

The Girl Who Reads Aloud

by JIM YARDLEY

BEIJING – Most mornings, while a noisy line of traffic is driving slowly along the Third Ring Road into the city center, a girl named Ouyang Junying leaves her apartment and stands beside the road. She turns away from the traffic, opens a book, and starts reading aloud.

It is one of the worst traffic jams in the city, but Ms. Ouyang, 29, has been doing this every morning for nearly five years. She is studying English and believes that the noise helps her to concentrate.

It is also the reason why she has become a sort of celebrity. For thousands of motorists, she is “The Girl Who Reads Aloud.” While she is reading, the rest of Beijing stares at her and wonders, “Who is this young woman? How long has she been standing there? And why is she reading in such a terrible place?”

In Beijing, there are 15 million people living in small apartments, so there are lots of people in the city parks, doing everything from tai chi to ballroom dancing. But Ms. Ouyang doesn't like the parks. “If I study in a park, people always watch me and I don't feel comfortable. But if cars pass me in the street, I don't care,” she says.



Ms. Ouyang, the daughter of a poor farmer, came to Beijing in 1995 to look for work. She has had a number of different jobs. She has also been studying English for nearly ten years, because she hopes that it will get her a better job with better money. Recently she was on local TV! She has become famous as a person who always works hard and tries her best.

Since the TV program, she has had a new job. She has been helping an architect in his work. And what has she been doing? Teaching him English, of course!

1 Read the newspaper article and answer the questions.

1. Which road does Ouyang Junying live near?
2. What has she been doing every morning for the last five years?
3. Why has she been doing this?
4. What name has she been given by the motorists?
5. How long has she been living in Beijing?
6. Why has she been studying English for so many years?
7. What has happened since the TV program?
8. How has she been helping the architect?

2 Find words in the text that mean:

1. a lot of cars moving very slowly
2. to think carefully about what you are doing
3. a famous person
4. looks for a long time