



Fixed Date or Long Weekend?

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

Class _____ No. _____ Name _____

1 Marine Day captures a recurring tension in Japan's holiday system: should a holiday stay on the date that gives it meaning, or move to create a long weekend? The holiday began on July 20 in 1996, the anniversary of the Meiji Maru's arrival in Yokohama. From 2003, however, the so-called Happy Monday system moved it to the third Monday of July to give people more three-day weekends. The original date was chosen to honor a specific voyage, not simply a season.



2 Supporters of the change point to tourism and family time, since a Monday holiday encourages short trips. Critics, including maritime organizations, argue that a moving date weakens the link to the historical event, and some local assemblies have adopted petitions asking for a return to July 20. The debate became even more visible in 2020 and 2021, when the holiday was moved twice to fit the Olympic schedule.

3 There is no single correct answer. Fixed dates protect memory, whereas movable dates make rest easier to plan. Yet the question forces us to ask what a holiday is really for: remembering, resting, or both.

Comprehension

1. What is the main topic of the passage?

- (A) How the Meiji Maru was built in Britain
- (B) Why Japan has more beaches than other countries
- (C) The debate over whether Marine Day should stay on a meaningful date or move to create a long weekend
- (D) How to plan a family trip to the sea

2. Why was July 20 chosen as the original date of Marine Day?

- (A) It was the anniversary of the Meiji Maru's arrival in Yokohama.
- (B) It was the first day of the summer vacation.
- (C) It was the hottest day of the year.
- (D) It was the day the Olympics started.

3. According to the passage, who have argued for a return to July 20?

- (A) The organizers of the Olympics
- (B) Tourism companies
- (C) Families who want short trips
- (D) Maritime organizations and some local assemblies

4. What can we infer from the fact that the holiday was moved twice in 2020 and 2021?

- (A) The date of Marine Day is fixed by the Meiji Maru's schedule.
- (B) The holiday's date can be changed for practical reasons, which made the debate about its meaning more noticeable.
- (C) People stopped celebrating Marine Day after the Olympics.
- (D) Marine Day will always be on a Thursday from now on.

5. In paragraph 1, the word "recurring" in "a recurring tension" is closest in meaning to

- (A) happening again and again
- (B) very new
- (C) easy to solve
- (D) hidden

6. What is the writer's position in the last paragraph?

- (A) The writer strongly supports July 20.
- (B) The writer thinks holidays are not important.
- (C) The writer does not choose a side but asks readers to think about what holidays are for.
- (D) The writer wants all holidays to be on Mondays.



Vocabulary, Paraphrase & Summary

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

Class _____ No. _____ Name _____

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| 1. capture | a. a long trip, especially by ship |
| 2. tension | b. connected with the sea or with ships |
| 3. anniversary | c. a written request signed by many people and sent to people in power |
| 4. voyage | d. easy to see or notice |
| 5. maritime | e. used to compare two facts and show that they are different |
| 6. petition | f. to show or express something clearly |
| 7. visible | g. a situation in which two ideas or needs do not easily fit together |
| 8. whereas | h. a day that is exactly one or more years after an important event |

Paraphrase — say it in your own words

1. “The original date was chosen to honor a specific voyage, not simply a season.”

Hint: Start with "July 20 was picked because" and use "not just because".

2. “Supporters of the change point to tourism and family time, since a Monday holiday encourages short trips.”

Hint: Use "People who like the Monday holiday say" and "because".

3. “Fixed dates protect memory, whereas movable dates make rest easier to plan.”

Hint: Make two sentences. Use "help us remember" and "On the other hand".

Summary

Summarize the passage in about 50 words.



Debate & Opinion Essay

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

Class _____ No. _____ Name _____

Motion: Holidays should stay on the dates that give them meaning, even if this means fewer long weekends.

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- A fixed date like July 20 reminds people of the real event, the Meiji Maru's voyage, so the holiday keeps its meaning.
- When the date moves every year, many people forget why the holiday exists and see it only as a day off.
- Maritime organizations and some local assemblies have asked for a return to July 20, which shows that the meaning matters to many people.

Add your own reason:

AGAINST 反対

- A Monday holiday creates a three-day weekend, which encourages short trips and gives families more time together.
- People can still learn the history of a holiday through schools, museums, and events, even if the date moves.
- The 2020 and 2021 changes show that dates can be moved for practical needs without losing the holiday itself.

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>