

## Apology after Japanese train leaves 20 seconds early

18th November, 2017



Train companies in Japan are renowned for their punctuality. Many people claim Japan's rail network is the envy of the world. Others say you can set your own watch using a Japanese train's departure. Most rail companies around the world apologize to passengers for delayed trains or cancellations. However, the operators of Tokyo's Tsukuba Express line apologized for one of its trains leaving 20 seconds too early on Tuesday. According to the apology, the high-speed train pulled out of a station 20 seconds earlier than scheduled due to staff members failing to check the departure timetable. Even though the company issued the apology, it said it had not received any complaints from passengers.

Bosses of the Tsukuba Express said the train crew did not sufficiently check the departure time and failed to accurately perform the departure operations. The company made a statement in Japanese on its website. It "deeply" apologized for the "severe inconvenience" caused to passengers who missed the scheduled train, even though the next train was just four minutes later. Many people tweeted about the apology. One tweet read: "Tokyo train company's apology for 20-second-early departure is one of the best things about Japan." A UK commuter tweeted: "They apologize for being 20 seconds early, and yet you don't get an apology from any major UK train company until they're over 2 hours late."

Sources: bloomberg.com / telegraph.co.uk / dailymail.co.uk

## Writing

Rail is the best way to travel. Discuss.

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

train companies / rail network / envy / departure / delayed / cancellation / station / express / website / inconvenience / apology / commuter / 20 seconds / major

## True / False

- The article said people believe Japan's railways are the envy of the world. T / F
- The article said people leave their watches on Japanese trains. T / F
- The article said all train companies worldwide apologize for delays. T / F
- The train company got eight complaints about its train departing early. T / F
- The train crew did not check the departure operations properly. T / F
- The company apologized for the severe inconvenience caused. T / F
- Another train was four minutes behind the one that left early. T / F
- UK train companies apologize for trains being two minutes late. T / F

## Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                         |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| 1. <b>renowned</b>      | a. passenger |
| 2. <b>claim</b>         | b. left      |
| 3. <b>envy</b>          | c. examine   |
| 4. <b>pulled out</b>    | d. famous    |
| 5. <b>timetable</b>     | e. trouble   |
| 6. <b>check</b>         | f. schedule  |
| 7. <b>severe</b>        | g. assert    |
| 8. <b>inconvenience</b> | h. big       |
| 9. <b>commuter</b>      | i. very bad  |
| 10. <b>major</b>        | j. jealousy  |

## Discussion – Student A

- What do you think about what you read?
- What do you know about Japan's bullet train?
- How important is punctuality?
- What should happen to the crew who did not check the schedule?
- When has a train company inconvenienced you?
- What is one of the best things about your country?
- Has there been a time when you were very unpunctual?
- What questions would you like to ask the train company CEO?

## Phrase Match

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Train companies in Japan are renowned   | a. own watch             |
| 2. Japan's rail network is the envy        | b. passengers            |
| 3. you can set your                        | c. scheduled train       |
| 4. delayed trains or                       | d. time                  |
| 5. it had not received any complaints from | e. UK train company      |
| 6. check the departure                     | f. for their punctuality |
| 7. It deeply apologized for the severe     | g. cancellations         |
| 8. passengers who missed the               | h. things about Japan    |
| 9. one of the best                         | i. of the world          |
| 10. an apology from any major              | j. inconvenience         |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you know about Japan's trains?
- What thing in your country is the envy of the world?
- What are the trains like in your country?
- How can Japanese trains be so amazingly punctual?
- How punctual are you?
- What experiences do you have of trains not being on time?
- What would you complain about to a train company?
- Do you think the company needed to apologize?

## Spelling

- renowned for their ayttstupculi
- a Japanese train's rutrapede
- apologize to pnegserssa
- gcdraconi to
- earlier than sdcdelueh
- it had not received any olimapsntc
- did not iinuftefcsl check
- failed to rtecacluya perform
- The company made a aetemtstn
- evrsee inconvenience
- tweeted about the oyagplo
- A UK ecruotmm tweeted

### Answers – Synonym Match

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

## Role Play

### Role A – A Train

You think a train is the worst thing to be delayed. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what isn't so bad for their things being delayed. Also, tell the others which of these involves the fewest problems when being delayed (and why): road works, having children or a sporting event.

### Role B – Road Works

You think road works is the worst thing to be delayed. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what isn't so bad for their things being delayed. Also, tell the others which of these involves the fewest problems when being delayed (and why): a train, having children or a sporting event.

### Role C – Having Children

You think having children is the worst thing to be delayed. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what isn't so bad for their things being delayed. Also, tell the others which of these involves the fewest problems when being delayed (and why): road works, a train or a sporting event.

### Role D – A Sporting Event

You think a sporting event is the worst thing to be delayed. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what isn't so bad for their things being delayed. Also, tell the others which of these involves the fewest problems when being delayed (and why): road works, having children or a train.

## Speaking – Delayed

Rank these with your partner. Put the worst things to be delayed at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                        |                    |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| • a train              | • road works       |
| • an airplane flight   | • a sporting event |
| • a book launch        | • having children  |
| • a hospital operation | • a holiday        |

### Answers – True False

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