

Entrance Exam Listening 2022 – Conversation – Solo Camping

Diane: Hi Jack. What have you been doing lately?

Jack: Hey Diane. Well, I've been doing a lot of solo camping lately.

Diane: Solo camping? What's that?

Jack: Solo camping is camping by yourself, so you can go camping anytime and anywhere you like. You don't have to make any plans.

Diane: Why would you want to do that? It doesn't sound like much fun to me. I prefer to go camping with some friends.

Jack: Well, I do that, too, *sometimes*. But I don't share a tent and I don't stay in a cabin or bungalow with anyone. The biggest reason I do solo camping is because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Diane: I guess I can understand that you would want to do social distancing when you're around other people, but why do you want to go camping?

Jack: I want to go camping because I spend too much time indoors at my home and in my office. Every place I used to go is closed, and I don't want to spend time indoors at restaurants even if they *are* open.

Diane: It sounds like you have a case of "cabin fever" because you're indoors too much.

Jack: Yeah, I think that's true. Staying inside for too long is stressful.

Diane: So where do you go camping?

Jack: I usually go camping near Sapporo. I often go to Takino or Lake Shikotsu, but recently I've been going farther away, like Niseko and Furano.

Diane: Do you have a favorite place to camp?

Jack: I really like the Furano area. It's so beautiful and photography is my hobby, so I take lots of pictures. My goal is to go camping all around Hokkaido.

- Question No.1 What has Jack been doing recently?
- Question No. 2 What does Diane think about solo camping?
- Question No. 3 Who does Diane like to go camping with?
- Question No. 4 Why does Jack go solo camping?
- Question No. 5 Where is Jack's favorite place to go camping?

Japan is a leading producer of plastic waste, second only to the United States. Japan produces more than 8.9 million tons of plastic waste annually. Over 80 percent of that waste is burned, exported or buried underground. Plastic containers and packaging make up nearly half the total. Burning plastics produces CO₂, and in recent years it has become increasingly difficult to export plastic waste. Land that can be used to bury plastic waste is running out.

The situation clearly requires greater efforts to reduce plastic use. Expanding the use of alternative natural materials is one way to tackle this environmental challenge. But this approach could cause other environmental problems.

Twenty environmental organizations in Japan, including the World Wildlife Fund and Greenpeace, recently focused on the need to create a society that produces and uses much less plastic. They have called on the government to take effective action to reduce the use and production of the country's plastic. Such a reduction, they say, is of critical importance.

There have been encouraging signs of change in people's attitudes toward the problem. For example, customers often bring their own shopping bags instead of paying for plastic shopping bags at stores. But such plastic bags make up less than 10 percent of the country's total plastic waste.

Stronger actions are needed from the government in order to make significant progress. Companies that produce and use plastic should be made responsible for collecting, reusing and recycling plastics. They should also reduce the amount of plastic that is consumed, by using non-plastic materials for containers, packaging and trays.

Reducing plastic waste can help to deal with a wide range of global environmental challenges, such as global warming. Japan has a duty to demonstrate a stronger commitment to reducing plastic waste as part of its contribution to the health of this planet.

/302 words./Adapted from 'Effective policy actions needed to tackle growing plastic waste'
- The Asahi Shimbun Asia & Japan Watch, October 19th, 2020