



Who Decides When You Are an Adult?

Read the passage and answer the questions. (CEFR B1–B2)

Class _____ No. _____ Name _____

1 When Japan lowered its age of majority from 20 to 18 in April 2022, it ended a rule that had stood since 1876. Supporters argued that 18-year-olds could already vote, and that most developed countries treat 18 as the start of adulthood. Since the change, an 18-year-old can sign a phone contract or apply for a credit card without a parent's permission.



2 Critics, however, worried that young people with little experience of money might become easy targets for dishonest sellers. So the government prepared lessons for high school students about contracts and common consumer traps. Meanwhile, the drinking and smoking age stayed at 20 for health reasons, so Japan now has two different lines for adulthood.

3 The ceremony tells a similar story. Most cities chose to keep celebrating 20-year-olds, partly because 18-year-olds face university entrance exams in January. Many young people also say they prefer to celebrate after they have left high school and started a new chapter of life. In other words, the law says one thing, while custom and practical life say another. This raises a deeper question about whether adulthood is a legal status, a social role, or a personal feeling of responsibility.

Comprehension

1. What is the main idea of the passage?

- (A) Japan lowered its adult age to 18, but law, custom, and daily life do not all draw the line in the same place.
- (B) Most Japanese cities now hold coming-of-age ceremonies for 18-year-olds.
- (C) Young people in Japan cannot sign any contracts until they are 20.
- (D) The government raised the drinking age to 20 in 2022.

2. According to the passage, what can an 18-year-old do since the change?

- (A) Drink alcohol in a restaurant.
- (B) Vote for the first time.
- (C) Sign a phone contract without a parent's permission.
- (D) Skip university entrance exams.

3. Why did the drinking and smoking age stay at 20?

- (A) Because 18-year-olds are busy with exams.
- (B) Because most developed countries use 20.
- (C) Because young people asked for it.
- (D) For health reasons.

4. Why did the government probably prepare lessons about contracts for high school students?

- (A) Because high school students had to sign contracts with their schools.
- (B) Because 18-year-olds could now sign contracts alone and might be tricked by dishonest sellers.
- (C) Because credit cards became illegal for young people.
- (D) Because the drinking age changed.

5. In paragraph 2, the word "targets" in "easy targets for dishonest sellers" is closest in meaning to

- (A) customers who get discounts
- (B) goals that students set
- (C) people who are chosen to be tricked
- (D) shops that sell cheap goods

6. Why does the writer end the passage with a question about adulthood?

- (A) To argue that the adult age should go back to 20.
- (B) To invite readers to think about what really makes a person an adult.
- (C) To explain how coming-of-age ceremonies began.
- (D) To show that Japanese law is the same as the law in other countries.



Vocabulary, Paraphrase & Summary

Match the words with the definitions. Then rewrite and summarize.

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|---------------|--|
| 1. contract | a. connected with real situations and actions, not with ideas or rules |
| 2. permission | b. the official position of a person or thing in law or in society |
| 3. critic | c. an official written agreement between two people or groups |
| 4. dishonest | d. the act of allowing someone to do something |
| 5. target | e. a person who says what is wrong or bad about a plan or an idea |
| 6. consumer | f. not telling the truth, or trying to cheat people |
| 7. practical | g. a person or thing that someone chooses to attack, trick, or sell to |
| 8. status | h. a person who buys goods or services for their own use |

Paraphrase — say it in your own words

1. “Since the change, an 18-year-old can sign a phone contract or apply for a credit card without a parent's permission.”

Hint: Start with "Now, 18-year-olds" and use "do not need to ask their parents".

2. “Meanwhile, the drinking and smoking age stayed at 20 for health reasons, so Japan now has two different lines for adulthood.”

Hint: Use "But you still have to be 20 to" and "because of health concerns". Then say there are two ages for being an adult.

3. “In other words, the law says one thing, while custom and practical life say another.”

Hint: Start with "This means" and use "does not match".

Summary

Summarize the passage in about 50 words.



Debate & Opinion Essay

Prepare for a debate. Then write your opinion (100–150 words).

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Motion: Coming-of-age ceremonies should be held for 18-year-olds.

FOR 賛成

- Since 2022, the legal adult age has been 18, so the ceremony should celebrate people when they really become adults.
- At 18, young people can sign contracts alone, so a ceremony can remind them of their new responsibilities.
- Most high school students are still in their hometown at 18, so it is easy for old classmates to meet.

Add your own reason:

AGAINST 反対

- Most 18-year-olds face university entrance exams in January, so they cannot enjoy the ceremony.
- Many young people say they prefer to celebrate after leaving high school and starting a new chapter of life.
- Drinking is still allowed only from 20, so a ceremony at 20 lets new adults share their first toast together.

Add your own reason:

Opinion	<i>I believe / I think that ...</i>
Reason 1	<i>First, ... For example, ...</i>
Reason 2	<i>Second, ... In fact, ...</i>
Counter	<i>Some people say ... However, ...</i>
Conclusion	<i>In conclusion, ...</i>