



CUNYASSESSMENT TEST IN WRITING (CATW) Practice 1

Read the passage below and write an essay responding to the ideas it presents. In your essay, be sure to summarize the passage in your own words, stating the author's most important ideas. Develop your essay by identifying one idea in the passage that you feel is especially significant, and explain its significance. Support your claims with evidence or examples drawn from what you have read, learned in school, and/or personally experienced.

Independent Kids

I left my 9-year-old at Bloomingdale's department store a couple weeks ago. I last saw him on the first floor. I said, "Bye-bye! Have fun!"

And he did. He came home on the subway and bus by himself.

Was I worried? Yes, a little. But it didn't strike me as that dangerous, either. New York is no longer such a dangerous place these days.

Anyway, for weeks my boy had been begging for me to please leave him somewhere, anywhere, and let him try to figure out how to get home on his own. So on that sunny Sunday, I gave him a subway map, a MetroCard, a \$20 bill, and several quarters, just in case he had to make a call.

No, I did not give him a cell phone. I didn't want him to lose it. I trusted him to figure out that he should take the Lexington Avenue subway down, and the 34th Street bus home. If he couldn't do that, I trusted him to ask a stranger. And then I even trusted that stranger not to think, "Gee, I was about to catch my train home, but now I think I'll abduct this adorable child instead."

He made it home, very proud.

Half the people I've told this story to now want to turn me in for child abuse.

"How would you have felt if he didn't come home?" a New Jersey mom of four, Vicki Garfinkle, asked. I'd have been devastated. But would that just prove that no mom should ever let her child ride the subway alone?

The number of children abducted by strangers has been going down over the years. So why not let your kids travel home from school by themselves? The problem with the everything-is-dangerous outlook is that over-protectiveness is a danger in and of itself. A child who thinks he can't do anything on his own eventually can't.

Meantime, my son wants his next trip to be from Queens.

Adapted from "Why I Let My 9-Year-Old Ride the Subway Alone" by Lenore Skenazy, *NY Sun*, April 1, 2008.