

IXNAY

“N” at the beginning of a syllable, spelled “N”, “KN”, or “GN”.

I. MAKE THE SOUND.

As with the “N” in the final position, flatten your tongue against the palate. Be sure that the edges of the tongue are touching the inner surface of your upper side teeth. All air should thus be directed through the nose, not the mouth. Make a sound.

Be careful:

- (1) Be sure that your tongue is flat. Bite your tongue lightly in order to flatten it fully against the palate, if necessary.
- (2) Make the contact definite, and the sound will be definite.
- (3) Increase the pressure of the tongue against the palate if the sound is still insufficiently clear.
- (4) Some speakers of Chinese and Nigerian (Ibo) may substitute “L” for “N”. Note that only the tip of the tongue touches the palate for the “L”, while the sides of the tongue are down.
- (5) Russian speakers may produce a dental “N”, especially in /ni/ (e.g., funny), as in a Russian soft /n/ sound. Be sure not to touch the inner surface of your upper front teeth during /n/ production.

II. CAN YOU HEAR THE DIFFERENCE?

Can you hear the difference between:

<u>n</u> o - low	<u>n</u> ab - lab
<u>n</u> ews - lose	<u>n</u> ot - lot
<u>n</u> otice – lotus	<u>n</u> ight – light

For further practice, return to the “L” section, *Live and Let Live*.

III. NOW IT’S YOUR TURN.

Words

<u>n</u> umb	<u>k</u> nob	<u>k</u> nuckle	<u>a</u> ny
<u>n</u> ope	<u>k</u> nock	<u>k</u> nit	<u>m</u> any
<u>n</u> avy	<u>k</u> nee	<u>k</u> nife	<u>e</u> nough

<u>nag</u>	<u>kneel</u>	<u>gnaw</u>	<u>noodle</u>
<u>nap</u>	<u>know</u> (<u>no</u>)	<u>gnat</u>	<u>ninny</u>
<u>nickel</u>	<u>nuisance</u>	<u>nephew</u>	<u>needle</u>

Sentences

- 1) Nancy's never been to Norfolk.
- 2) Not now.
- 3) Are you going to Newark or New York?
- 4) The gold reserve is kept at Fort Knox.
- 5) The dog gnawed the bone.
- 6) Nina visited Nantucket on spring break.
- 7) The contract is null and void.
- 8) Nick is a nickname for Nicholas.

Sentences with an explanation

- 1) The company has carved out a niche in the soft drink market (i.e., a suitable place or position).
- 2) The information is on a need-to-know basis (i.e., the information is available only to those who need to know it).
- 3) Your signature must be notarized (i.e., certified as true by a notary public; signatures on deeds, wills, and other legal documents are notarized).
- 4) Nathan pleaded no *lo contendere* to the drunk driving charge (i.e., "no contest"; a defendant's plea that he/she will accept conviction without admitting guilt.)
- 5) The Nelsons prefer to invest in no-load mutual funds (i.e., a fund in which shares are sold without a sales charge).
- 6) Lenny is sitting out on the lanai (i.e., porch, veranda; Lanai is a Hawaiian island).

Sentences to use with your friends

- 1) Natalie is always nagging her husband to stop smoking (i.e., scolding; finding fault with).
- 2) Nancy took me on a white-knuckle ride up and down the hills of San Francisco (i.e., a very stressful ride).
- 3) The horses are neck and neck (i.e., the horses are even in the race; abreast).
- 4) Use your noodle (i.e., use your head; think).
- 5) Nope (i.e., informal “no”; the opposite is “yep” for “yes”).
- 6) Should we tell Nelson what Penny did to his car? -- ixnay, ixnay (i.e., “nix” in pig Latin; no).
- 7) Penelope nixed the idea (i.e., rejected; said “no” to).
- 8) Repairs on that car will nickel and dime you to death (i.e., although each repair may not be costly, the overall cost will be great).

Note: Pig Latin is a children’s slang in which the first consonant or consonant blend is moved to the end of the word; then “ay” is added. Some examples of pig Latin have become common in informal adult language, also:

“Amscray” for “scram” (i.e., get out of here)
“Ixnay” for “nix” (i.e., no)