

The story...

Child announcer on London Underground

Learn language related to...

Safety

Need-to-know language

safety – the condition of being protected from danger

take care – be cautious of danger

handrail – fixed bar for people to hold for support

injured – harmed or hurt

takes notice – pays attention

Answer this...

How are deeper adult voices perceived?

Watch the video online

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/lingohack/ep-180801>

Transcript

Around a quarter of a million people use Victoria Station in London each weekday. And for the past few months, they've been hearing an unusual voice. Meet the station's newest and youngest **safety** announcer – nine-year-old Megan. Her proud parents both work at the station.

Megan, safety announcer

Hello, everybody and please listen up. **Take care** on the escalators. Hold on to the **handrail** and your luggage.

Megan's recorded announcement is designed to tackle a serious problem. Around 10 people a day get **injured** on the underground network.

Mark Evers, Chief Customer Officer

What we have noticed is that when people do injure themselves, it's typically because they're not taking enough care when using stairs and escalators.

At Victoria alone on average, 15 people a month are injured this way. For some passengers at least, Megan's message seems to be getting through.

Passenger

I think everyone **takes notice** when a child says something. And because they don't... they always mean it!

So what does someone who studies the psychology of the human voice make of this?

Dr Valentina Cartei, Voice Lab, University of Sussex

Research shows that deeper adult voices are perceived by humans as having more authority than higher voices. So a child's voice wouldn't have that authority. But perhaps it's the shock factor of using a child's voice.

It may be just a short-term result from this shock factor. But the station says injuries have dropped by nearly two thirds since Megan's announcements started.

Did you get it?

How are deeper adult voices perceived?

According to Dr Cartei, research shows that deeper adult voices are perceived by humans as having more authority than higher voices.

Did you know?

The world's first underground railway was opened between Paddington and Farringdon Street in London in 1863 by the Metropolitan Railway.