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## Level 6

### Number of Japanese children at record low

8th May, 2018

<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1805/180508-japanese-children.html>

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**Please try Levels 4 and 5 (they are easier).**

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# THE ARTICLE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1805/180508-japanese-children.html>

The number of children in Japan has fallen to its lowest number since records began. There were 170,000 fewer children in Japan at the end of March 2018 than there were a year earlier. Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications issued a report on Friday showing the falling numbers of children. According to the statistics, the number of children aged 14 or under dropped for the 37th consecutive year. There was another record fall in the ratio of children to the overall Japanese population. This dropped to a new record low of 12.3 per cent and was the 44th year of decline in a row. This ratio is the lowest among countries in the world with a population of 40 million or more.

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has been trying to address the country's dwindling birth rate. He has introduced several measures to encourage lower-income families to have bigger families. However, these measures seem to be having little success. This is coupled with the fact that fewer Japanese people are getting married, which demographers say is a "ticking time-bomb" for Japan. The number of annual births in 2016 fell below one million for the first time since the government began collecting data in 1899. Japanese demographers predict that by 2050, Japan will have 23 per cent fewer citizens. This means a rapidly aging society and a greatly diminishing workforce.

Sources: <https://asia.nikkei.com/Economy/Japan-s-plunging-population-adds-urgency-to-immigration-talk>  
[http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-05/04/c\\_137156459.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-05/04/c_137156459.htm)  
<http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/east-asia/article/2144754/number-japanese-children-declines-37th-year-row-now-record-low>

# WARM-UPS

**1. CHILDREN:** Students walk around the class and talk to other students about children. Change partners often and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, talk about these topics or words from the article. What will the article say about them? What can you say about these words and your life?

children / Japan / records / statistics / consecutive / population / decline / low / ratio  
address / birth rate / measures / lower-income / success / annual / demographers

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. BIGGER FAMILIES:** Students A **strongly** believe having a bigger family is best; Students B **strongly** believe otherwise. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**4. BIRTH RATE:** Is a low or a high birth rate best for these things? Why? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners often and share what you wrote.

	High is best	Low is best
Family		
Schools		
Transportation		
Workplace		
Hospitals		
Army		

**5. RECORDS:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "records". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**6. POPULATION:** Rank these with your partner. Put the best ways to address a shrinking population at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- better healthcare
- increased immigration
- procreation campaign
- tax breaks for big families
- stop emigration
- more working visas
- downsize the economy
- free schooling

# VOCABULARY MATCHING

## Paragraph 1

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. records      | a. Taking everything into account; as a whole.  |
| 2. issued       | b. As said or written by (someone).   |
| 3. according to | c. Following consecutively, one after the other.  |
| 4. statistics   | d. Pieces of evidence or documentation about the past, especially an account of an act or happening kept in writing or some other permanent form. |
| 5. consecutive  | e. The numerical relationship between two amounts, showing the number of times one value is contained in the other value.                         |
| 6. ratio        | f. Formally send out or made known.   |
| 7. overall      | g. Facts or pieces of data from a study of a large quantity of numerical data / information.  |

## Paragraph 2

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 8. address       | h. Combined.   |
| 9. dwindling     | i. Someone who studies statistics such as births, deaths, income, or the incidence of disease, which show the changing structure of human populations. |
| 10. measures     | j. All the people in or available for work, either in a country or area or in a particular company or industry.  |
| 11. coupled      | k. Gradually getting smaller and smaller in size, amount, or strength.   |
| 12. demographers | l. A process or procedure causing a problem that will eventually become very, very dangerous if no action is taken.                                    |
| 13. time-bomb    | m. Plans or courses of action taken to achieve a particular purpose.   |
| 14. workforce    | n. Think about and begin to deal with an issue or problem.   |

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1805/180508-japanese-children.html>

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- a. The number of children in Japan fell by 170,000 in 2017. **T / F**
- b. The number of under-14s fell for the 37th year in a row. **T / F**
- c. The ratio of children to the whole Japanese population hit a record low. **T / F**
- d. Japan has the lowest ratio of children to the population in the world. **T / F**
- e. Japan's leader has been very successful in increasing the birth rate. **T / F**
- f. The number of babies born each year is always over one million. **T / F**
- g. Japan's government began collecting data on births in 1899. **T / F**
- h. There could be 23% fewer Japanese citizens by the year 2050. **T / F**

## 2. SYNONYM MATCH:

Match the following synonyms. The words in **bold** are from the news article.

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. <b>fallen</b>     | a. falling           |
| 2. <b>records</b>    | b. released          |
| 3. <b>issued</b>     | c. consecutively     |
| 4. <b>statistics</b> | d. actions           |
| 5. <b>in a row</b>   | e. documentation     |
| 6. <b>address</b>    | f. forecast          |
| 7. <b>dwindling</b>  | g. deal with         |
| 8. <b>measures</b>   | h. dropped           |
| 9. <b>predict</b>    | i. considerably      |
| 10. <b>greatly</b>   | j. facts and figures |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |                                    |                       |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. its lowest number since         | a. to the statistics  |
| 2. There were 170,000              | b. numbers            |
| 3. falling                         | c. for the first time |
| 4. According                       | d. birth rate         |
| 5. This dropped to a new           | e. measures           |
| 6. address the country's dwindling | f. workforce          |
| 7. He has introduced several       | g. records began      |
| 8. a ticking                       | h. record low         |
| 9. fell below one million          | i. time-bomb          |
| 10. a greatly diminishing          | j. fewer children     |

# GAP FILL

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1805/180508-japanese-children.html>

The number of children in Japan has fallen to its lowest number since (1) \_\_\_\_\_ began. There were 170,000 fewer children in Japan at the end of March 2018 than there were a year earlier. Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (2) \_\_\_\_\_ a report on Friday showing the (3) \_\_\_\_\_ numbers of children. According to the statistics, the number of children aged 14 or under dropped for the 37th (4) \_\_\_\_\_ year. There was another record fall in the ratio of children to the (5) \_\_\_\_\_ Japanese population. This dropped to a new record (6) \_\_\_\_\_ of 12.3 per cent and was the 44th year of (7) \_\_\_\_\_ in a row. This ratio is the lowest among countries in the world with a (8) \_\_\_\_\_ of 40 million or more.

*falling*  
*low*  
*records*  
*population*  
*overall*  
*issued*  
*decline*  
*consecutive*

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has been trying to (9) \_\_\_\_\_ the country's dwindling birth rate. He has introduced (10) \_\_\_\_\_ measures to encourage lower-income families to have bigger families. However, these (11) \_\_\_\_\_ seem to be having little success. This is (12) \_\_\_\_\_ with the fact that fewer Japanese people are getting married, which demographers say is a "(13) \_\_\_\_\_ time-bomb" for Japan. The number of annual births in 2016 fell below one million for the first time since the government began collecting (14) \_\_\_\_\_ in 1899. Japanese demographers (15) \_\_\_\_\_ that by 2050, Japan will have 23 per cent fewer citizens. This means a rapidly aging society and a greatly (16) \_\_\_\_\_ workforce.

*several*  
*ticking*  
*diminishing*  
*address*  
*coupled*  
*predict*  
*measures*  
*data*

# LISTENING – Guess the answers. Listen to check.

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1805/180508-japanese-children.html>

- 1) The number of children in Japan has fallen to its lowest number since \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. record began
  - b. recordings began
  - c. records began
  - d. records begin
- 2) There were 170,000 fewer children in Japan at \_\_\_\_\_ March
  - a. an ending of
  - b. the ends of
  - c. the end of
  - d. an end of
- 3) ... and Communications issued a report on Friday showing \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. the failing numbers
  - b. the falling numbers
  - c. the fallen numbers
  - d. the falling numbers
- 4) the number of children aged 14 or under dropped for the 37th \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. consecutively year
  - b. consecutives year
  - c. consecutive year
  - d. executive year
- 5) This dropped to a new record low of 12.3 per cent and was the 44th year of \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. decline in a low
  - b. decline in a row
  - c. decline on a row
  - d. decline on a low
- 6) Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has been trying to address the country's \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. dwindling birth rate
  - b. dawdling birth rate
  - c. dwindle ring birth rate
  - d. de-wind all birth rate
- 7) He has introduced several measures to encourage \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. lower-income family
  - b. lower-incomes families
  - c. lowers-income families
  - d. lower-income families
- 8) births in 2016 fell below one million for the first time since the government \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. began collecting date a
  - b. began collecting dater
  - c. began collecting data
  - d. began collecting day ta
- 9) Japanese demographers predict that by 2050, Japan will have 23 per cent \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. fewer citizens
  - b. fewer denizens
  - c. fewer netizens
  - d. fewer frozens
- 10) This means a rapidly aging society and a \_\_\_\_\_ workforce
  - a. greatly diminished in
  - b. greatly diminishing
  - c. greatly diminish in
  - d. greatly dim in fishing

# LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1805/180508-japanese-children.html>

The number of children in Japan (1) \_\_\_\_\_ its lowest number since records began. There were 170,000 fewer children in Japan at the end of March 2018 (2) \_\_\_\_\_ a year earlier. Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications issued a report on Friday showing the falling numbers of children. According (3) \_\_\_\_\_, the number of children aged 14 or under dropped for the 37th consecutive year. There (4) \_\_\_\_\_ fall in the ratio of children to the overall Japanese population. This dropped to a new (5) \_\_\_\_\_ 12.3 per cent and was the 44th year of decline in a row. This ratio is (6) \_\_\_\_\_ countries in the world with a population of 40 million or more.

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (7) \_\_\_\_\_ to address the country's (8) \_\_\_\_\_. He has introduced several measures to encourage lower-income families to have bigger families. However, these measures seem to be having little success. This (9) \_\_\_\_\_ the fact that fewer Japanese people are getting married, which demographers say is a "(10) \_\_\_\_\_" for Japan. The number of annual births in 2016 fell below one million for the (11) \_\_\_\_\_ the government began collecting data in 1899. Japanese demographers predict that by 2050, Japan will have 23 per cent fewer citizens. This means a (12) \_\_\_\_\_ and a greatly diminishing workforce.



# COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1805/180508-japanese-children.html>

1. How many fewer children were there in Japan in the year to March 2018?
2. What did Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications issue?
3. How many years in a row has the number of children in Japan fallen?
4. What is the percentage of children to the whole Japanese population?
5. For how many years in a row has Japan's children-population ratio fallen?
6. What has Japan's leader been trying to address?
7. Who has Shinzo Abe been trying to get to have larger families?
8. What are fewer Japanese people doing?
9. When did the number of annual births in Japan first fall below a million?
10. What did the article say was "greatly diminishing"?

# MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1805/180508-japanese-children.html>

- 1) How many fewer children were there in Japan in the year to March 2018?
  - a) 107,000
  - b) 117,000
  - c) 170,000
  - d) 177,000
- 2) What did Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications issue?
  - a) a report
  - b) a warning
  - c) a cry for help
  - d) a painting
- 3) How many years in a row has the number of children in Japan fallen?
  - a) 12
  - b) 44
  - c) 26
  - d) 37
- 4) What is the percentage of children to the whole Japanese population?
  - a) 13.2%
  - b) 12.3%
  - c) 12.2%
  - d) 13.3%
- 5) For how many years in a row has Japan's children-population ratio fallen?
  - a) 41
  - b) 43
  - c) 44
  - d) 47
- 6) What has Japan's leader been trying to address?
  - a) an envelope
  - b) Japan's dwindling birth rate
  - c) party issues
  - d) immigration
- 7) Who has Shinzo Abe been trying to get to have larger families?
  - a) rich people
  - b) people in cities
  - c) childless couples
  - d) lower-income families
- 8) What are fewer Japanese people doing?
  - a) complaining
  - b) getting married
  - c) dating
  - d) going out
- 9) When did the number of annual births in Japan first fall below a million?
  - a) 2016
  - b) 2006
  - c) 1996
  - d) 1976
- 10) What did the article say was "greatly diminishing"?
  - a) the economic miracle
  - b) hope
  - c) the aging society
  - d) Japan's workforce

# ROLE PLAY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1805/180508-japanese-children.html>

## **Role A – Better Healthcare**

You think better healthcare is the best way to deal with a shrinking population. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): increased immigration, stopping emigration or downsizing the economy.

## **Role B – Increased Immigration**

You think increased immigration is the best way to deal with a shrinking population. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): better healthcare, stopping emigration or downsizing the economy.

## **Role C – Stop Emigration**

You think stopping emigration is the best way to deal with a shrinking population. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): increased immigration, better healthcare or downsizing the economy.

## **Role D – Downsize the Economy**

You think downsizing the economy is the best way to deal with a shrinking population. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): increased immigration, stopping emigration or better healthcare.

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1805/180508-japanese-children.html>

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'record' and 'low'.

<b>record</b>	<b>low</b>
---------------	------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• fallen</li><li>• end</li><li>• showing</li><li>• 37</li><li>• 12.3</li><li>• 40</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• address</li><li>• several</li><li>• little</li><li>• time</li><li>• 2016</li><li>• 2050</li></ul>
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# CHILDREN SURVEY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1805/180508-japanese-children.html>

Write five GOOD questions about children in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

# CHILDREN DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

1. What did you think when you read the headline?
2. What images are in your mind when you hear the word 'children'?
3. How useful and important are children?
4. What problems are there with a falling birth rate?
5. What's the best number of children to have?
6. How can Japan's government increase the birth rate?
7. Is a shrinking population a good thing?
8. What more should governments do for children?
9. What things about children annoy you?
10. What was it like being a child?

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# CHILDREN DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

11. Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
12. What do you think of when you hear the word 'birth rate'?
13. What do you think about what you read?
14. How can a leader encourage couples to have more children?
15. What support does your government give to families?
16. Why do you think fewer Japanese people are getting married?
17. Why is a low birth rate a "ticking time-bomb"?
18. What things about children make you smile?
19. What problems does an ageing workforce create?
20. What questions would you like to ask Japan's prime minister?

## **DISCUSSION (Write your own questions)**

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

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## **DISCUSSION (Write your own questions)**

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

# LANGUAGE - CLOZE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1805/180508-japanese-children.html>

The (1) \_\_\_\_\_ of children in Japan has fallen to its lowest number since records began. There were 170,000 (2) \_\_\_\_\_ children in Japan at the end of March 2018 than there were a year earlier. Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications issued a report on Friday showing the falling numbers of children. According to the (3) \_\_\_\_\_, the number of children aged 14 or under dropped for the 37th (4) \_\_\_\_\_ year. There was another record fall in the ratio of children to the overall Japanese population. This dropped to a new record low of 12.3 per cent and was the 44th year of (5) \_\_\_\_\_ in a row. This ratio is the lowest among countries in the world with a population (6) \_\_\_\_\_ 40 million or more.

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has been trying to (7) \_\_\_\_\_ the country's dwindling birth rate. He has introduced several (8) \_\_\_\_\_ to encourage lower-income families to have bigger families. However, these measures seem to be having little success. This is (9) \_\_\_\_\_ with the fact that fewer Japanese people are getting married, which demographers say is a "(10) \_\_\_\_\_ time-bomb" for Japan. The number of (11) \_\_\_\_\_ births in 2016 fell below one million for the first time since the government began collecting data in 1899. Japanese demographers predict (12) \_\_\_\_\_ by 2050, Japan will have 23 per cent fewer citizens. This means a rapidly aging society and a greatly diminishing workforce.

## Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- |     |                   |                 |                  |                    |
|-----|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 1.  | (a) numeral       | (b) number      | (c) numbering    | (d) numbered       |
| 2.  | (a) smaller       | (b) fewer       | (c) lesser       | (d) less           |
| 3.  | (a) earliest      | (b) earlyish    | (c) early        | (d) earlier        |
| 4.  | (a) consecutively | (b) consecutive | (c) conservative | (d) conservatively |
| 5.  | (a) incline       | (b) decline     | (c) cline        | (d) recline        |
| 6.  | (a) from          | (b) for         | (c) of           | (d) as             |
| 7.  | (a) dress up      | (b) dressage    | (c) address      | (d) dressing       |
| 8.  | (a) rulers        | (b) tapes       | (c) measures     | (d) metres         |
| 9.  | (a) muffled       | (b) doubted     | (c) doubled      | (d) coupled        |
| 10. | (a) ticking       | (b) tickling    | (c) tricking     | (d) sticking       |
| 11. | (a) annual        | (b) year        | (c) annum        | (d) 12 months      |
| 12. | (a) what          | (b) which       | (c) that         | (d) thus           |



# SPELLING

## Paragraph 1

1. According to the tctsitasis
2. for the 37th ectcovnuesi year
3. the lvaerol Japanese population
4. the 44th year of incldee
5. This aotri is the lowest
6. a population of 40 mnilloi

## Paragraph 2

7. the country's ldidginnw birth rate
8. introduced several uremaess
9. uoelcd with the fact that
10. The number of launan births in 2016 fell
11. 23 per cent fewer itsnzice
12. a greatly nidsngihimi workforce

# PUT THE TEXT BACK TOGETHER

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1805/180508-japanese-children.html>

**Number these lines in the correct order.**

- ( **1** ) The number of children in Japan has fallen to its lowest number since records began. There were 170,000 fewer
- ( ) fall in the ratio of children to the overall Japanese population. This dropped to a new record
- ( ) rate. He has introduced several measures to encourage lower-income families to have bigger
- ( ) citizens. This means a rapidly aging society and a greatly diminishing workforce.
- ( ) data in 1899. Japanese demographers predict that by 2050, Japan will have 23 per cent fewer
- ( ) Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has been trying to address the country's dwindling birth
- ( ) countries in the world with a population of 40 million or more.
- ( ) of children aged 14 or under dropped for the 37th consecutive year. There was another record
- ( ) a report on Friday showing the falling numbers of children. According to the statistics, the number
- ( ) families. However, these measures seem to be having little success. This is coupled with the fact that fewer
- ( ) children in Japan at the end of March 2018 than there were a year earlier. Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications issued
- ( ) low of 12.3 per cent and was the 44th year of decline in a row. This ratio is the lowest among
- ( ) Japanese people are getting married, which demographers say is a "ticking time-
- ( ) bomb" for Japan. The number of annual births in 2016 fell below one million for the first time since the government began collecting

# PUT THE WORDS IN THE RIGHT ORDER

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1805/180508-japanese-children.html>

1. began . lowest since Fallen to its records number
2. end the of at children Fewer March . in Japan
3. aged 14 of children The number under . or
4. to a of low record new cent . dropped 12 .3 This per
5. is This among countries . ratio the lowest
6. to country's dwindling birth Trying the rate . address
7. families . Encourage to families bigger have lower-income
8. Demographers say "ticking is a this time-bomb" .
9. Fell for first million one the time . below
10. have will per citizens . cent 23 Japan fewer

# CIRCLE THE CORRECT WORD (20 PAIRS)

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1805/180508-japanese-children.html>

The number of children in Japan has *felled* / *fallen* to its lowest number since records began. There were 170,000 *fewer* / *less* children in Japan at the end of March 2018 than there were a year *earlyish* / *earlier*. Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications issued a report on Friday *shown* / *showing* the falling numbers of children. According *to* / *at* the statistics, the number of children aged 14 or under dropped for the 37th *consecutively* / *consecutive* year. There was another record fall in the *ratio* / *patio* of children to the *overall* / *overalls* Japanese population. This dropped to a new record low of 12.3 per cent and was the 44th year of decline in a *low* / *row*. This ratio is the lowest among countries in the world with a population *for* / *of* 40 million or more.

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has been *trying* / *tried* to address the country's *dwindling* / *dawdling* birth rate. He has introduced *several* / *severance* measures to encourage lower-income families to have bigger families. However, these measures *seen* / *seem* to be having little success. This is *coupled* / *doubled* with the fact that fewer Japanese people are getting married, which demographers say is a "*ticking* / *tickling* time-bomb" for Japan. The number of annual births in 2016 *fall* / *fell* below one million for the first time *since* / *for* the government began collecting data in 1899. Japanese demographers predict that by 2050, Japan will have 23 per cent fewer *citizenry* / *citizens*. This means a rapidly *agreeing* / *aging* society and a greatly diminishing workforce.

**Talk about the connection between each pair of words in italics, and why the correct word is correct.**

# INSERT THE VOWELS (a, e, i, o, u)

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The number of children in Japan has fallen to its lowest number since records began. There were 170,000 fewer children in Japan at the end of March 2018 than there were a year earlier. Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications said in a report on Friday showing the falling numbers of children. According to the statistics, the number of children aged 14 and under dropped for the 37th consecutive year. There was another record fall in the rate of children to the overall Japanese population. This dropped to a new record low of 12.3 percent and was the 44th year of decline in row. This rate is the lowest among countries in the world with a population of 40 million or more.

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has been trying to address the country's dwindling birth rate. He has introduced several measures to encourage lower-income families to have bigger families. However, these measures seem to be having little success. This is a problem with the fact that fewer Japanese people are getting married, which demographers say is "a ticking time bomb" for Japan. The number of annual births in 2016 fell below a million for the first time since the government began collecting data in 1899. Japanese demographers predict that by 2050, Japan will have 23 percent fewer citizens. This means rapidly ageing society and greatly diminished working force.

# PUNCTUATE THE TEXT AND ADD CAPITALS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1805/180508-japanese-children.html>

the number of children in japan has fallen to its lowest number since records began there were 170000 fewer children in japan at the end of march 2018 than there were a year earlier japans ministry of internal affairs and communications issued a report on friday showing the falling numbers of children according to the statistics the number of children aged 14 or under dropped for the 37th consecutive year there was another record fall in the ratio of children to the overall japanese population this dropped to a new record low of 123 per cent and was the 44th year of decline in a row this ratio is the lowest among countries in the world with a population of 40 million or more

japans prime minister shinzo abe has been trying to address the countrys dwindling birth rate he has introduced several measures to encourage lower income families to have bigger families however these measures seem to be having little success this is coupled with the fact that fewer japanese people are getting married which demographers say is a ticking time bomb for japan the number of annual births in 2016 fell below one million for the first time since the government began collecting data in 1899 japanese demographers predict that by 2050 japan will have 23 per cent fewer citizens this means a rapidly aging society and a greatly diminishing workforce

# PUT A SLASH ( / ) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1805/180508-japanese-children.html>

The number of children in Japan has fallen to its lowest numbers since records began. There were 170,000 fewer children in Japan at the end of March 2018 than there were a year earlier. Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications issued a report on Friday showing the falling numbers of children. According to the statistics, the number of children aged 14 or under dropped for the 37th consecutive year. There was another record fall in the ratio of children to the overall Japanese population. This dropped to a new record low of 12.3 percent and was the 44th year of decline in a row. This ratio is the lowest among countries in the world with a population of 40 million or more. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has been trying to address the country's dwindling birth rate. He has introduced several measures to encourage lower-income families to have bigger families. However, these measures seem to be having little success. This is coupled with the fact that fewer Japanese people are getting married, which demographers say is a "ticking time-bomb" for Japan. The number of annual births in 2016 fell below one million for the first time since the government began collecting data in 1899. Japanese demographers predict that by 2050, Japan will have 23 percent fewer citizens. This means a rapidly aging society and a greatly diminishing workforce.







# HOMework

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find out more about this news story. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. CHILDREN:** Make a poster about children. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. INCREASE BIRTH RATES:** Write a magazine article about countries doing more to increase birth rates. Include imaginary interviews with people who are for and against this.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?** Write a newspaper article about the next stage in this news story. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Give each other feedback on your articles.

**6. LETTER:** Write a letter to an expert on birth rates. Ask him/her three questions about them. Give him/her three of your ideas on how countries can increase birth rates. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## VOCABULARY (p.4)

1. d    2. f    3. b    4. g    5. c    6. e    7. a  
8. n    9. k    10. m    11. h    12. i    13. l    14. j

## TRUE / FALSE (p.5)

- a F    b T    c T    d F    e F    f F    g T    h T

## SYNONYM MATCH (p.5)

- |               |                      |
|---------------|----------------------|
| 1. fallen     | a. dropped           |
| 2. records    | b. documentation     |
| 3. issued     | c. released          |
| 4. statistics | d. facts and figures |
| 5. in a row   | e. consecutively     |
| 6. address    | f. deal with         |
| 7. dwindling  | g. falling           |
| 8. measures   | h. actions           |
| 9. predict    | i. forecast          |
| 10. greatly   | j. considerably      |

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS (p.9)

- 170,000
- A report
- 37
- 12.3%
- 44
- Japan's dwindling birth rate
- Lower-income families
- Getting married
- 2016
- Japan's workforce

## WORDS IN THE RIGHT ORDER (p.20)

- Fallen to its lowest number since records began.
- Fewer children in Japan at the end of March.
- The number of children aged 14 or under.
- This dropped to a new record low of 12.3 per cent.
- This ratio is the lowest among countries.
- Trying to address the country's dwindling birth rate.
- Encourage lower-income families to have bigger families.
- Demographers say this is a "ticking time-bomb".
- Fell below one million for the first time.
- Japan will have 23 per cent fewer citizens.

## MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ (p.10)

1. c    2. a    3. d    4. b    5. c    6. d    7. b    8. d    9. a    10. d

## ALL OTHER EXERCISES

Please check for yourself by looking at the Article on page 2.  
(It's good for your English ;-)