

# Women-only cars for Tokyo trains (Tue 10 May, 2005)

## WARM-UPS

**CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics you are interested in, which do not look interesting and which look really boring:

*Tokyo / rush hour / traveling by train / single-sex train cars / icebergs / indecent assault / commuting / discrimination against men*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**COMMUTING:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with commuting. Share your words with your partner / group and talk about them.

**MY COMMUTE:** In pairs / groups, describe your journey from your house to your office / school in as much detail as you can. You must try and account for and talk about every 30-second segment of your commute - your routines, the same faces you see, the same kiosks or shops you visit, what you eat or drink, what you always do on the train / bus / in the car...

**SINGLE-SEX:** Around the world there are many examples of sexual segregation. Look at the following list of men-only or women-only places and decide whether you think each is a good idea:

- a. Movie theatre.
- b. Bar.
- c. Train carriage.
- d. Golf club.
- e. Shopping mall.
- f. Swimming pool.
- g. Public toilet.
- h. Beach.

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## VOCABULARY EXERCISE:

**PERVERTS:** Match the kinds of perverts on the left with the definitions on the right. After you have finished, talk about the vocabulary:

stalker	Someone who suddenly reveals his / her naked body to another person in public.
peeping Tom	Someone who likes taking their clothes off and showing his/her body in public places.
flasher	Someone who obsessively tracks and follows another person.
molester	Someone who forcibly touches the body of another person, often in crowded places.
bottom pincher	Someone who, hidden from view, secretly looks at others undressing.
kerb crawler (UK) curb crawler (US)	Someone who telephones another person anonymously to make unwanted, sexually suggestive comments.
exhibitionist	Someone who forcibly and often violently touches the body of another person, often in crowded places.
dirty caller	Usually a man who drives slowly in red-light areas looking for prostitutes, but will also harangue other women.
groper	Someone who engages in anti-social and sexually deviant practices.
pervert	Someone who tweaks a private body part of another person and thinks it's a joke.

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## PRE-READING

**WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... of the words 'rush' and 'hour'.

**TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Tokyo trains now have cars that are only for women. T / F
- b. The women-only cars were introduced to reduce molestation. T / F
- c. The groping of women by male passengers increased three-fold last year. T / F
- d. The vast majority of molestation cases on Tokyo trains go unreported. T / F
- e. The single-sex cars are part of a citywide effort to tackle indecent assault. T / F
- f. Tokyo police officers are to secretly take photographs of women. T / F
- g. Just over half of female commuters approve of the new initiative. T / F
- h. A small percentage of male commuters feel discriminated against. T / F

**SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |    |                   |                   |
|----|-------------------|-------------------|
| a. | rush              | arrested          |
| b. | sharp             | efforts           |
| c. | groping           | combat            |
| d. | apprehended       | dramatic          |
| e. | suffer in silence | accosting         |
| f. | tackle            | armory            |
| g. | arsenal           | peak              |
| h. | covertly          | keep tight-lipped |
| i. | initiatives       | expressed         |
| j. | voiced            | secretly          |

**PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |    |                       |                            |
|----|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| a. | in reaction           | 217 molesters              |
| b. | increased             | welcomed                   |
| c. | confessed to          | three-fold                 |
| d. | police apprehended    | concerns                   |
| e. | the tip               | to a sharp increase of     |
| f. | indecent              | majority                   |
| g. | other weapons in the  | assault                    |
| h. | These initiatives are | having been groped         |
| i. | overwhelming          | of the iceberg             |
| j. | a few have voiced     | Tokyo Government's arsenal |

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### READING:

**GAP FILL:** Put the words from the column on the right into the correct spaces in the text:

### Women-only cars for Tokyo trains

**BNE:** Nine rail companies in Tokyo began offering a women-only carriage on their rush hour trains on May 9. This is in \_\_\_\_\_ to a sharp increase in \_\_\_\_\_ of molestation.

The groping of women by male passengers on Tokyo's trains has increased \_\_\_\_\_ in the past decade and is a particular problem during peak travel times. Sixty per cent of women in their twenties and thirties confessed to having been groped on a train, with a record 2,201 cases reported last year. Although police \_\_\_\_\_ 217 molesters, the number of reported cases is just the tip of the \_\_\_\_\_. Many women suffer in \_\_\_\_\_, either feeling too ashamed or thinking that it is a waste of time to report being molested.

The single-sex cars – just one per train – are part of a \_\_\_\_\_ effort to tackle indecent \_\_\_\_\_. Other weapons in the Tokyo Government's \_\_\_\_\_ include 100 specially trained police officers, who will ride the trains seeking out perverts who touch or \_\_\_\_\_ take photographs of women. These initiatives are welcomed by an \_\_\_\_\_ majority of female commuters. Tomoko Ando, 28, said: "At last I can go to work without worrying about who's around me. The ladies car makes my commute a much more pleasant way to start my day." Most male passengers agree with the new system, although a few have \_\_\_\_\_ concerns about the overcrowding it causes in other cars and of discrimination.

*apprehended*  
*silence*  
*incidences*  
*reaction*  
*iceberg*  
*three-fold*

*overwhelming*  
*covertly*  
*assault*  
*voiced*  
*arsenal*  
*citywide*

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## DISCUSSION

- a. What did you think of this article?
- b. Did anything in this article surprise you?
- c. Were you angered by anything you read in the article?
- d. What do you think about female-only train carriages?
- e. Should there also be male-only train carriages?
- f. Is molestation on trains a problem in your country?
- g. Are there any examples of segregated services or places in your country?
- h. Is segregating train carriages an effective solution to molestation?
- i. What happens to molesters in your country?
- j. What should happen to molesters in your view?
- k. If you were being groped on a train, would you “suffer in silence”?
- l. Do you think the men who complained about reverse discrimination have a point?
- m. Would (do) you use single-sex train carriages?
- n. What annoyances are there on the trains or buses in your country?
- o. Are there any annoyances on public transport you particularly dislike?
- p. How would you feel if a close male relative or friend of yours was apprehended for being a molester?
- q. How often do you see weirdoes on the train or bus?
- r. What do you do when a weirdo sits next to you and wants to talk to you?
- s. Did you like this discussion?
- t. Teacher / Student additional questions.

## HOMEWORK

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google’s search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find information on rules of behaviour on trains. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. TRAIN STORY:** Write a story about a weirdo you have encountered on public transport. Share your story with your classmates in your next lesson.

**4. LETTER:** Write a letter to the boss of the Japanese train lines telling him / her what you think of the new ladies only train carriages. Show your letters to the class next lesson.

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### SPEAKING:

**COMMUTING OFFENCES:** You are head of the newly created “Keep Commuting Carefree Council” It is your job to eradicate all forms of anti-social behaviour on all modes of public transport. In pairs / groups, determine the seriousness of the “commuting crimes” in the table and decide on a suitable punishment.

CRIME	SERIOUSNESS (10 = Seriously serious, 1 = I can live with that)	PUNISHMENT
Groping		
Taking up two seats		
Taking one's (live) chickens on the train		
Smoking		
Talking loudly on a mobile phone		
Eating smelly food		
Reading or looking at pornographic material		
Sitting in the special needs seats		
Falling asleep and dribbling on another passenger's shoulder		
Loud Walkmans		
Your ideas? _____ _____		

Change partners. With new partners, compare how serious you deemed the “crimes” and the punishments. Agree on the five top offences in order of most serious. Have a class vote to see which offences are the worst.

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### TEXT

#### GAP FILL:

### Women-only cars for Tokyo trains

**BNE:** Nine rail companies in Tokyo began offering a women-only carriage on their rush hour trains on May 9. This is in **reaction** to a sharp increase in **incidences** of molestation. The groping of women by male passengers on Tokyo's trains has increased **three-fold** in the past decade and is a particular problem during peak travel times. Sixty per cent of women in their twenties and thirties confessed to having been groped on a train, with a record 2,201 cases reported last year. Although police **apprehended** 217 molesters, the number of reported cases is just the tip of the **iceberg**. Many women suffer in **silence**, either feeling too ashamed or thinking that it is a waste of time to report being molested.

The single-sex cars – just one per train – are part of a **citywide** effort to tackle indecent **assault**. Other weapons in the Tokyo Government's **arsenal** include 100 specially trained police officers, who will ride the trains seeking out perverts who touch or **covertly** take photographs of women. These initiatives are welcomed by an **overwhelming** majority of female commuters. Tomoko Ando, 28, said: "At last I can go to work without worrying about who's around me. The ladies car makes my commute a much more pleasant way to start my day." Most male passengers agree with the new system, although a few have **voiced** concerns about the overcrowding it causes in other cars and of discrimination.