

'I can't read time'? 時間が読めない? jikan ga yomenai?

Next week, I have to attend an important conference in Germany. Since Mr. Yoshida, who is one of my colleagues, is accompanying me, I wanted to prepare everything with him in advance. So I asked him, "**ashita uchiawase no jikan ga arimasu ka?**" (Do you have time to discuss things tomorrow?). He said, "I have meetings all day long tomorrow..." Then I said to him, "The conference is next week! Please make some time, anytime tomorrow!" Mr. Yoshida said, "**uuun... jikan ga yomenai nā**" (Gee... I can't read time, though), and he became quiet. I was surprised and said, "**e! yoshida-san jikan ga yomenai no?**" (What? You cannot read the time?). He said, "**sō nan da yo ne. maitta nā...**" (Yeah... It's a real shame...) and he started scratching his head and left. Does "**jikan ga yomenai**" mean "he can't read time on his watch"? Or is there another meaning?

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■■■ "**jikan ga yomenai**" does not mean that he couldn't read the time on his watch. I'm glad that you started to pick up this kind of Japanese! What he meant was that he had no idea when the meeting was going to end. There are a number of phrases using "**yomu**." Let's look at them.

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to read
読みます
yomimasu

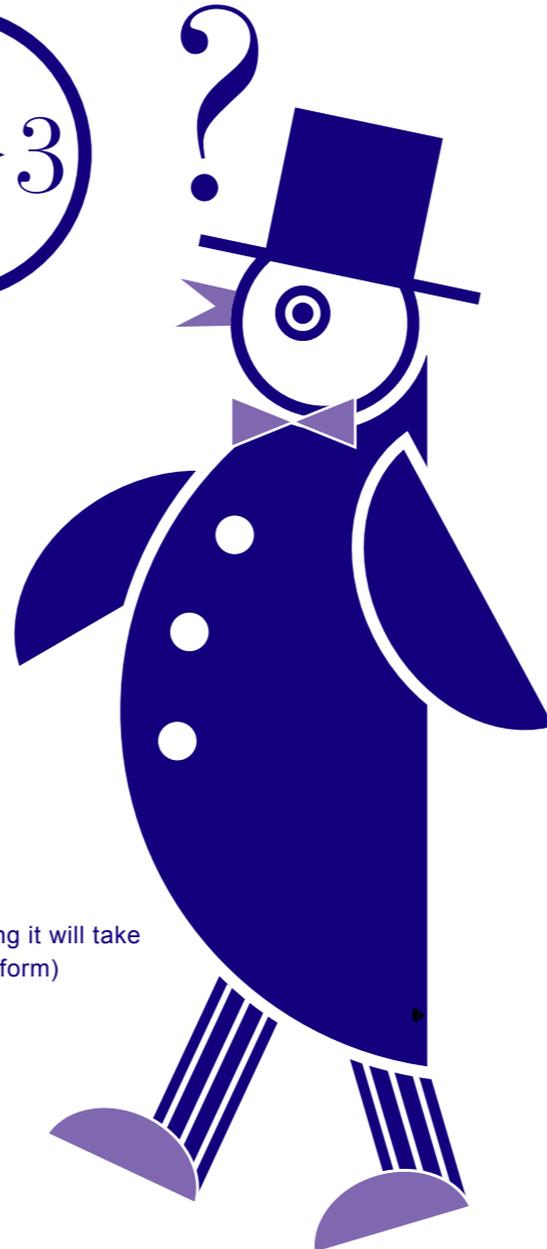
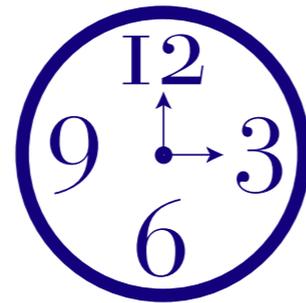
dictionary form
読む
yomu

potential from
(negative)
読めない
yomenai

te from
読んで
yonde

noun
読み
yomi

- | | |
|---|--|
| (1) To understand the circumstances
状況を読む
jōkyō o yomu | (9) To think superficially
読みが浅い
yomi ga asai |
| (2) To think ahead
先を読む
saki o yomu | (10) To think deeply
読みが深い
yomi ga fukai |
| (3) To guess one's intentions
考えを読む
kangae o yomu | (11) To cheat in counting
サバを読む
saba o yomu |
| (4) To sense the atmosphere
空気を読む
kūki o yomu | (12) To read the (golf) green
グリーンを読む
green o yomu |
| (5) To think/see several moves ahead
動きを読む
ugoki o yomu | (13) Unable to predict how long it will take
(mostly used in negative form)
時間が読めない
jikan ga yomenai |
| (6) To read one's thoughts
心を読む
kokoro o yomu | |
| (7) To read between the lines/
to see through one's plot
手の内を読む
te no uchi o yomu | |
| (8) To read the times
時代の流れを読む
jidai no nagare o yomu | |



Choose one of the 13 expressions and change the form if necessary to complete the following sentences.

- (A) My friend altered her age by five years.
友達は5歳 **tomodachi wa go-sai** te form いました。
imashita
- (B) If you want to become a columnist, you need to have the ability to think ahead.
コラムニストになるは dic. form 力が必要です。
columnist ni naru ni wa chikara ga hitsuyō desu
- (C) It is a psychologist's job to read the thoughts of his patient.
心理学者は患者の dic. form のが仕事です。
shinrigakusha wa kanja no no ga shigoto desu
- (D) There has been an increase in self-centered people who have no sense of the atmosphere.
場の nai form 自己中心的な人が増えている。
ba no jikochūshinteki na hito ga fuete iru
- (E) Analysts try to predict the way the exchange rate will move.
アナリストは常に 為替相場の dic. form
analyst wa tsune ni kawasesōba no
- (F) What a shame! I didn't fully think through the situation.
It's no use crying over spilled milk, eh?
まいったな? past tense 「後悔先に立たず」ですね。
maitta na "kōkai saki ni tatazu" desu ne
- (G) That's so like you! You really know everything! You think things through!
さすが、何から何まで分かってる! dic. form ですね。
sasuga nani kara nani made wakatteru! desu ne
- (H) Successful international designers have an excellent ability to read the times.
世界で活躍しているのデザイナーは dic. form 力がすごい。
sekai de katsuyaku shite iru designer wa chikara ga sugoi

Answers (A) **saba o yonde** (B) **saki o yomu** (C) **kokoro o yomu** (D) **kūki o yomenai** (E) **ugoki o yomu**
(F) **yomi ga asakatta** (G) **yomi ga fukai** (H) **jidai no nagare o yomu**