

# KIRITAKA English Journal Vol.39

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## Kiwi Corner



For this month's Kiwi Corner, I'd like to tell you about the "New Zealand accent." First of all, English is one of three official languages in New Zealand, along with Te Reo Māori (the Māori language) and New Zealand Sign Language. However, the way English is spoken in New Zealand sounds very different to the way people speak in the USA or the United Kingdom. Maybe some of you have realised that our ALT, Choy-sensei, and I have quite a different accent (or maybe it sounds the same to you!)



Te Reo Māori is one of the national languages of NZ



NZ English is different from Australian

The New Zealand accent really is special. Some people mistake it for the Australian accent but it's not quite the same – it's a little softer sounding and is said to be based on the accent of south-east England, where a lot of the first European settlers to New Zealand came from. Unfortunately, most people outside of Australia and New Zealand can't tell the difference between our accents. An easy way to tell the difference is the way we say the word "dance". In Australia, it's commonly said like it is in the USA, "dæn(t)s", whereas in New Zealand it is always said "da:ns", as it is typically said in the U.K.

Here are some things you might notice about the way Kiwis speak English:

- Kiwis speak fast!
- Vowels (the sounds the letters A, E, I, O, and U make) can sound very different in New Zealand English compared to American English or standard English spoken in the United Kingdom. For example the word 'kit' in New Zealand English sounds more like 'cut'.
- The 'r' sound is often very soft when Kiwis speak and sometimes it's hard to hear it at all! For example, the word 'farm' sounds more like 'faahm'. This also makes it easier for Japanese speakers!
- Kiwis often speak with a rising tone at the end of a sentence making it sound like they are asking a question. This is very similar to the usage of “ね” at the end of sentences in Japanese, used to include the listener.
- An 'L' after a vowel can sometimes sound like a vowel sound – so 'feel' is pronounced 'fee-u'.

Please remember! If you're talking to someone from New Zealand (especially me!) and you're not sure what they're saying, don't be afraid to ask them to repeat themselves slowly. Remember, us Kiwis are super friendly and are happy to help.

This month I'd like to introduce an old, but amazing Kiwi song. It was the theme song to an animated movie from the 1980s! You can listen to it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0pWejAnLUQ> (Liam Campbell)

# Tea Time with Choy



Hello again! Last time, we explored British accents, and now it's time for a crash course in British humor—where sarcasm, understatement, and keeping a straight face are key.

## Sarcasm: Our Secret Language

In Britain, sarcasm is like breathing. We often say the opposite of what we mean. For example, when it's raining (again), we'll say, "**Lovely weather, isn't it?**" It's how we poke fun at life's annoyances.

## Self-Deprecation: Laughing at Ourselves

We Brits love to make fun of ourselves. You'll hear us say things like, "**I'm completely useless,**" even when we're doing just fine. It's all about not taking ourselves too seriously!

## Understatement: Making Big Things Seem Small

Understatement is when we downplay situations. If someone's car breaks down, they might say, "**Well, that's not ideal.**" Translation: It's a disaster — but we'll keep calm and laugh about it.

## Deadpan: Joking Without Smiling

Deadpan humour is when we tell jokes with a totally serious face. The more ridiculous the comment, the straighter our face. Think British comedian James Acaster baking a terrible flapjack on The Great British Bake Off said, "**Started making it. Had a breakdown. Bon Appetit,**" said with zero expression. Somehow, that makes it funnier!

Follow these tips and you'll fool anyone into thinking you're a true Brit!



## A New English Phrase: "Taking the Mickey"

This means teasing or joking around. So if someone is having a laugh at your expense, you can say, "**Are you taking the mickey?**" It's all in good fun! British humor is all about the little things. It's subtle, clever, and sometimes you might not even realize we're joking. But that's the fun of it!

To go along with our British humor, enjoy "Don't Worry, Be Happy" by Bobby McFerrin. It's a cheerful song that captures the light-hearted spirit we love!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-diB65scQU>

