Japan and Hong Kong have closed their elementary, junior-high and high schools until April. Governments say they want to protect children from the COVID-19 coronavirus. Schools in Japan will remain closed until April the 8th, which is the start of the new school year. Children in Hong Kong will return to school on April the 20th at the earliest. Parents are now worried about the school closures. Working parents have to think about how to care for younger children. Grandparents will look after many children while their parents go to work. However, many children have no grandparents or extended family who live nearby. Parents may have to pay for expensive childcare fees.

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe shut the country's schools after a meeting of Japan's anti-virus task force. He said the next two weeks are critical to control the spread of COVID-19. He wants to "stem the risk of many children and teachers becoming infected through gathering for long hours every day". The government said it would urge public services and private companies to make it easier for people to take time off work to look after their children. An angry mother said: "I wonder if the government thinks it is OK to leave children at home alone for long hours." She asked: "What's the point of closing schools if parents are still commuting in packed trains in which passengers may have COVID-19?"

**TRUE / FALSE** a F b T c F d F e F f T g T h T

**SYNONYM MATCH** 1. h 2. a 3. d 4. f 5. c 6. j 7. e 8. g 9. b 10. i