 之間的音，大家也不會搞錯字。

在 [ŋ] 前 [ɪ, ɛ, æ] 上升程度 > 在 [g] 前。

<http://homepage.ntu.edu.tw/~karchung/intro%20page%2015.htm>

## 6. 建議學習順序：子音→母音

子音：

(1) p, t, k 不送氣 → p, t, k 送氣 → b, d, g

(2) m, n, ŋ

(3) f, v + s, z

(4) h, w, r, l (ʔ), j

(5) θ, ð

(6) dʒ, tʃ, ʃ, ʒ

母音

(1) i, ɪ

(2) ɛ, æ, a, ɔ

(3) u, ʊ

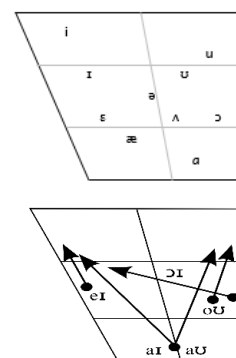
(4) ʌ, ə

(5) ɔ̃, ʒ̃

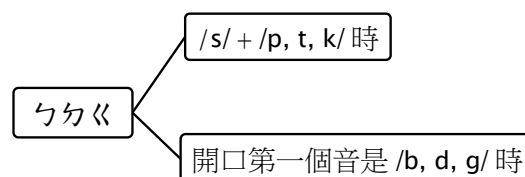
(6) aɪ, eɪ, aʊ, oʊ

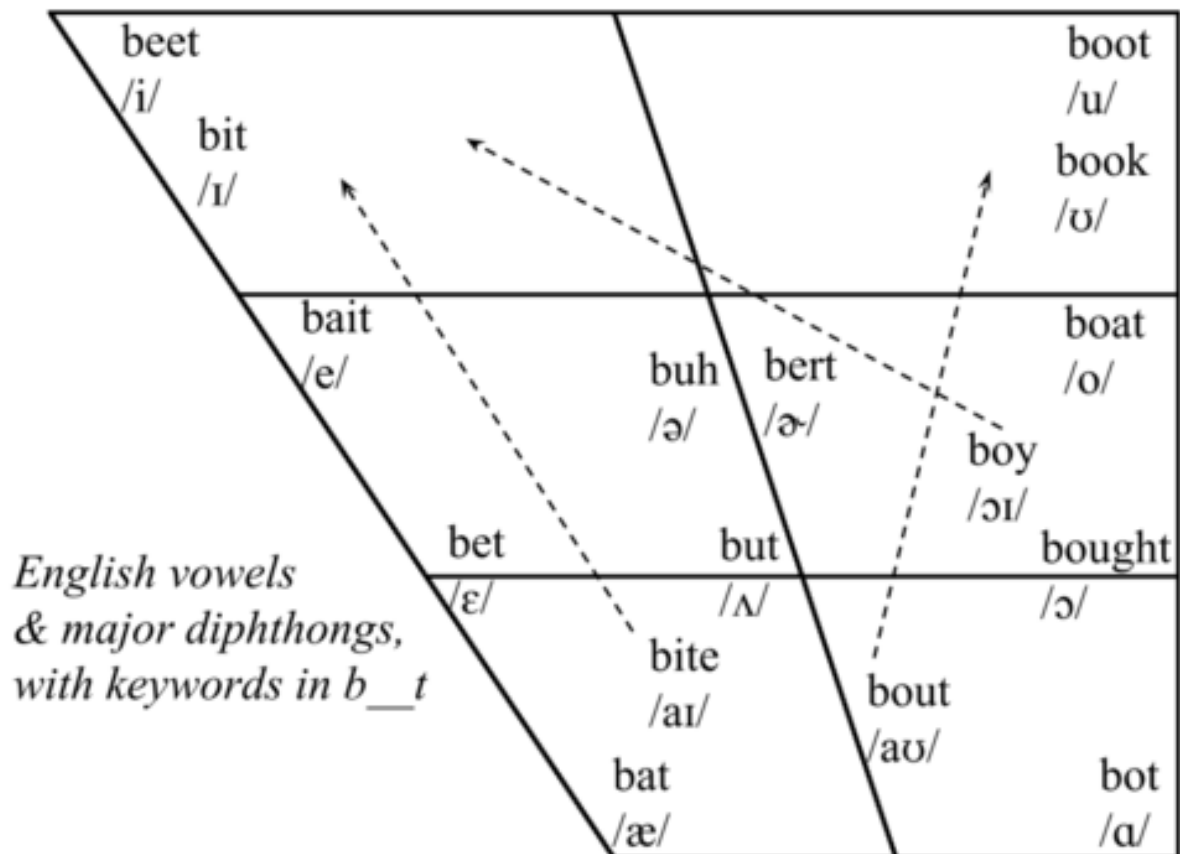
(7) ɔɪ

(8) ju



## 7.





### The Perfect Paragraph Method: A Very Strange Woman

Brad and Ryan were just about to start their dinner of beef noodles.

"She's kind of cute," Brad said, glancing at a woman sitting alone at another table.

"Yeah," replied Ryan. "She looks busy with her work."

"Her food's here. She's put her work away to eat," Brad said.

After Brad and Ryan paid their bill, Ryan said, "She's back at work, writing in her notebook.

Maybe she has a deadline to meet?"

The next day Brad and Ryan found seats together on the MRT to go to campus.

"Hey, isn't that the woman we saw in the restaurant?" Brad asked, looking across the aisle.

"Yeah, that's her all right, reading a book," replied Ryan. "Wonder where she's headed."

"Well, looks like we're getting off first, so we won't know," Brad replied.

After their classes, Brad and Ryan met again at their usual coffee shop.

"There she is again," Ryan said. "Three times in two days."

Brad thought for a minute. "You know, there's something really odd about her," he said, "but I just can't put my finger on it."

"She looks totally normal to me," Ryan replied. "But I know what you mean – there's something kind of weird about her somehow. No idea what, though."

Brad and Ryan chatted a bit more as they finished their lattes.

Brad glanced up at the woman again and closed his eyes briefly.

"I know what it is. And it is really, truly strange," he said.

"So what *is* it?" Ryan asked anxiously.

"Have you noticed, that every single time we've seen her..." Brad started.

"What?" Ryan asked impatiently.

"...she has not pulled out her phone even once?!"

Ryan looked up, then shook his head in amazement.

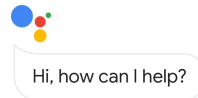
"My gosh, you're right!" he exclaimed. "That must be one of the *weirdest* things I've ever seen!!"

## Some minimal pairs for practice

1. sit, seat; Sid, seed; dip, deep
2. tin, teen; sin, seen/scene; bean, bin/been
3. bet, bat; bet, bed; bat, bad; bet, bed, bat, bad
4. expensive, expansive
5. bin, bing; pin, ping;
6. done, dung; some, sun/son, sung
7. cut, cot; cup, cop; shut, shot; luck, lock
8. Luke, look; fool, full; shoed, should; cooed, could; wooed, wood/would
9. stewed, stood; who'd, hood
10. around, a wrong; pond, pound; lawn, long; gone, gong
11. boy, toy; poison; loiter
12. student, dew, during, tune, Tuesday, newspaper, clue, blue/blew
13. hue, who; beauty, booty; cute; cure
14. lap, lab; flap, flab; rip, rib
15. mate, made/maid; rate, raid; safe, save; ether, either
16. back, bag; sack, sag; pick, peek/peak, pig

## Six ways to supercharge your English listening and speaking!

### 1. How can Siri help me with my spoken English?



You can practice speaking English out loud and get answers to a range of questions, with **Siri** on Apple devices, or **Google Assistant (GA)** on either Android or Apple devices. “Siri” here is usually meant to include *both* Apple’s Siri and also Google Assistant. There are differences between the two, but they can do largely the same things.

For Apple’s **Siri**: Go to Settings 設定 → Siri & Search (Siri 與搜尋) and choose your desired settings. The app may have you go through a short training process so your device can better adjust to your voice and pronunciation.

It’s actually best if you use **two devices**, e.g. a smartphone and a tablet (Mac laptops also have Siri), and you set the language on one as:

- a. **US English**, to practice speaking and listening in English, and to get information;

Set the language on the other device to:

- b. **Mandarin Chinese**; that way you can ask Siri for translations from Chinese into English. This will save you the trouble of changing the system language back and forth.

For **Google Assistant**, download the Google Assistant app from the Google Play Store (or the Apple App Store) and follow the cues to adjust the settings. GA can handle **two** languages on the same device, and it is very easy to change languages.

To get Siri’s attention, either say, “**Hey Siri**” or **press the home button**. For GA, say “**OK Google**” or “**Hey Google**” or click on the **microphone** icon. You can do a Google search if you need more help setting up Siri or Google Assistant.

Siri often responds to less common requests with a link to a Wikipedia article or other web page; on occasion Siri will say he/she doesn’t understand or can’t perform a certain task at present. You will gradually learn where Siri’s limits are, as well as which things Siri does very well.

Note that your devices are in fact always “listening”; if you have privacy concerns, you need to be aware of this.

Here are some very practical, everyday questions you can ask and requests you can make of Siri.

### **Questions and requests for daily use:**

1. What time is it?
2. Set a timer for 25 minutes. or: How much time is left on the timer?
3. Set an alarm for 6:30am.
4. Turn on (turn off) the flashlight (torch).
5. Find pictures of a monkey wrench.
6. Open YouTube. (or other app)
7. Play some music. or: What's this song? or: "Like" this song. or: Play more like this.
8. Play, pause/stop, skip/next, play previous song. or: After this, play "The Way I Am".
9. What's the date today? or: What date is it today? or: What's today's date? or: What day is it today?
10. What's the weather [like] today? or: What kind of weather do we have today?
11. How much is 36 degrees Celsius in Fahrenheit?
12. What's the temperature now? or: What's the humidity? or: How windy is it today?
13. Is it going to rain today? or: "Do I need an umbrella today?" or: When is sunset tonight?
14. How much is 160 centimeters in feet?
15. How far is it from Taipei to Taichung in kilometers/miles?
16. Define "layover". or: What's a synonym for "pretty"? or: What are some antonyms of "clear"?
17. How do you spell "confident"?
18. How do you say "succulents" in [Mandarin] Chinese? (or other language)
19. What is 421 times 364?
20. How much is 109 divided by 619? (for a percentage)
21. How much is eight thousand New Taiwan dollars in US dollars?
22. What is the square root of 21,609?
23. Open a new Note called "Groceries".
24. Search the App Store for Google Podcasts.
25. Where are you? or: Ping my iPhone. (to help you find your phone, tablet or AirPods)
26. What is the closest restaurant to me?
27. What time is it in California? (for a long-distance video call)
28. Check the flight status of EVA Air flight BR88.
29. When is Chinese New Year this year?
30. How many days are there until Christmas?
31. What's the population of Japan?
32. How many websites are there?
33. What's the most common sound in English?
34. When is Jay Chou's birthday?
35. How long would it take me to walk to the post office?

### **Some fun interactions with Siri:**

36. Tell me a knock-knock joke. (can be repeated endlessly)  
*Example:* Siri: Knock, knock. You: Who's there? Siri: Dwayne. You: Dwayne who?  
Siri: Dwayne the bathtub, I'm ddowning!
37. Flip a coin. or: Heads or tails? or: Roll a die. or: Roll two dice.
38. Tell me a joke. (can be repeated)
39. Read me a haiku. (can be repeated)
40. Can you beatbox?
41. Where are you from?
42. When were you born? or: How old are you?
43. What's your favorite movie?
44. Who's your favorite actor?
45. What is zero divided by zero?
46. Which came first, the chicken or the egg?
47. Good-bye! or: I'm off now! or: See you later, Alligator!
48. I'm back! or: I'm home!

49. I'm sad. or: I'm happy. or: I'm nervous. or: I can't get to sleep.  
50. Good night.

More suggestions at the link below; you can find further questions for Siri with a Google search!

### The complete list of Siri commands

<https://www.cnet.com/google-amp/news/the-complete-list-of-siri-commands/>

## 2. How can I turn an ebook into an audio book?

Your digital device can *read aloud* almost any printed text to you, and even turn the pages!

On an Apple device: Go to → Settings 設定 (the Gear icon), tap → Accessibility 輔助使用 (this may be under General 一般 in some versions), then go to → Spoken Content 語音內容. Turn on both → Speak Selection 朗讀所選範圍 and → Speak Screen 朗讀螢幕. (DON'T turn on Speech Controller 語音控制器, Highlight Content 反白內容, or Typing Feedback 輸入回饋 – they are mostly very noisy!)

Next, click on → Voices 聲音, and choose → English 英文, then → English (US) 英文 (美國), then → **Alex (enhanced 高音質)**. Alex is currently the gold standard of synthesized speech – you can even hear him draw a breath before he starts reading a sentence! You can also adjust the → Speaking Rate 朗讀速度 as you prefer, and you can add new words under → Pronunciations 發音. Alex does make some mistakes, but not many, and even his English **intonation** is pretty good! Now go to → Add Language 新增語言 and choose → Chinese (Traditional) 中文 (台灣), then → female 女性, if needed, and then → Mei-Jia 美嘉 for Taiwan Mandarin. Mei-Jia enables you to **listen** to Chinese articles and books in electronic form when you're not free to read with your eyes or when you're just tired.

To hear a whole page read: Starting from the top of the screen, swipe down over the screen with two fingers. To hear a selection, mark 反白 the selection you want to hear, and click on Speak 朗讀; you may also need to choose your desired language, but usually it's automatic, and usually you get the right language.

More information in Chinese here:

<https://support.apple.com/zh-tw/guide/iphone/iph96b214f0/ios>

If it's an online article, click on the **AA** icon at the left of the URL to use the **Reader view** 閱讀器模式 if and when it's available – it gets rid of a lot of unwanted formatting and images, and sometimes wards off annoying pop-ups. The Reader view is also good for just regular silent reading!

Other **AA** options are: Translate Website, Hide Toolbar, Request Desktop/Mobile Website, Website Settings, Deactivate ad blockers or Privacy Report, and Show Bottom Tab Bar.

You also have several options, including Look up and Translate, if you mark 反白 a word or phrase.

On an Android device: Go to → Settings 設定 (the Gear icon) and then tap → Accessibility → Select to Speak. Tap the Select to Speak toggle switch to turn on the feature. Select OK to confirm permissions.

Open any app, and then tap → Select to Speak → Play, to hear the phone read the text aloud. You can now listen as your device reads any pdf, text, Word, epub, or other electronic file to you. Tap → Stop to end playback.

You can listen to Alex read to you while doing housework, driving (use an audio cable 音源線 to connect your device to your car's radio), on hikes, and for getting to sleep. And of course for focused English reading and listening practice, including with the Echo Method!

Alternatively, you can just copy-and-paste any text you'd like to hear, paste it into **Google Translate**, and click the speaker icon to **listen** to, **Echo**, or **shadow** the text being read. Click a second time to hear it read more **slowly**, or click on a single word or phrase to hear it read alone.

### 3. How can I be sure my English sentences are correct and well-formed?

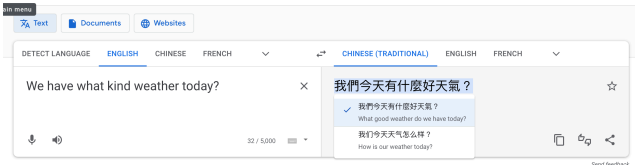
1. Make sure your questions and sentences are **well-formed** and colloquial, and not 「台式英語」! You can check with **Google Translate** to be sure. Translate back and forth a few times between English and Chinese to be really sure your question or sentence is well-formed.

For example, Siri can *understand* “We have what kind weather today?” But this is **not** a well-formed question; Google Translate translates it as 我們今天有什麼好天氣?, which is quite odd in Chinese. But when we click on this, reverse the direction of translation, and maybe delete any unnecessary words like 我們, we get:

“How's the weather today?”

*Much better!*

In addition, if you click on the proposed translation, it will offer as another option: 我們今天天氣怎麼樣?



and *this* is in fact what we want to express!

Click on this for more options for the same meaning, like “What’s the weather like today?”, which is another good way to ask this question.

2. Ask Chinese Siri: 「今天天氣怎麼樣？」英文怎麼說？

Siri should answer something like: “What’s the weather like today?”, which is correct and colloquial! I personally have found this very, very useful using English Siri to learn correct and more colloquial ways to express things in French, and also in English and Chinese.

See also section 4. below for hints on how to use simplified English novels to help you accumulate and store up lots of good, well-formed English sentences in your brain!

### 4. The Perfect Paragraph Method

This is mainly how our TA Melissa got so good at English pronunciation and speaking without even leaving Taiwan!

**Understanding passively** while reading with just your eyes and with unlimited time is **not enough!**

While reading along with your eyes, **listen** to the story with the audio or text-to-speech over and over, until your brain **can fully keep up with the pace**.

This means not only getting the main ideas, but also fully **catching every single detail** of vocabulary, meaning and **grammar**. Once you can follow the story **almost effortlessly** by listening to it, go back to read and re-read and re-read the story until you yourself can **produce** the **good chunks** and sentences in the story **actively**.

**Don't be embarrassed by repetition.** The more often you repeat the same material, the more **deeply** you **internalize** it, with all the **correct details**, and the longer it will stay with you, hopefully for a lifetime!

Start becoming sharply aware of **how well your brain is keeping up**, i.e. **processing all of the content**, for **both meaning** and **grammar**, with **all the details**, as the story plays.

If you find you're missing some information, you can slow the speaking rate down for a few times, then put it back to normal, and keep listening and re-listening until your brain can **fully keep up**, with **no loss of information**. Alternatively, you can speed it up for a while and try to keep up. Then when you set it back to “normal” speed, your brain will perceive it as quite “slow” and you'll probably understand it more easily!

**Marc Green** describes a related method in his TEDx talk: **How to Talk Like a Native Speaker**:

“The best way that I've found – the best exercise I've found to improve your pronunciation is what I call **the perfect-sentence technique**. What you do is you find a native speaker to help you, and you take a book in



the foreign language, you open it at a random page, and you read the first sentence. Then, you ask a native speaker to rate you on obvious accent, slight accent, no accent. Then the native speaker will read this sentence back to you. You have to listen carefully and then you repeat. And you repeat this process over and over until the native speaker tells you that he can no longer hear an accent when you read the sentence. Now, I realize it can take a very long time even just to get one sentence right. But I promise you if you are persistent, and if you patiently work on this, you'll be amazed by what happens to your accent."

<https://singjupost.com/how-to-talk-like-a-native-speaker-marc-green-full-transcript/?singlepage=1>  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ti\\_gFEe1XNY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ti_gFEe1XNY)

Green is basically describing one approach to **"opening your ears"** 打開耳朵, then getting your mouth to precisely reproduce what the ears and brain now hear in **clear, full detail!**

You can simplify this, especially if you don't have a native speaker handy. Just take one paragraph of text with audio **about something interesting**. Focus on one sentence at a time, breaking it down into shorter pieces of maybe 4 or 5 words each; try to stop at the punctuation. First,

1. Listen-Echo-Repeat 用回音跟著唸;
2. Then do direct listen and repeat 直接跟著唸, then
3. Read in sync with the recording 同步唸.

Record yourself and listen to yourself, then compare it with the native speaker's version. If you can, get feedback from somebody nearby.

Do this over and over and over until you can read that one paragraph close to *perfectly*! This may take **days**. Then move on to another paragraph.

This will not only help you improve your pronunciation, but will help you accumulate a whole mental library of model English sentences that you can output when required as entire chunks *automatically*, changing words where needed. **Simplified English novels** are **excellent** for this purpose! Try to get ones with audio files.

**Dialogues** and scenes from high-quality **English-language TV series** are also excellent. This is among the *very best* ways to learn spoken English (or any language). This is how almost all of my most successful students and TAs over the years learned to speak **natural, idiomatic English**.

More information here:

重方法不重死背的英文文法（上、下）

<https://homepage.ntu.edu.tw/~karchung/8889CETKSC.pdf>

## 5. Set up an online language exchange

Look for a good language exchange partner on **italki** (many friends and I have used this very successfully), **Tandem**, or other online language exchange platform, to help bring your English conversation or composition skills to the next level! Exchanges are free, but if you prefer not to teach in return, you can just hire a tutor – it's usually less expensive than finding a teacher locally! Commit to meeting online at least once a week. Details in this article:

語言交換必看小撇步

<https://homepage.ntu.edu.tw/~karchung/EI45langexchange.pdf>

## 6: Powerful productivity tools

### 1. Kaizen:

**Do a little bit every day, no matter what!**

One Small Step Can Change Your Life: with Kaizen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VHkOFs67d9A%20>

### 2. The Pomodoro Technique:

**Set a timer to 25 minutes and do *only* focused work until time is up, then rest for 5 minutes**

<https://francescocirillo.com/pages/pomodoro-technique>

### 3. The Power of Habit:

**Cue–Routine–Reward**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W1eYrhGeffc&t=53s>

#### 4. Grab bag of productivity hacks:

- a. **The Alien Hand:** When you need to task-switch, just click off or close your device or laptop to break the blue light spell, and/or pull out your earphones, without giving your conscious brain time to argue or resist.
- b. **BOOC: Butt Out Of Chair!** Be able to sense when you're just dawdling and wasting time. A variation of this: **Countdown:** 3...2...1... **Up!** or **Get up!** Or: 1...2...3...**Go!** Or: 1...2...3...**Sit!** when you need to sit down to work.
- c. **Next on the list:** Have a clear idea of what you want to do next, so you don't waste time and energy deciding.
- d. **Set things up for the next task:** Tell yourself you don't have to do the work, you're just getting things ready, like opening the right file – then you'll often do the whole task anyway, since you've now removed or reduced some of the obstacles, friction and internal resistance to doing it.
- e. **Create urgency:** Set an artificial deadline, e.g. imagining guests are coming so you're motivated to clean the house!
- f. **Use peak energy time for the most important tasks:** Figure out your period of highest physical and brain energy, and do your most important and hardest tasks then. DON'T do email or social media first and let them fill your prime brain time – save these for later when your energy troughs. Most people are sharpest in the morning after breakfast; you may be different. Figure out your own daily energy patterns. Another version of this is: **Do your most important task FIRST!** And when you have a choice, **do the harder thing.** And yet another version of this: **Daily highlight:** choose the one task you **have** to get done today.  
<https://maketime.blog/article/choose-a-highlight-to-make-time-every-day/>
- g. **One Small, Easy Victory:** Choose an easy task early in the day and get it done. Scoring one small, easy victory early in the day can often give you a feeling of "I'm the kind of person that takes things on and gets them done!" This often gives you motivation and momentum to take on other things during the day that you might otherwise be tempted to put off until "some other time".
- h. **The Two-Minute Rule:** When you're reluctant to do a task, tell yourself "I'll just work on it for 2 minutes." This is usually enough to overcome your inertia and get started. And once you've started, you'll often keep on going beyond the 2 minutes. <https://jamesclear.com/how-to-stop-procrastinating>
- i. **Time-boxing:** Allocate a **fixed time** for the planned task. <https://clockify.me/timeboxing> In addition to your to-do list, use a **CALENDAR** to plan which tasks you're going to actually do, when you're going to do them, and how much time you're going to devote to each one. Having something on your list and never getting to it because you're too busy with other things does no good whatsoever, and means it's just not important enough to you, and you're not [yet] committed to actually **doing** it – a bit **every day**. See also:  
<https://kevinkruse.com/to-do-lists-time-management/> and  
<https://kevinkruse.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/15-Secrets-Bonus-Workbook.pdf>
- j. **Trick Parkinson's Law:** Feeling too busy to finish something? You may need to become even *busier*. Parkinson's Law states that "Work expands to fill available time." Often when you have *more* to do, you will try harder to fit everything in, and you get more done faster. Often the **momentum** of being *busier* and more **active** helps you just get on with things that need to be done.
- k. **Leverage the formidable Force of Habit:** Build habits and stick to them. If you've succeeded in making something a habit, you'll often do it by default, with a minimum of pain and frittered energy, even if you don't initially feel like it. Habits are another way to reduce friction and make it easier to get things done. You may need to reevaluate your habits and routines from time to time and possibly make some adjustments. Don't get stuck in routines that no longer serve you. See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W1eYrhGeffc&t=53s>
- l. **The importance of rest:** Taking breaks, and getting your brain to change gears and look at, think about and do something else often provides much-needed relief, and you'll feel much better able to get back to what you were doing with a fresh mindset and energy. And often with new ideas as well. Showers, listening to and/or making music, drawing, walks, bike rides and other physical activity often give your brain a chance to come up with good new ideas and insights, or helps solidify what you've been working on.
- m. **Give your brain a question before bed:** You will often have a solution or ideas in the morning after waking up.
- n. Meeting and **chatting with friends** and others will give you needed perspective, feedback, ideas and insights. You'll hear different ideas you'd never have thought of or that never would have occurred to you.
- o. **The importance of reading widely:** Good online videos can be useful, but wide **reading** will often bring unexpected insights and help you make useful connections.
- p. **Just do it:** Be willing to produce **crap**. Sit down and work even if you don't feel ready to do a really good job on it. You can go back and fix or edit it later. Just fill the Pomodoro with actual work, regardless of quality.
- q. **Note** when you realize you're clearly taking steps to avoid doing something, e.g. you have an urge to check your email, LINE or fb, play a game, watch a video, or do something less demanding and more pleasurable – and take the reins to counter it and do it anyway.
- r. **Eat well** – i.e. lots of veggies and fruit, no added sugar, avoid fried foods, **sleep** well, and **exercise**. No compromises. Or you won't have the energy and health to do anything important. And you're more likely to get sick easily.

- s. Clarify your **priorities** HONESTLY. Do you *really* want to be doing this thing? If so, you need to make time for it in your day. If not, then focus on what *really is* important to you, your highest priority.
- t. Keep a daily bullet **journal** of what you've done today. This will help you be more *mindful* of how you use your time and energy, and also makes it easy to track your habits, and to check on what happened when in your life.
- u. **Don't brood** over the past and previous mistakes. Focus on your key goals and what you're doing **now**, and look ahead!
- v. Listen to a **mixture** of easier **ESL-type materials** – you will often be able to understand 100% of these – and **authentic** materials designed for native speakers, which will probably contain lots of things you don't easily get. One will get your brain used to **full comprehension**, the other will stretch you and help train you in authentic face-to-face **native speaker-level** English.

## 5. Time Tracker

If you'd really like to improve your productivity, track how you use every 15 minutes or half hour of your time throughout the day – then you'll know just *where* all your time is going! Just knowing this can help you figure out what to cut or change. Template available in Google Sheets, or one that includes **all** the hours in a day is available from Before Breakfast podcast host Laura Vanderkam at:

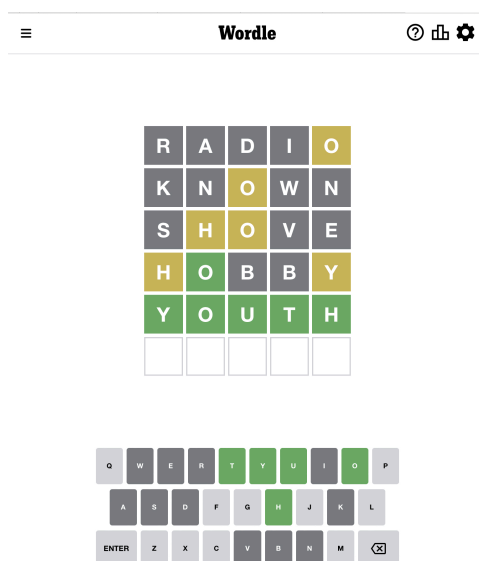
<https://lauravanderkam.com/manage-your-time/>

## Bonus: Game time!

Just for fun: Everybody's playing **Wordle**!

It comes out only once a day, so you don't need to worry about bingeing!

<https://www.nytimes.com/games/wordle/index.html>



If you ever end up a bit frustrated, you can get some “help” from OneLook Online dictionary at:

<https://www.onelook.com/>:

