

WHY ARE JAPANESE CHILDREN SO INDEPENDENT?

I In Japan, parents regularly send their kids out into the world alone at a very young age. A popular television program shows children who are only two or three years old going out to buy food for their family at the neighborhood store. Moreover, you can often see children as young as six or seven without their parents on city trains. They are on their way to school either alone or in small groups. They usually have their tickets attached to their schoolbags.



Japanese children on subway
From: Wikimedia Commons
Photo by: Ryuetsu Kato

10 II Kaito, a 12-year-old boy who lives in Tokyo, has been riding trains by himself since he was seven. "At first I was afraid that I would get lost," he says. "But, now, it's easy for me." His parents were also worried, but they knew that lots of other kids his age were riding trains by themselves. "We know that our trains are safe," Kaito's mother says. "They are also reliable."

15 III "And, if Kaito gets lost," says his father, "he can call us on his cell phone. When I was his age, I took the trains by myself and we didn't even have cell phones then." He adds, "I wouldn't let a seven-year-old child ride the train alone in London or New York but in Tokyo it's safe."

Answer questions 1-7 in English according to the article. In questions 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6, circle the number of the correct answer. In the other questions, follow the instructions.

1. Why is the television program mentioned in paragraph I? To show that (-).

- i) young children enjoy the program
- ii) children's programs are popular in Japan
- iii) Japanese parents need their children's help
- iv) Japanese children are independent at a young age

(8 points)

2. What do we know about young Japanese children riding on the train? (paragraph I)

- i) They buy their tickets on the train.
- ii) Their parents take them to the train.
- iii) They ride the train alone.
- iv) Their parents ride the train with them.

(8 points)

3. Why was Kaito afraid to ride the train at first? (paragraph II)

- i) He thought the trains weren't safe.
- ii) He often got lost on trains.
- iii) He wasn't sure he knew the way.
- iv) He didn't know other kids on the train.

(9 points)

4. Give ONE reason why Kaito's parents stopped worrying about him riding the train alone in Tokyo.
(paragraph II)

ANSWER:

(9 points)

5. What does Kaito's father say about trains in New York? (paragraph III)

- i) He rode the trains in New York when he was a child.
- ii) He wouldn't ride a train in New York without a cell phone.
- iii) New York trains are as safe as the trains in Tokyo.
- iv) A child shouldn't ride alone on a train in New York.

(9 points)