

Bangkok subway crash (Tuesday, January 18, 2005)

WARM UP

CHAT: Talk about Bangkok / subways / rail safety / rush hour / lucky escapes / ...

MY SUBWAY: Talk about the subway systems in your own city / country (or the need for one if you don't have a subway). Also talk about other subways around the world –

TRANSPORT SAFETY: How safe is public transport? Every day there are news reports of accidents, injuries and deaths on trains, planes, buses and boats:

(a) Rank which of the following modes of transport are safest: rickshaw, motorbike taxi, city bus, intercity bus, tram (or trolley or street car), ocean liner, subway, bullet train, airplane, hovercraft, supersonic aircraft, other (local) modes....

(b) In pairs discuss the possible dangers of three of these forms of transportation. Change partners and tell new partner of these dangers. It is the new partner's job to dismiss all of these dangers and make reassurances that the modes of transport are 100% safe.

PRE-READING

WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... of the words 'subway', and 'passenger'.

TRUE / FALSE: Predict from the headline whether these statements are true or false:

- (a) Subway passengers in Bangkok are counting sheep. T / F
- (b) There was an evening rush hour train crash. T / F
- (c) Over 200 people are feared dead. T / F
- (d) An empty train crashed into a stationery train one more than 700 passengers. T / F
- (e) There was no fire after the train crash. T / F
- (f) Thailand's transport minister said it may be terrorism. T / F
- (g) All subway operations have been suspended to allow a full investigation. T / F
- (h) A computer malfunction is suspected of being the culprit. T / F

DEFINITIONS: Match the following words with the **most likely** definitions:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| (a) passengers (n) | (a) people you walk past in the street who look at you for a second or two |
| | (b) people who travel in a car, train, plane, taxi, boat... without driving or flying it |
| (b) count one's lucky blessings (v) | (a) to be, and feel, very very fortunate |
| | (b) to go to church / temple / synagogue...and pray many times |
| (c) rush hour (n) | (a) the busiest times at the beginning and end of the working day when many people are traveling to or from work |
| | (b) a time you decide to do as much work as you can within 60 minutes |
| (d) severe (adj) | (a) not at all serious |
| | (b) very very serious |
| (e) ploughed into (v) | (a) to crash into something at high speed |
| | (b) to avoid crashing into something |
| (f) stationary (adj) | (a) not moving |
| | (b) writing materials and office supplies |
| (g) chaos (n) | (a) saying goodbye many times |
| | (b) great disorder or confusion |
| (h) suspended (v) | (a) to stop something from happening for a short period of time |
| | (b) to think that someone did something, but are not totally sure |
| (i) malfunction (n) | (a) a bad party you go to where many bad things happen |
| | (b) something that has not worked properly, or has failed to operate |
| (j) culprit (n) | (a) the person or thing that has done something wrong |
| | (b) a tropical fruit very popular in Thailand |

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| (a) subway | incident |
| (b) count their lucky blessings | test |
| (c) accident | impact |
| (d) severe | halted |
| (e) stationary | underground |
| (f) collision | serious |
| (g) chaos | error |
| (h) suspended | breath a sigh of relief |
| (i) malfunction | parked |
| (j) trial | pandemonium |

PHRASE MATCH: Match these words / phrases. Check your answers in the article.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| (a) subway | hour |
| (b) count their lucky | injuries |
| (c) morning rush | investigation |
| (d) severe back | death |
| (e) single | runs |
| (f) feeling lucky to | out terrorism |
| (g) I escaped | passengers |
| (h) transport minister has ruled | be alive |
| (i) full | track |
| (j) trial | blessings |

GAP-FILL:

Bangkok subway crash (Tue 18 Jan)

bNE: Subway _____ in Bangkok, Thailand, can _____ their lucky blessings today following a morning rush hour train crash at the capital's Cultural Centre Station. Miraculously, no one died in the accident, although over 200 were _____, including the train driver who suffered severe back injuries. An empty train somehow managed to _____ to the subway's single track and ploughed into a stationary train carrying more than 700 passengers. There was no fire _____ from the collision and all of the injured were removed and taken to hospital, feeling lucky to be alive. One passenger said, "I feel like I escaped death. There was panic and _____ and at first I thought it was a terrorist attack". Thailand's transport minister has ruled out terrorism as a cause of the accident, but has _____ all subway operations to allow a full investigation into the causes of the incident. A computer malfunction is suspected of being the culprit. The subway only opened last July, However, _____ trial runs in April there was a similar accident. The subway 20 kilometres long, has 18 stations and is used by 250,000 people each day.

*suspended
count
chaos
passengers
resulting
during
injured
link*

DISCUSSION:

- (a) What do you think of this news?
- (b) Do you trust the safety of public transport?
- (c) How safe is your country's public transport compared to other countries?
- (d) What is the safest way to travel?
- (e) Have you ever been involved in an accident while using public transport?
- (f) Have you ever experienced Bangkok's infamous traffic problems or ridden on Bangkok's subway?
- (g) What's the best subway system you've used?
- (h) Do you have a favourite train station (subway or other)?
- (i) Are you surprised when you hear of major train, bus, ferry, plane ... accidents?
- (j) What has happened to you that made you count your lucky blessings?
- (k) Do you ever travel during the rush hour? Do you like it?
- (l) Have you ever felt lucky to be alive after a near miss?
- (m) Have you ever experienced chaos and panic?
- (n) When was the last time you panicked?
- (o) Teacher's / Students' additional questions

INTERNET / WEB LINKS:

Bangkok Subway info:

<http://www.bangkokbob.net/subway.htm>

Bangkok Post news article about subway safety

http://www.bangkokpost.com/News/18Jan2005_news01.php

Look at the world's subway systems:

http://www.subwaynavigator.com/subway_site/eng/accueil/fset_subway.htm

New York City public safety tips:

<http://www.hostos.cuny.edu/publicsafety/tips/subway.html>

A list of air, rail, ship and road disasters:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_disasters

Bangkok subway crash (Tue 18 Jan)

bNE: Subway **passengers** in Bangkok, Thailand, can **count** their lucky blessings today following a morning rush hour train crash at the capital's Cultural Centre Station. Miraculously, no one died in the accident, although over 200 were **injured**, including the train driver who suffered severe back injuries. An empty train somehow managed to **link** to the subway's single track and ploughed into a stationary train carrying more than 700 passengers. There was no fire **resulting** from the collision and all of the injured were removed and taken to hospital, feeling lucky to be alive. One passenger said, "I feel like I escaped death. There was panic and **chaos** and at first I thought it was a terrorist attack". Thailand's transport minister has ruled out terrorism as a cause of the accident, but has **suspended** all subway operations to allow a full investigation into the causes of the incident. A computer malfunction is suspected of being the culprit. The subway only opened last July. However, **during** trial runs in April there was a similar accident. The subway 20 kilometres long, has 18 stations and is used by 250,000 people each day.