

Siri's swirly disk



Making Friends with Siri

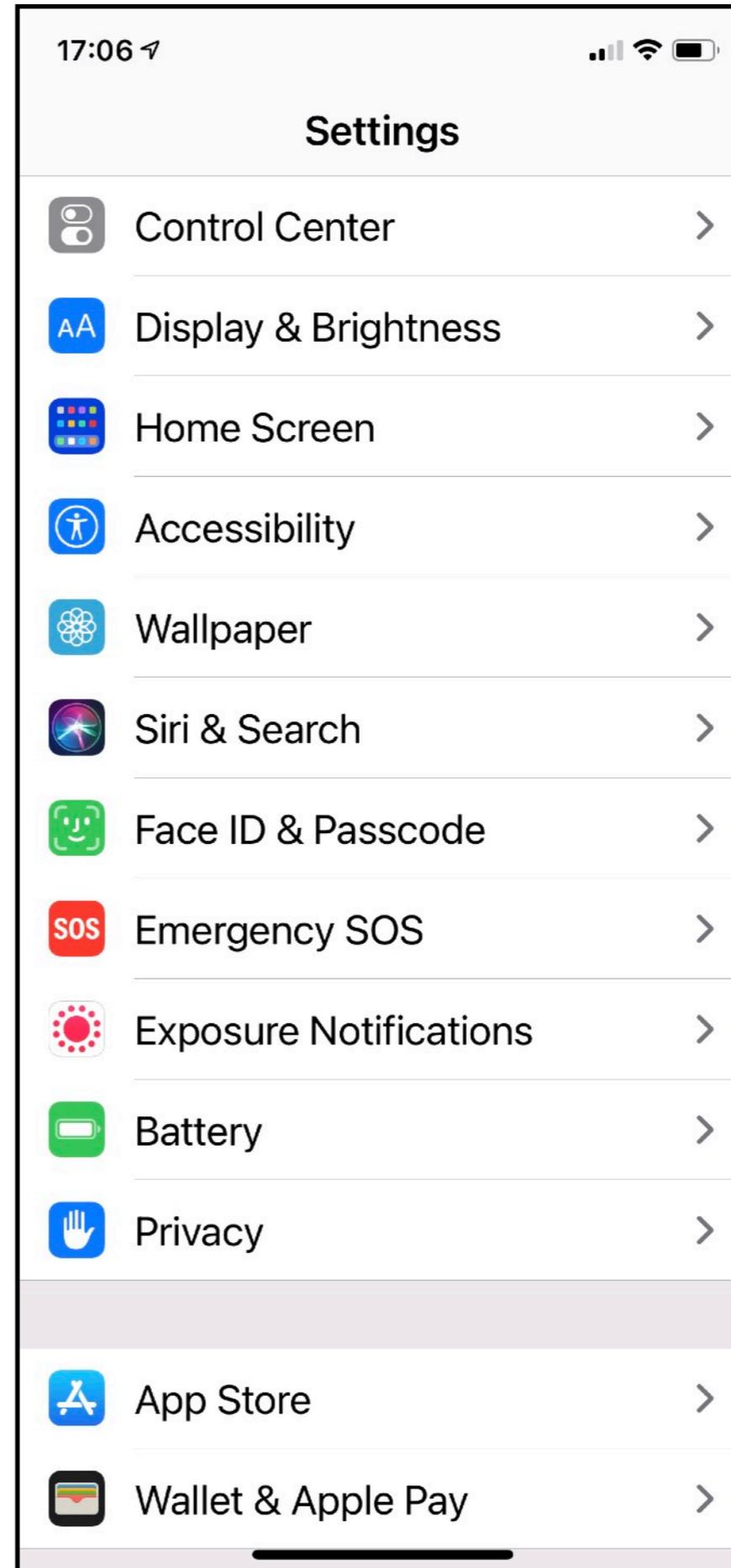
I've found myself using Siri more since I got my last iPhone. I wouldn't say I've mastered it, but I've learned a few things that make it easier and more fun to use.

Just to let you know in advance—I will refer to Siri as “she” and “her.”

created by Steve Maynard for GAMUG
April 13, 2021

First, the basics: You need to open the Settings for Siri. There you'll find a lot of options.

Open Settings for Siri 





Toggle ON “Hey Siri,” Side Button, and Allow When Locked. If you scroll down on this page you will find just about every app on your phone. Tap on each one to open Siri options as they apply to a particular app.

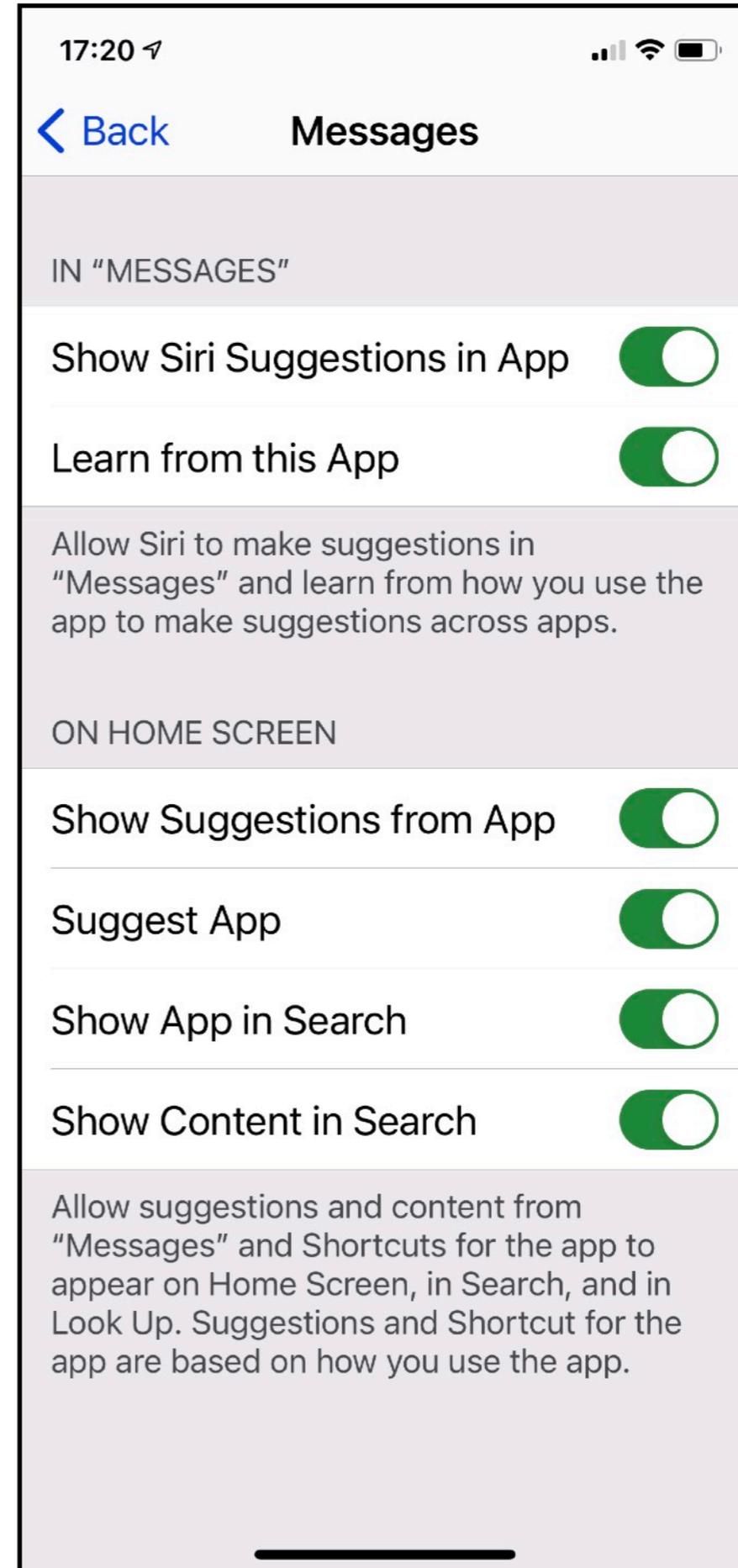
Suggested settings:

- “Hey Siri”
- Side Button
- Allow when locked

Scroll down for Siri options with virtually every app on iPhone.

I use Siri for dictation most when I'm composing text messages. This is especially useful when I'm driving. (By the way, you can tell Siri to read your incoming messages, then dictate to her how or even if you want to reply. This works especially well with CarPlay.)

Default toggle is ON for all apps. Before changing any toggles, get some practice using Siri to send text messages.

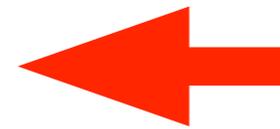




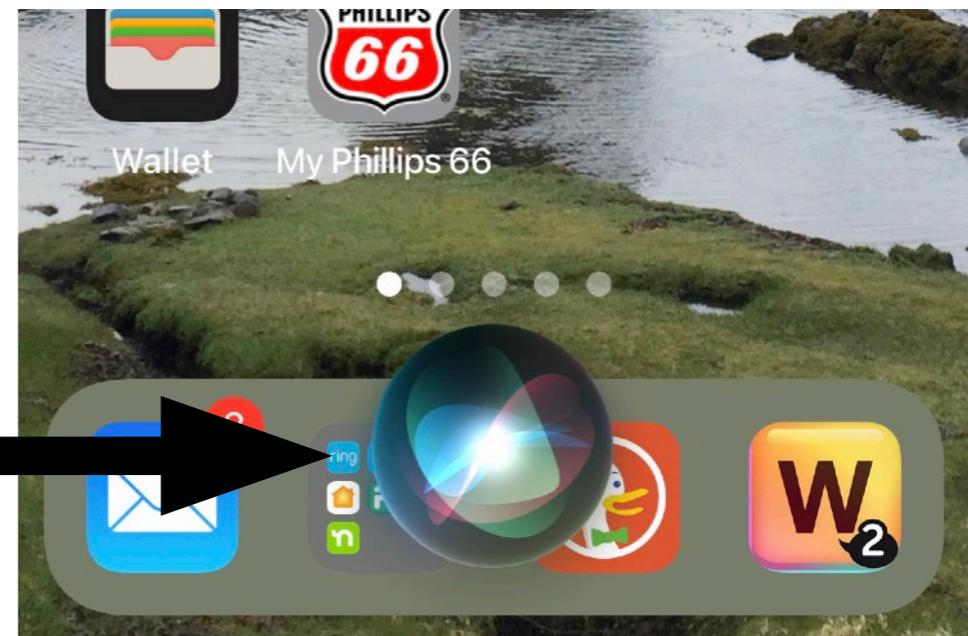
A feature I've found handy is that you don't have to say, "Hey, Siri" to get her attention. If your hands are free then just press and hold the power button, and the swirly disk will appear near the bottom of your screen. As long as the icon is visible, Siri is listening to you.

Once you have her attention, try dictating a text message. Start by telling Siri, "Send a text message to..." and the name of someone in Contacts you often text with.

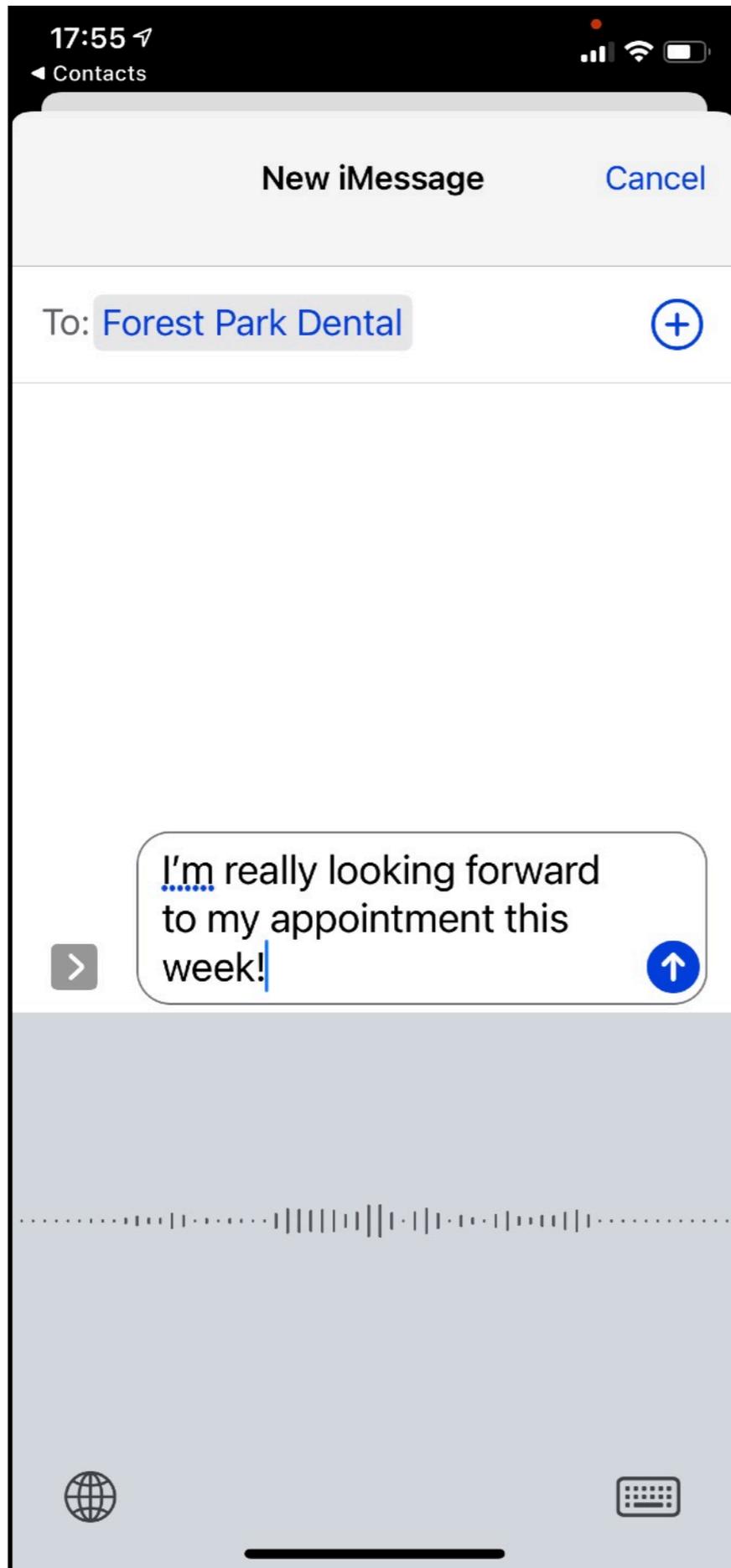
Press and hold the Power Button instead of saying, "Hey, Siri."



Siri's swirling icon when activated



Tell Siri, "Send a text message to (whomever)."



Siri will ask, “What do you want to say?” Then just dictate your message. When you first start using Siri, speak slowly and distinctly until you learn what she will or won’t understand. With time you can speak more naturally.

You can insert a comma between clauses, and you can end a sentence by saying the punctuation you want.

Siri will ask, “What do you want to say?”

Dictate your message.

You can also dictate punctuation, such as:

- “period”
- “question mark”
- “exclamation mark”
- “comma”

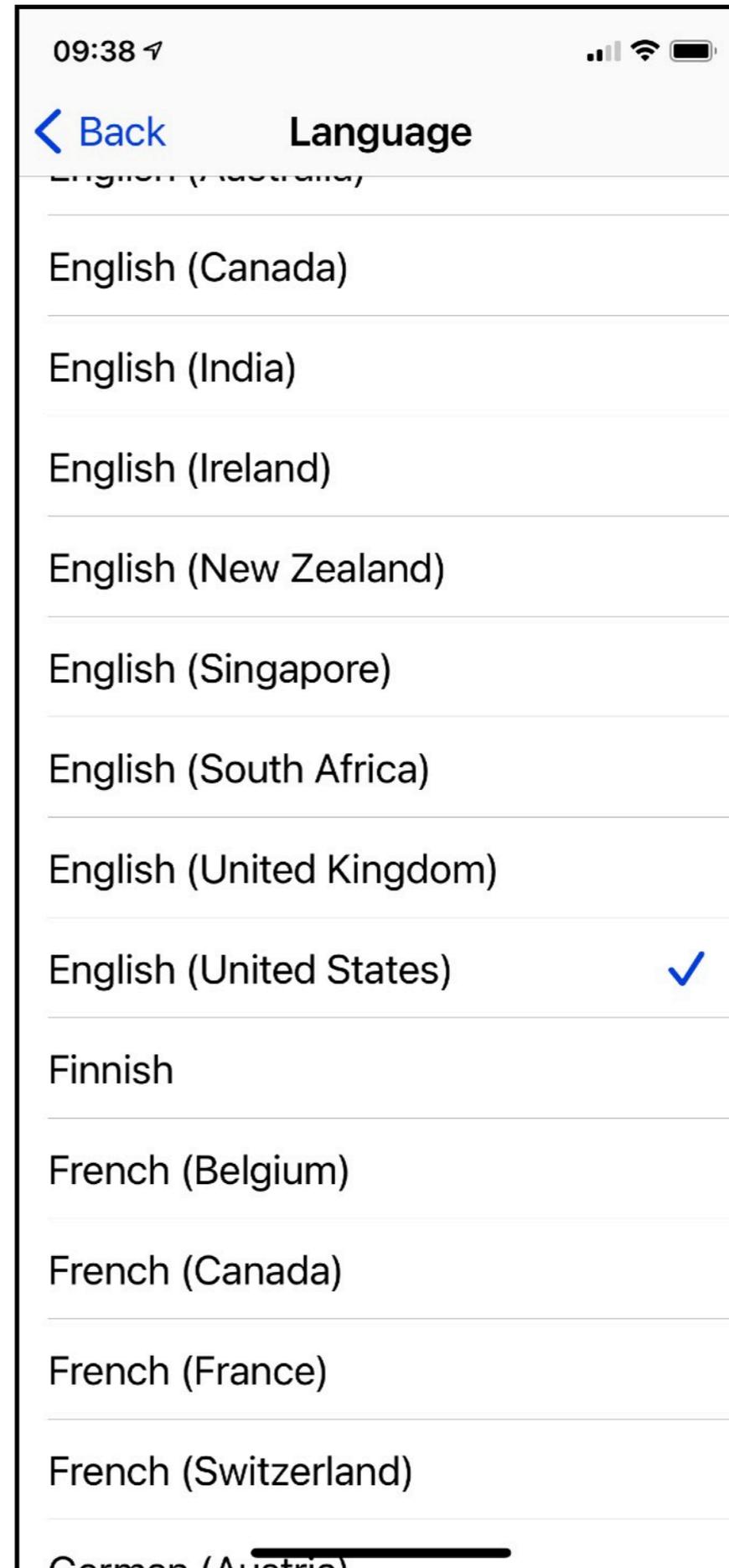
Siri understands punctuation:

- question mark = ?
- exclamation point/mark = !
- dot/point/period = .
- comma = ,
- next line = same as tapping the enter/return key once
- next paragraph = same as tapping the enter/return key twice
- quote/end quote = “”
- cap = capitalize the first letter of the next word
- caps on = capitalize every word in the sentence
- all caps = capitalize every letter in the word
- apostrophe = ‘
- open parenthesis = (
- close parenthesis =)
- dash = –
- dollar sign = \$
- smiley face = 😊
- frowny face = ☹️

Here is a list of punctuation marks and even some emojis Siri supposedly can understand just by saying the common term.

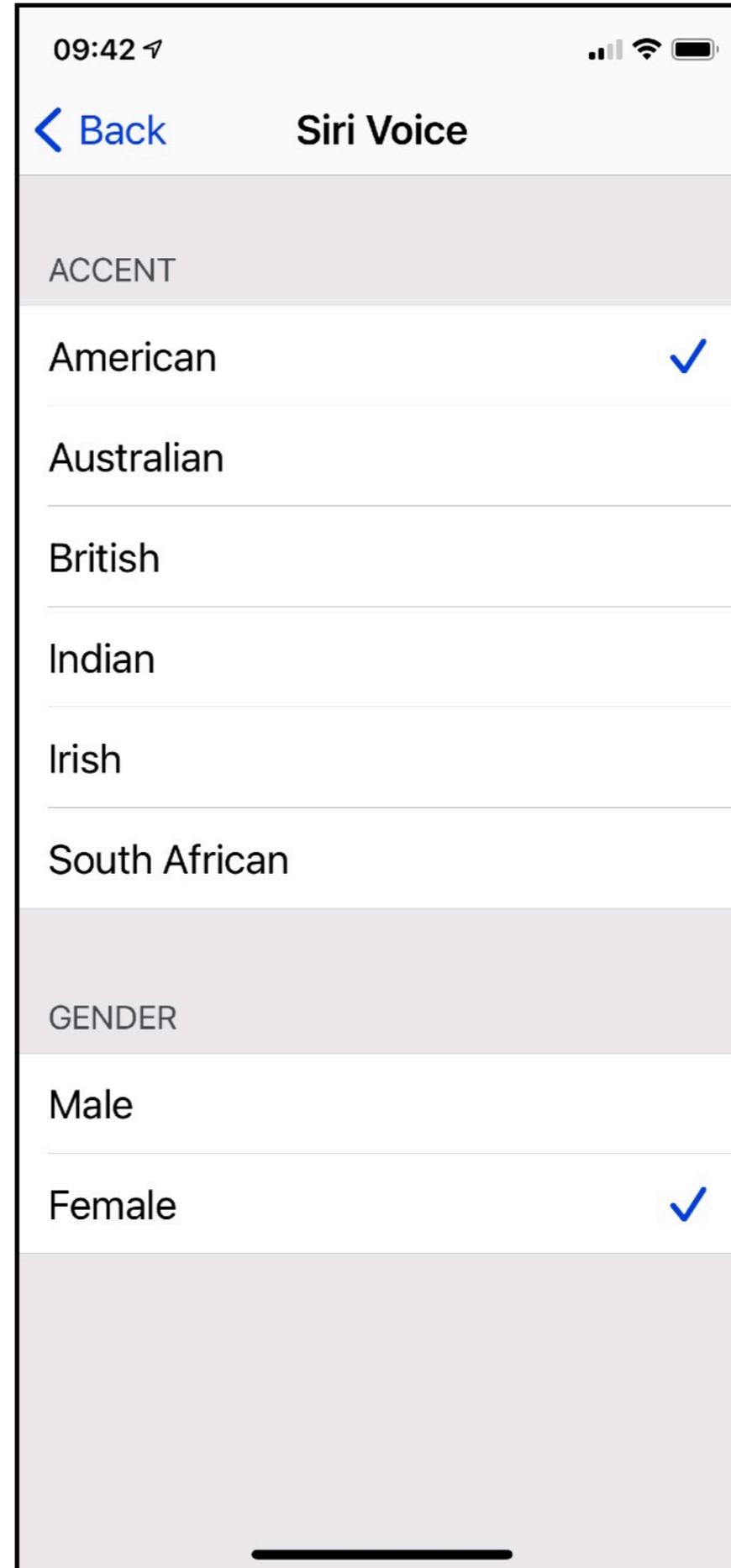
If you are fluent in a foreign language, Settings lets you choose that language, and in some cases even a dialect. For example, there are ten different choices for English, such as Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Ireland and so on, in addition to American English.

Use Settings for Siri to choose a language or dialect.



There are also options for the accent and gender you want Siri to have. Since Siri's beginning the voice on phones in the US have had an American female voice as the default. In a future update there will be no default voice; you will have to select the voice you want, and they will not be called Male and Female.

You can also choose an accent and gender.

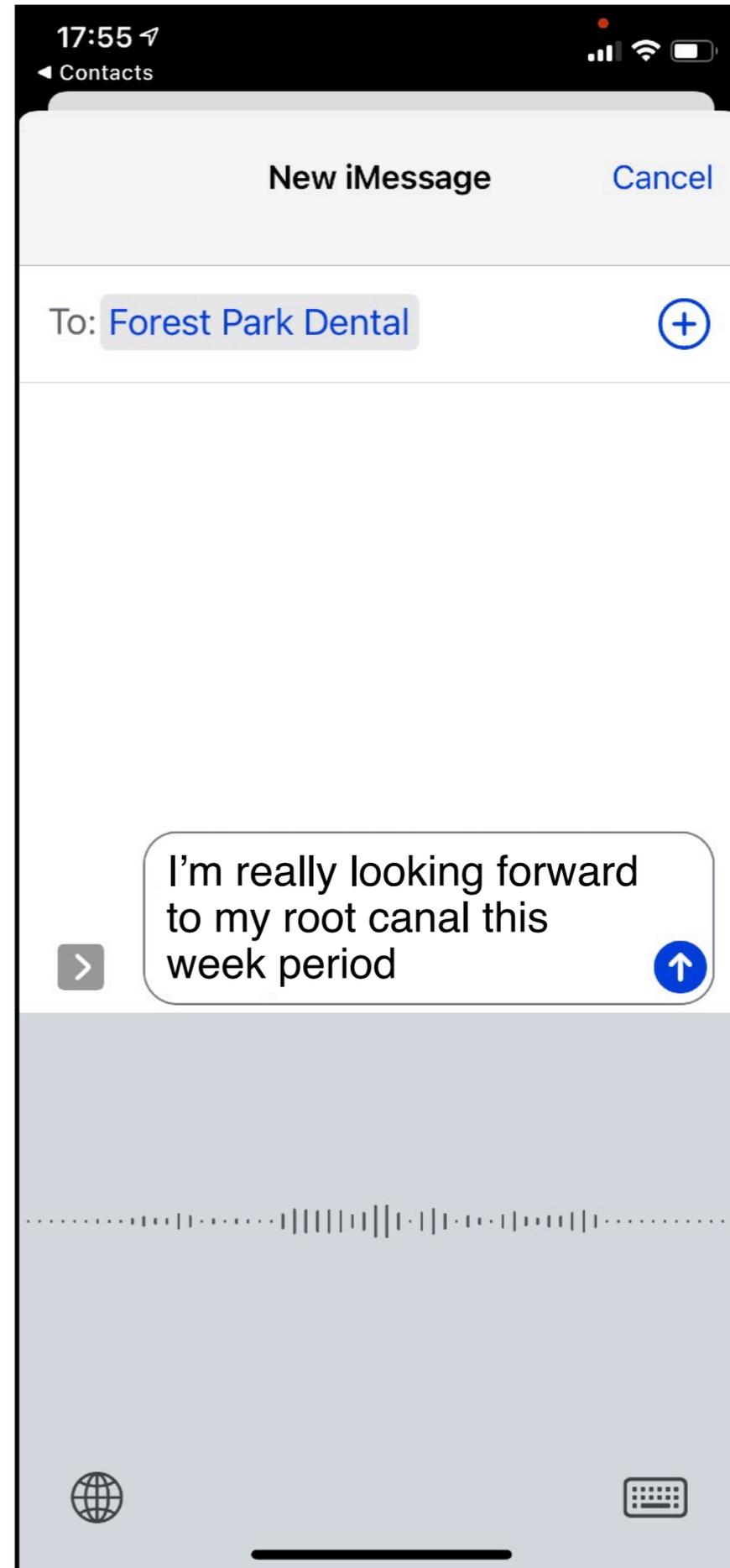


For a while I changed Siri to British and Australian voices. It was good for laughs when friends would hear my phone talk to me.

But I noticed when I dictated a sentence and ended it by saying “period,” Siri would add the literal word period rather than the punctuation mark.

If Siri will not understand “period,” you may have the UK keyboard selected.

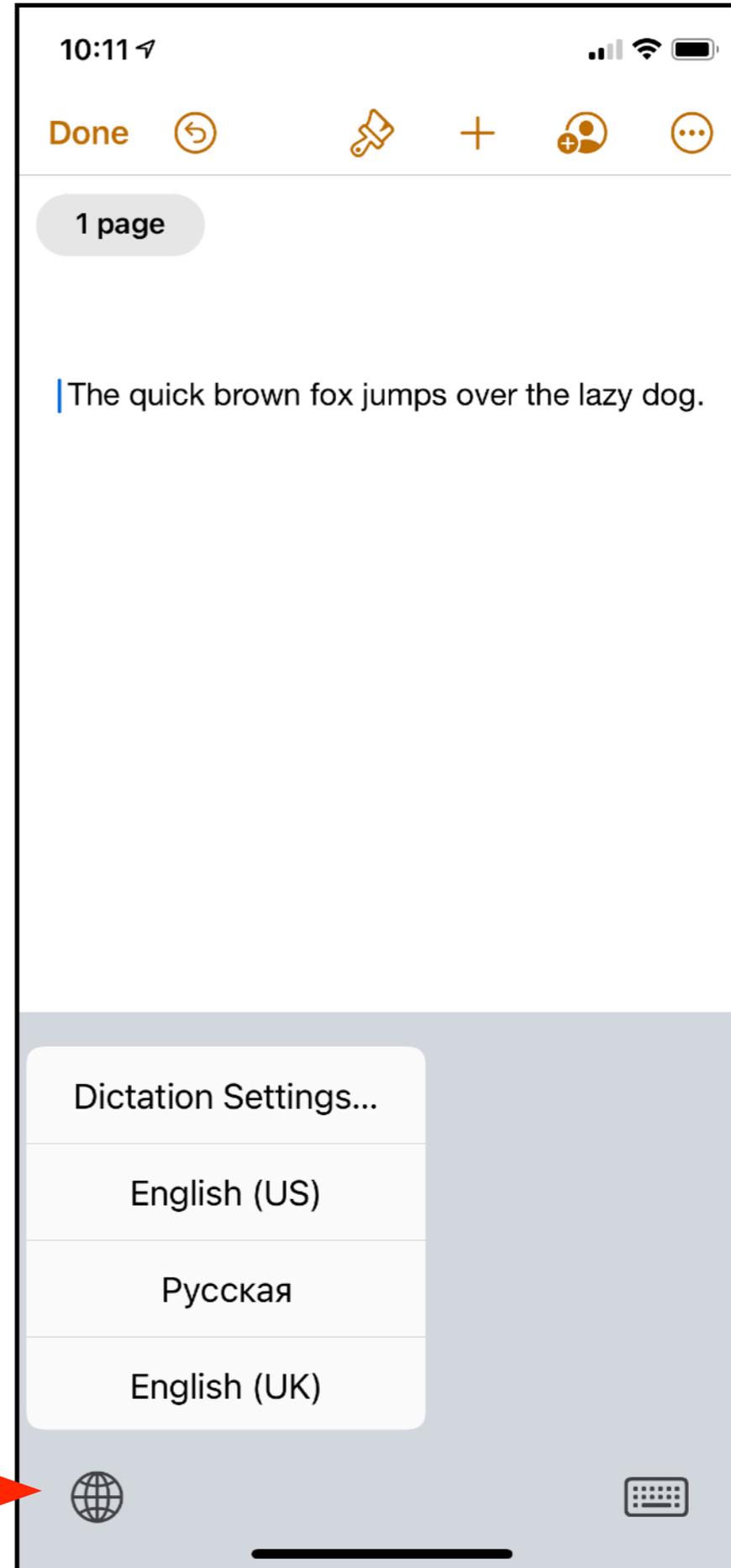
Either say, “full stop,” or change to the US keyboard.



With a little online digging I learned there is a difference between American and British keyboards. When I selected the British accent, the keyboard also changed to British, and Siri would not recognize the command “period.” The correct British command is “full stop.”

To change the keyboard, look for a little globe in the lower left when you are dictating. Tap and hold on the globe, and you can change keyboards. There are more keyboards available in Settings, including languages that don't use the Roman alphabet.

Tap and hold the “globe”
to select a keyboard.



Those are some general Siri functions. I did some searching for other things Siri can do, and I was amazed at what I found. These are just a few.

Try saying to Siri:

“Where is the nearest COVID vaccination site?”

Add an event to your Calendar

Create a Reminder

Solve a math equation

“What is the current weather?”

“What is the score of the Cardinals game?”

“How much caffeine is in Mountain Dew?”

Computer nerds probably think Siri's sense of humor is great. So if you don't have anything better to do, try saying things like this to Siri:

Just for laughs, ask Siri:

“Can you rap?”

“Read me a haiku.”

“Do you love me?” (Siri has a problem with commitment.)

“Do you sleep?”

“Windows or Mac?”

Links to more Siri tips:

If you want to dig more deeply into Siri's psyche, here are some links that are good places to start.

[**Siri dictation guide**](#)

[**How to use punctuation with Siri and Dictation**](#)

[**25 Things Siri Can Do You Had No Idea About**](#)

[**26 Actually Useful Things You Can Do with Siri**](#)

[**10 Awesome Things Siri Can Do For You**](#)

[**375 Funny Things to Ask Siri When Bored**](#)

[**The complete list of Siri commands**](#)

Last, if you're a fan of "Big Bang Theory" . . .

