

Talk to yourself in English

Most students are spending time alone these days.

Here are some easy ways to practice English. Use these ideas.

Talk to yourself *silently* in English. This follows the units in

English Firsthand 2.

Unit 1 – Introductions. Turn on the TV but turn off the sound. Find a show where people are doing things – like a drama. Not a talk show. If you were meeting them, what would you ask? What would you say about yourself? (“Hi, I’m (name). I’m a student at (school). What do you do? ...”).

Unit 2 – You must be excited. Look at people on TV – no sound. How do you think they feel? What are their emotions? Imagine the reasons.

(“That man looks really bored. I’ll bet he had a hard day at work. That couple looks really happy. They are holding hands. I think they are in love. ...”).

Unit 3 – Going places (Comparing places). Look TV or a magazine. Notice businesses and other places. How do they compare with other things? (“That restaurant looks more expensive than places I usually go. That park is bigger than the one by my house. That is one of the smallest cars I’ve seen. ...”).

Unit 4 – I love that. Look out the window. In your mind, describe things you like and dislike. Think of the reasons. (“I like that kind of car because it is really cute. There is a McDonald’s. I think Mos Burger is more delicious. But it is slower. ...”).

Unit 5 – Why (giving reasons). Look at people on TV (no sound) or in magazines. Notice things people have. Imagine the reasons they have them. (“She’s wearing glasses. Maybe she needs them to read. He’s using his mobile phone for texting. Maybe he’s using it to write to his girlfriend. She’s got a designer bag. Maybe...”).

Unit 6 – What’s it like there (culture) Look around your house or neighborhood. What do you see that is “typically Japanese? (both “old” and “modern” Japan. Describe the things. (“There’s a huge apartment building. Most Japanese live in apartments. That car is a Toyota. Toyota is the biggest car company. There’s a stone lantern in my neighbor’s garden.”)

Unit 7 – Do you remember when? (the past). Think about every thing you did today or this week. How many different verbs can you use? (“I ate toast and drank coffee for breakfast. I took a shower and washed my hair...”).

Unit 8 – Making plans. Imagine that you are going to go to another country soon. It can be for any reason – a vacation, a school trip, graduation travel, etc. Think of all the things you need to do to get ready. (“I need to get my passport. I can do that at the prefecture office. I’ll need to buy my tickets. Should I do that at a travel agent or on the internet. I’m going to Thailand. I need to get a new swimming suit. ...”).

Unit 9 – What should I do? (advice). Go for a walk (but not around a lot of people) What should be done? Think about ways to give advice. (“That car is really dirty. They should wash it. He is kind of fat. If I were him, I’d go on a diet. Look at that building. Someone really should paint it. ...”). You can also think of good advice for yourself. (“I really should think of good things, not bad ones!”)

Unit 10 – Tell me a story. Think of a story you remember from when you were a child. How would you tell it in English. OR think about an old person. How has life in Japan changed since he or she was your age. (“When she was my age, there weren’t any smart phones. And there weren’t fast food restaurants so her diet was probably healthier.

Unit 11 – In my opinion. Look at the advertisements for magazines, especially those magazines that talk about the news. Find one news story that is interesting to you. Imagine that you are explaining it to a foreigner who doesn’t know much about Japan. How would you story. What is your opinion? What should people do? (“_____ is a big news story in Japan right now. This is what is happening... I think...”).

Unit 12 – Looking ahead (future plans and dreams) Think about your life in 5, 10, 20 years into the future. What is your dream in English? What little things can you do TODAY to help make that dream come true? (“Someday, I’ll travel around the world. Having good English will help me. Today I am practicing by thinking of English sentences right now!...”).

