

# The 8-Week Output Protocol

Close the comprehension–production gap. From the JIVX guide *Why You Understand Japanese But Can't Speak It*.

**How to use this:** Keep your existing study (WaniKani, Bunpro, Anki, textbook). Add the items below on top — every block forces retrieval, which is the one thing recognition-only study never asks your brain to do. Most learners notice the conversation freeze fading by Week 3.

## Weeks 1–2: Wake up the retrieval pathway

■ <b>Sentence construction</b>	10 / day	English → Japanese with feedback. Even 10 sentences a day moves the needle in 2–3 weeks.
■ <b>Shadowing</b>	5 min / day	Audio plays, you mimic on top — sound, rhythm, pitch. Trains automaticity.
■ <b>Self-narration</b>	1 min × 3 / day	Narrate what you're doing. Set phone reminders. Builds retrieval habit.

## Weeks 3–4: Build automaticity

■ <b>Sentence construction</b>	15 / day	Push to mid-tier difficulty. The freeze should already be softening here.
■ <b>Shadowing</b>	10 min / day	Match the speaker's speed. Drop subs if you've been using them.
■ <b>Self-narration</b>	5 min continuous	Switch from 1-min sprints to a sustained block. No translation in your head.
■ <b>Dictation</b>	1 session / week	Listen, pause, write. Cures the read-better-than-I-hear gap.

## Weeks 5–6: Add live pressure

■ <b>Continue all of the above</b>	Daily	No reduction. Output volume is the engine.
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■ iTalki community tutor	30 min / week	Or any cheap conversation partner. The first session will be uncomfortable. That's the point.
■ Language exchange	Daily message	HelloTalk, Tandem, anywhere with native speakers. Written counts.

## Weeks 7–8: Production becomes default

■ Sentence construction	Daily routine	Not a chore. It's part of how you study now.
■ Real conversation	1 / week minimum	Tutor, exchange partner, or in-person. Stress-test what you've built.
■ Shadowing	Warm-up before any input	Use it as the first 5 minutes of any study session.

## Why this protocol works

Every single block forces retrieval — the act of starting from a thought and producing the Japanese yourself. Recognition-only study (flashcards, reading, anime with subs) never requires this, which is why it never produces speaking ability on its own. Eight weeks is long enough to see the conversation freeze visibly fade. Most learners report the change around Week 3, with the rest of the protocol consolidating it.

**One rule above all:** never skip a day in Weeks 1–4. Habit beats heroics. Even 10 minutes of retrieval beats a 90-minute session you skip the next four days for.

JIVX gives you English prompts and grades your Japanese with Claude — the fastest way to do the sentence-construction block of this protocol. Free forever on N5. [jivx.com](https://jivx.com)