

# '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?

### Pera Pera Penguin's

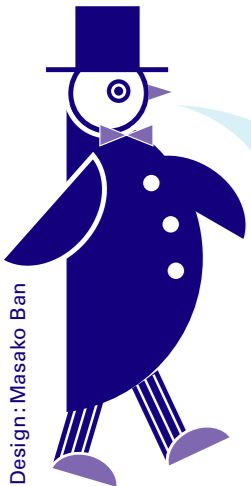
5-minute Japanese Class by Hitomi Hirayama



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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.

Design: Masako Ban



to read  
**読みます**  
yomimasu

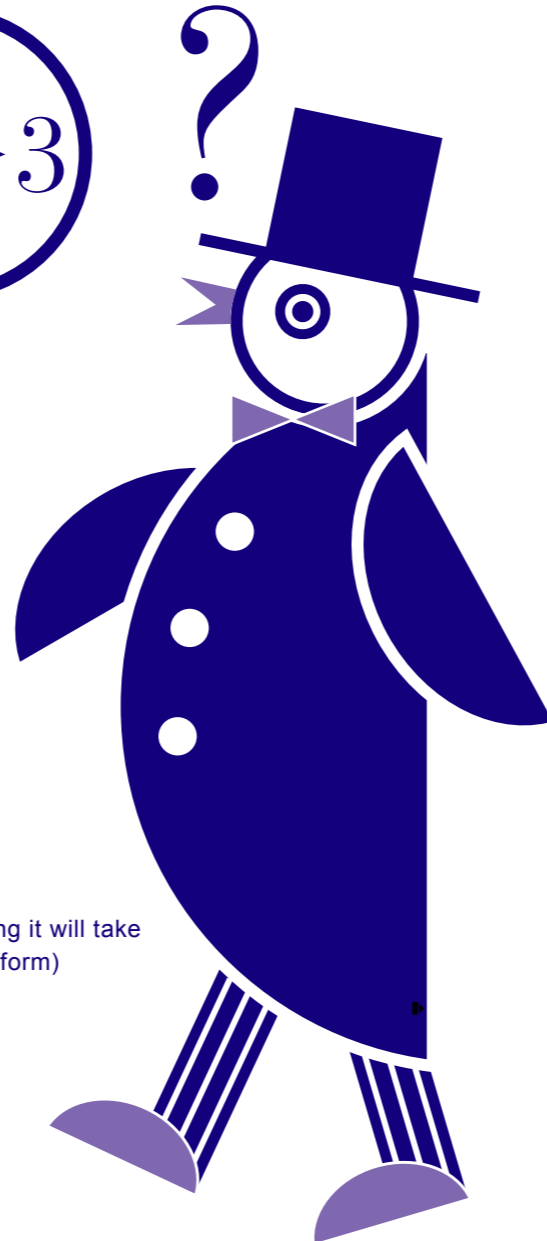
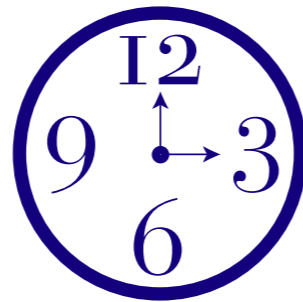
dictionary form  
読む  
**yomu**

potential from  
(negative)  
読めない  
**yomenai**

te from  
読んで  
**yonde**

noun  
読み  
**yomi**

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



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**