

Q and A of the Week 你问我答

Number pronunciation

数字的发音



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Li: 大家好欢迎收听《你问我答》节目。I'm Li... and I'm hoping Rob can join us.

Rob: [door opens] Hi Li. Oh, I see you've started already.

Li: Yes, I've been sitting here for over half an hour waiting for you. Where have you been?

Rob: What do you mean? You said to meet at two-fifty.

Li: No, I said two-fifteen [pronounces fifty].

Rob: Yes, two-fifty. Ten minutes to three – I'm on time.

Li: No! Two-fifteen [pronounces fifty]. A quarter past two.

Rob: You mean two-fifteen!

Li: Two-fifteen. Oh, I see. I didn't pronounce it properly, did I?

Rob: Well, not to worry – I'm here now. I've seen that we've had an email about this very problem. Let's listen to the question from Yvonne Chan:

Insert

I have a question about the pronunciation of English numbers, such as thirteen(13) and thirty(30), fourteen(14) and forty(40), fifteen(15) and fifty(50). How to pronounce the numbers that will make myself understand by others?

Li: Yvonne Chan 也碰到了类似的问题她想让我们给解释和示范某些英语数字的发音。So Yvonne has a similar problem. How do you pronounce English numbers that sound the same or similar?

Rob: Well, the stress on the words is very important; otherwise you can cause confusion.

- Li:** 单词的重音非常重要。 Which numbers usually get mixed up?
- Rob:** As Yvonne says, numbers in the teens – so thirteen, fourteen, fifteen and so on can be confused with multiples of ten ending in a zero: so twenty, thirty, forty for example.
- Li:** I said we should meet at two-fifty when I actually meant to say two-fifteen. 我想说我们在两点十五分见面，可是我实际上说的却是两点五十分。
- Rob:** That's right. As you didn't pronounce it correctly I turned up at a different time.
- Li:** I see. 我发音错了，结果 Rob 抵达的时间也跟着错了。由此可见正确的发音是多么重要。
- Rob:** So it can cause particular problems if, for example, you're talking about the time or about money.
- Li:** So it could cause problems if I asked to borrow some money?
- Rob:** Let's try it. I'm writing down the number one-five. Here comes Jen. Ask her if you can borrow that amount in pounds.
- Li:** OK... Hey Jen, can I borrow fifteen [pronounces fifty] pounds?
- Jen:** Fifty pounds? You must be joking - no way! I'm not made of money... pfft!
- Rob:** Wait, wait - Li try again. This is a teen number, so you need pronounce the 'n' stress at the end of the word.
- Li:** 英语中的十三到十九一定要把重音放在最后，其中的元音是 i: Rob, what I meant to say was can I borrow fifteen pounds?
- Jen:** Oh £15. Well, that seems a bit more reasonable I suppose. Hang on; let me check my pockets...
- Rob:** Whilst Jen is hunting around for some money let's practise the pronunciation: fifteen. Fifty.
- Li:** OK. Fifteen. Fifty.
- Rob:** And let's count up from twelve. Again, don't forget to stress the 'n' sound at the end of the word.
- Li:** Thirteen
- Rob:** Fourteen
- Li:** Fifteen
- Rob:** Sixteen

Li: Seventeenu

Rob: Eighteenu

Li: Nineteenu

Rob: Great. Now let's hear the tens. These numbers end with the sound '-ty' so there's no 'n' sound at the end. Off you go...

Li: Twentyu, thirtyu, fortyu, fiftyu and sixtyu...

Rob: Excellent. Here are some more examples...

Examples

*The Uruguay football team won the World Cup for the second time in nineteen-fifty.
(1950)*

Hello, I'd like to host a party in your restaurant - I'll be inviting sixteen(16) guests.

Li: So you need to be careful about the stress on the words.

Rob: Absolutely. So Yvonne needs to practise her pronunciation and make sure she stresses either the -teen or -ty endings.

Li: That's really useful.

Jen: OK, Li. Here's a £10 note ... plus five pound coins. That makes...

Li: Fifteenu pounds!

Rob: Yes, that's right. Don't forget if you have a problem in English you'd like to ask us about please do send us a question.

Li: 是的如果你也有英语学习上的问题请给我们发电子邮件。我们的邮箱是
questions.chinaelt@bbc.co.uk

Rob: We look forward to hearing from you. Bye ... C'mon Li, with that money let's go for some lunch!

Li: Yes, let's go. Bye!

Jen: Hey, when can I expect my money back?