

Japan town beats world snowman record

21st February, 2015



Residents of a Japanese town have broken the world speed record for building snowmen. Citizens at the Iiyama Snow Festival in Nagano made 1,585 of the snowy fellows in one

hour to set the new mark. Around 630 people took part in the record attempt. The previous record was 1,279 snowmen, set in Utah, USA in 2011. The event in Iiyama Town coincided with the opening of a new train station for Japan's famous bullet train. Justin Patterson, the adjudicator from the official Guinness World Records organisation, said the event had been a wonderful occasion. He said: "Despite Iiyama being buried in snow, it is wonderful that the residents came out to tackle the challenge together in a positive light."

There were strict rules to be met for the record to be broken. One was that each snowman has to be at least 80 cm tall. In addition the snowmen had to be made of three separate snowballs, with eyes, a nose and arms. People used only their hands in the record-breaking endeavour. Committee member Jiro Kobayashi told Japan's Asahi Shimbun newspaper that the event was fitting for the opening of the bullet train station. He said: "We were able to achieve the record thanks to the cooperation of many people. We believe the feat will boost [the celebratory atmosphere of] the opening of the Shinkansen's Iiyama Station." Ichika Oguchi, 8, said: "It was tough because the snow didn't stick together, but I had fun."

Sources: *Japan Times* / *UPI* / *Bangkok Post*

Writing

The word 'snowman' is sexist and should be replaced by 'snowperson'. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

residents / world record / snowmen / previous / bullet train / train station / wonderful / strict rules / snowballs / endeavor / achieve / cooperation / atmosphere / tough

True / False

- Residents in a Japanese town have built the world's tallest snowman. T / F
- It took about 630 people to break the snowman record. T / F
- The record attempt was to celebrate the opening of a train station. T / F
- The residents came together and did everything in a positive light. T / F
- The snowmen had to be made from three separate snowballs. T / F
- People used special equipment to help break the record. T / F
- The event put a damper on the celebratory atmosphere. T / F
- An 8-year-old said the event was fun and easy. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| 1. residents | a. men |
| 2. fellows | b. what's more |
| 3. previous | c. confront |
| 4. coincided | d. collaboration |
| 5. tackle | e. attempt |
| 6. strict | f. citizens |
| 7. in addition | g. happened together |
| 8. endeavour | h. difficult |
| 9. cooperation | i. old |
| 10. tough | j. rigid |

Discussion – Student A

- What do you think about what you read?
- What do you think of there being a record for building the most snowmen in an hour?
- Would you like to take part in this attempt?
- What do you know about Japan's bullet train?
- What world record would you like to break?
- What things are good to do in snow?
- Do you like snow? Why?
- Do you live in a community where people do things together?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Citizens at the | a. train |
| 2. 630 people took part | b. member |
| 3. Japan's famous bullet | c. light |
| 4. the residents came out to tackle | d. rules |
| 5. in a positive | e. snowballs |
| 6. strict | f. in the record attempt |
| 7. made of three separate | g. of many people |
| 8. committee | h. the challenge together |
| 9. thanks to the cooperation | i. atmosphere |
| 10. celebratory | j. Iiyama Snow Festival |

Discussion – Student B

- Why do you think each snowman had to be in three different parts?
- Was this a good event to mark the opening of a bullet train station?
- What other things do people make with snow?
- Do you prefer lots of snow or 40-degree heat?
- Where do you think the idea of snowmen came from?
- Why don't people say snow-women?
- What are the good and bad things about snow?
- What questions would you like to ask the snowman builders?

Spelling

- nisreetsds of a Japanese town
- 630 people took part in the record tapmtet
- cniodiedc with the opening
- the event had been a wonderful cooasinc
- came out to ltacek the challenge together
- in a tivspoie light
- made of three stareaep snowballs
- the record-breaking raveunode
- the opening of the ultble train station
- thanks to the ctiooaonepr of many people
- the elraebrctoy atmosphere
- It was utgho

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. a	3. i	4. g	5. c
6. j	7. b	8. e	9. d	10. h

Role Play

Role A – Making snowmen

You think making snowmen is the best snow-related activity. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their activities aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least fun of these (and why): hiking, having a snowball fight or just watching it fall.

Role B – Hiking

You think hiking is the best snow-related activity. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their activities aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least fun of these (and why): making snowmen, having a snowball fight or just watching it fall.

Role C – Having a snowball fight

You think having a snowball fight is the best snow-related activity. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their activities aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least fun of these (and why): hiking, making snowmen or just watching it fall.

Role D – Just watching it fall

You think just watching it fall is the best snow-related activity. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their activities aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least fun of these (and why): hiking, having a snowball fight or making snowmen.

Speaking – Snow

Rank these with your partner. Put the best things to do in / with snow at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| • ski | • make a snowman |
| • go sledding | • watch it fall |
| • go for a walk | • have a snowball fight |
| • make a snow maze | • make an igloo |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	T	e	T	f	F	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.