



THE 7-MINUTE MIRACLE

© talkmor.com

PDF 1: The 7-Minute Miracle! Japan's Super-Fast Bullet Train Cleaners



How do they clean a whole bullet train in just 7 minutes?

The Story – The 7-Minute Miracle

At busy Tokyo Station, something amazing happens every day. A Shinkansen bullet train arrives and stops for only 12 minutes.

Passengers get off in about two minutes. New passengers board in about three minutes. That leaves just **seven minutes** for cleaning the entire train!

A special cleaning crew called **Tessei** does the “impossible.” In those seven minutes, each cleaner is responsible for about 100 seats. They wipe every tray table, vacuum the floor, rotate all the seats to face the new direction, replace headrest covers, check overhead bins, and make the train spotless again.

They work quickly and perfectly as a team. Before they start, they bow to the train to show respect. When they finish, they line up and bow politely to the new passengers.

Many cleaners are in their 50s and 60s. People from around the world come to watch this fast and respectful work. Harvard Business School made a case study about them, and newspapers call it the “7-minute miracle.”

Japan didn't just invent fast trains. They show the dignity of doing small things perfectly.

Vocabulary

Words from the story.

Word	Meaning	Sounds Like
miracle	something amazing that is hard to believe	MIR-uh-kul
crew	a team of workers	KROO
Shinkansen	Japan's famous bullet train	shin-KAN-sen
spotless	completely clean with no dirt	SPOT-less
rotate	to turn something around	ROH-tayt
dignity	respect and pride in your work	DIG-ni-tee
bow	to bend your body to show respect	BOW (like now)
efficient	doing something well in a short time	eh-FISH-ent
passengers	people who travel on a train or bus	PAS-sen-jers
overhead	above your head (like bins)	OH-ver-hed
impressive	causing admiration or wonder	im-PRES-iv
respectful	showing good manners and care	ree-SPEKT-ful

Quick Activity

Choose 5 words from the table and use them to describe the picture.

Fun Facts about the Tessei Cleaners

- A team of about 22 people cleans around 1,000 seats in just 7 minutes.
- They do this hundreds of times every day!
- Before starting, they bow to the train. After finishing, they bow to the passengers.
- Harvard Business School created a case study about their amazing teamwork.
- Tourists now stand on the platform just to watch the “7-minute miracle.”

Quick Question

Would you like to watch the 7-minute miracle in person? Why or why not?

Comprehension Questions

A. True or False

True / False

1. The Shinkansen stops for 12 minutes at Tokyo Station. _____
2. The cleaning crew has 20 minutes to clean the train. _____
3. Each cleaner is responsible for about 100 seats. _____
4. The cleaners are all young university students. _____
5. They bow to the train and to the passengers. _____

B. Answer the questions

1. What is the name of the cleaning crew/company? _____
2. How much time do they have to clean the train? _____
3. Name three things the cleaners do in seven minutes.

4. What do the cleaners do before and after cleaning?

5. Why do people call this the “7-minute miracle”?

C. What do you think?

Look at the big picture. Why is this work impressive? Use at least 3 vocabulary words.

Bonus Drawing / Writing Space

Draw the cleaners at work or write one sentence about what you admire most.