

WEEKLY ENGLISH PRACTICE

Tokyo's anti-procrastination café

Writers in Tokyo who need an antidote to **procrastination** can now enjoy a coffee under pressure at Tokyo's 'Manuscript Writing' café.



Photo de Kae Ng en Unsplash

The café opened in April in the city's Koenji neighbourhood as a space for writers, editors, video producers and manga artists—anyone struggling with the distractions of the home or office.

Committing to a specific writing goal is a condition of admission, as is an understanding that leaving before you have completed the task is **out of the question!**

The café charges 150 Japanese yen (€1.04) for the first 30 minutes and then 300 an hour after that. Although a few people have stayed past the official closing time, they have all eventually finished their work, says owner Takuya Kawai.

The **cosy**, 10-seat café provides unlimited self-service refills of tea and coffee, high-speed wifi, **docking ports** and tall chairs that positively discourage **slouching** or **nodding off**.

Customers must write down their name, writing goals and the time they plan to finish. They can also request for Kawai to periodically quiz them about their progress.

Those who ask for the “mild” option will simply be asked how they got on when they pay at the end of the session; others in need of a heavier dose of discipline can expect him to occasionally stand behind them.

The **mild-mannered** 52-year-old man, who is a technical writer when he is not pushing his customers to get their work done, **dismissed** concerns among some social media users that his tactics were **heavy-handed**.

“Rather than monitor them, I’m here to support them,” he said. “As a result, what they thought would take a day is actually completed in three hours, or tasks that usually take three hours get done in one.”

Kawai believes the café’s location on the corner of a busy street is ideal for creatives in need of inspiration. “After we opened, I played jazz to **drown out** the sound of people tapping their keyboards. However, the noise from the traffic and people outside is at just the right level. You don’t want the absolute silence of a library or home. Here people can **draw on** the energy of the neighbourhood.”

After initial doubts about whether the concept would work in a city packed with themed cafés, he has been **taken aback** by the response. “People were pleased when they told me they had met their **upcoming** deadline or word count for the day. And that made me happy too.”



Adapted from [this article](#)
by ECP coach

Ali Keable

Word list

- out of the question:** not permitted
- cosy:** warm and comfortable
- docking port:** a place to plug in your devices
- to slouch:** to sit in a curved position
- to nod off:** to start falling asleep
- mild-mannered:** calm and gentle
- to dismiss sth:** to say that sth is not important
- heavy-handed:** excessively forceful
- to drown out:** to hide a noise with a louder noise
- to draw on sth:** to use sth as a resource (i.e. for inspiration)
- taken aback:** surprised
- upcoming:** approaching, imminent

Let's chat about that!

1. What do customers have to do if they want to have a coffee at Kawai's café?
2. What is the "mild" treatment and what is the alternative?
3. What does Kawai appreciate about the area?
4. Do you think this café would help you to be more productive? Why (not)?
5. Do you think an anti-procrastination café would be popular in your city? Why (not)?
6. Have you heard of any other kinds of themed café or restaurant?

Vocabulary: compound adjectives

An adjective is a word that describes a noun. A **compound adjective** is an adjective that contains two or more words.

We usually put a hyphen between the words:

I live in an **English-speaking** country.

The article on page 1 contains several examples. Find these words in the text:

<i>10-seat</i>	<i>mild-mannered</i>
<i>self-service</i>	<i>52-year-old</i>
<i>high-speed</i>	<i>heavy-handed</i>

What noun do they modify and what do you think they mean?

Make compound adjectives:

A meeting that lasts two hours → A _____ meeting

A book that contains 150 pages → A _____ book

A stranger who has a kind heart → A _____ stranger

Guitarists who have long hair → _____ guitarists

Traffic that moves slowly → _____ traffic

A device that saves time → A _____ device