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## Japan minister quits over drunk at G7 claims

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18th February, 2009

# THE ARTICLE

Japan's Finance Minister Shoichi Nakagawa resigned on Tuesday, causing great damage to the Japanese government. There was an enormous amount of pressure for Nakagawa to step down after he appeared to be drunk at an international meeting. He looked extremely sleepy at a Group of Seven news conference in Rome. He slurred his words and could hardly keep his eyes open. He even appeared to fall asleep at one point. Nakagawa denied being drunk. He said an unfortunate combination of a sip of wine and his cold medicine made him very drowsy. His explanation was not enough for Japan's opposition politicians, who immediately called for his resignation. This is a huge blow for Japan's Prime Minister Taro Aso in an election year.

Nakagawa's resignation could not come at a worse time for Prime Minister Aso. He is already one of Japan's most unpopular leaders in modern times. His popularity rating is currently less than ten per cent. Nakagawa resigned a day after Japan released its worst economic data for 35 years. The country is in its worst economic slump since the world oil crisis in 1974. Japan's Finance Ministry announced the economy shrank by 3.3 per cent between October and December. This is the same as a 12.7 percent contraction over a year. A strong yen against the dollar is adding to Japan's economic woes. Nakagawa apologized to the Japanese people, saying: "I have caused trouble to the people. I apologize for...my careless health management."

# WARM-UPS

**1. JAPAN:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about Japan. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your partner(s) and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*resignations / pressure / being drunk / slurring one's words / medicine / huge blows / unpopular leaders / modern times / popularity ratings / economic woes / carelessness*

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

**3. GREAT DAMAGE:** What damage can your country's leaders do? Complete the table below. Talk with your partner. Change partners and share what you wrote.

Action	Damage	Resign or not?
Getting drunk		
Having an affair		
Not paying tax		
Faked qualifications		
Terrorist links		
Attacking a religion		

**4. DRUNK:** Students A **strongly** believe any world leader found drunk should automatically resign; Students B **strongly** believe there's nothing wrong with world leaders getting drunk. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. PRESSURE:** In pairs / groups, rank the following in order of which you think is the worst kind of pressure.

_____ to pass exams	_____ to stay slim
_____ to meet deadlines	_____ to provide for your family
_____ to get married	_____ to come up with new ideas
_____ to win at sports / competitions	_____ to satisfy your parents

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

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. Japan's finance minister is thinking about stepping down from his post. | T / F |
| b. The minister was very drunk at a news conference in Rome.               | T / F |
| c. The minister said a mix of alcohol and medicine made him very sleepy.   | T / F |
| d. Japan will hold its next election next year.                            | T / F |
| e. The Japanese prime minister is the most unpopular ever.                 | T / F |
| f. Japan's economy is in its worst condition for three-and-a-half decades. | T / F |
| g. The American dollar is extremely strong against the Japanese yen.       | T / F |
| h. The finance minister said sorry to the Japanese people.                 | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. resigned    | a. presently     |
| 2. enormous    | b. mix           |
| 3. appeared    | c. disliked      |
| 4. combination | d. huge          |
| 5. blow        | e. irresponsible |
| 6. unpopular   | f. seemed        |
| 7. currently   | g. recession     |
| 8. slump       | h. quit          |
| 9. woes        | i. setback       |
| 10. careless   | j. problems      |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                                       |                               |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. causing great                      | a. his words                  |
| 2. an enormous amount                 | b. against the dollar         |
| 3. He slurred                         | c. for Japan's Prime Minister |
| 4. He even appeared to fall           | d. less than ten per cent     |
| 5. a huge blow                        | e. damage                     |
| 6. Nakagawa's resignation could not   | f. to Japan's economic woes   |
| 7. His popularity rating is currently | g. of pressure                |
| 8. its worst economic slump           | h. come at a worse time       |
| 9. A strong yen                       | i. asleep at one point        |
| 10. adding                            | j. since the world oil crisis |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Japan's Finance Minister Shoichi Nakagawa \_\_\_\_\_ on Tuesday, causing great damage to the Japanese government. There was an enormous \_\_\_\_\_ of pressure for Nakagawa to step \_\_\_\_\_ after he appeared to be drunk at an international meeting. He looked extremely \_\_\_\_\_ at a Group of Seven news conference in Rome. He slurred his words and could hardly keep his eyes open. He even appeared to \_\_\_\_\_ asleep at one point. Nakagawa denied being drunk. He said an unfortunate \_\_\_\_\_ of a sip of wine and his cold medicine made him very drowsy. His explanation was not enough for Japan's \_\_\_\_\_ politicians, who immediately called for his resignation. This is a huge \_\_\_\_\_ for Japan's Prime Minister Taro Aso in an election year.

*down*  
*opposition*  
*sleepy*  
*resigned*  
*blow*  
*combination*  
*amount*  
*fall*

Nakagawa's resignation could not come at a \_\_\_\_\_ time for Prime Minister Aso. He is already one of Japan's most unpopular leaders in \_\_\_\_\_ times. His popularity rating is currently less than ten per cent. Nakagawa resigned a day after Japan released its worst economic \_\_\_\_\_ for 35 years. The country is in its worst economic slump since the world oil \_\_\_\_\_ in 1974. Japan's Finance Ministry announced the economy \_\_\_\_\_ by 3.3 per cent between October and December. This is the same as a 12.7 percent \_\_\_\_\_ over a year. A strong yen against the dollar is adding to Japan's economic \_\_\_\_\_. Nakagawa apologized to the Japanese people, saying: "I have caused trouble to the people. I apologize for...my \_\_\_\_\_ health management."

*shrank*  
*careless*  
*data*  
*worse*  
*woes*  
*crisis*  
*modern*  
*contraction*

## **LISTENING:** Listen and fill in the spaces.

Japan's Finance Minister Shoichi Nakagawa resigned on Tuesday, causing \_\_\_\_\_ the Japanese government. There was an enormous amount of pressure for Nakagawa to step down after \_\_\_\_\_ be drunk at an international meeting. He looked extremely sleepy at a Group of Seven news conference in Rome. He slurred his words \_\_\_\_\_ keep his eyes open. \_\_\_\_\_ to fall asleep at one point. Nakagawa denied being drunk. He said an unfortunate combination of a sip of wine and his cold medicine made him very drowsy. His explanation \_\_\_\_\_ Japan's opposition politicians, who immediately called for his resignation. This \_\_\_\_\_ Japan's Prime Minister Taro Aso in an election year.

Nakagawa's resignation could not come \_\_\_\_\_ Prime Minister Aso. He is already one of Japan's most unpopular leaders in modern times. His popularity \_\_\_\_\_ less than ten per cent. Nakagawa resigned a day after Japan released its worst economic data for 35 years. The country is in its worst economic \_\_\_\_\_ world oil crisis in 1974. Japan's Finance Ministry announced the economy \_\_\_\_\_ cent between October and December. This is the same as a 12.7 percent contraction over a year. A strong yen \_\_\_\_\_ is adding to Japan's economic woes. Nakagawa apologized to the Japanese people, saying: "I have caused trouble to the people. I \_\_\_\_\_ health management."

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

<b>enormous</b>	<b>amount</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>• causing</li><li>• enormous</li><li>• extremely</li><li>• appeared</li><li>• mix</li><li>• blow</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• come</li><li>• currently</li><li>• data</li><li>• shrank</li><li>• strong</li><li>• careless</li></ul>
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# STUDENT PRESSURE SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about pressure 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.



# BEING DRUNK DISCUSSION

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

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'drunk'?
- c) What do you think of people who get drunk?
- d) Do you think it should be illegal to get drunk?
- e) What do you think of political leaders getting drunk at international meetings?
- f) How much damage do you think Shoichi Nakagawa's actions will do to the Japanese government?
- g) Do you think Nakagawa would have resigned if he wasn't drunk?
- h) Did you see Nakagawa slurring his words on TV? What did you think?
- i) Should Nakagawa's party punish him for his actions?
- j) Do you think people can be excused for their actions when drunk?

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# BEING DRUNK DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Who is the most unpopular leader in your country's recent history?
- c) What economic data has come out of your country recently?
- d) How do you think Nakagawa is feeling now?
- e) Do you avoid people who are drunk?
- f) How would society change if all alcohol was banned?
- g) Have any famous people in your country done stupid things while being drunk?
- h) What does a strong yen against the dollar do to Japan's economy?
- i) What do you think of Nakagawa's expression "careless health management"?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Shoichi Nakagawa?

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# LANGUAGE

Japan's Finance Minister Shoichi Nakagawa (1) \_\_\_\_\_ on Tuesday, causing great damage to the Japanese government. There was an enormous amount of pressure (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Nakagawa to step down after he appeared to be drunk at an international meeting. He looked extremely (3) \_\_\_\_\_ at a Group of Seven news conference in Rome. He slurred his words and could (4) \_\_\_\_\_ keep his eyes open. He even appeared to fall asleep at one point. Nakagawa denied being drunk. He said an unfortunate combination of a sip of wine and his cold medicine (5) \_\_\_\_\_ him very drowsy. His explanation was not enough for Japan's opposition politicians, who immediately called for his resignation. This is a huge (6) \_\_\_\_\_ for Japan's Prime Minister Taro Aso in an election year.

Nakagawa's resignation could not (7) \_\_\_\_\_ at a worse time for Prime Minister Aso. He is already one of Japan's most unpopular leaders in modern times. His popularity rating is currently (8) \_\_\_\_\_ than ten per cent. Nakagawa resigned a day after Japan released its worst economic data for 35 years. The country is in its worst economic slump (9) \_\_\_\_\_ the world oil crisis in 1974. Japan's Finance Ministry announced the economy shrank by 3.3 per cent between October and December. This is the same as a 12.7 percent contraction (10) \_\_\_\_\_ a year. A strong yen (11) \_\_\_\_\_ the dollar is adding to Japan's economic woes. Nakagawa apologized to the Japanese people, saying: "I have caused trouble to the people. I apologize (12) \_\_\_\_\_ ...my careless health management."

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

- |     |               |                 |              |              |
|-----|---------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1.  | (a) resigning | (b) resignation | (c) resigns  | (d) resigned |
| 2.  | (a) at        | (b) by          | (c) for      | (d) to       |
| 3.  | (a) sleep     | (b) sleepy      | (c) sleeping | (d) slept    |
| 4.  | (a) hardly    | (b) hard        | (c) hardest  | (d) harden   |
| 5.  | (a) forced    | (b) did         | (c) made     | (d) put      |
| 6.  | (a) breath    | (b) exhale      | (c) puff     | (d) blow     |
| 7.  | (a) go        | (b) come        | (c) leave    | (d) visit    |
| 8.  | (a) less      | (b) least       | (c) lesser   | (d) lessen   |
| 9.  | (a) then      | (b) since       | (c) at       | (d) for      |
| 10. | (a) by        | (b) in          | (c) over     | (d) at       |
| 11. | (a) against   | (b) via         | (c) pushed   | (d) negative |
| 12. | (a) with      | (b) at          | (c) by       | (d) for      |

## WRITING:

Write about **pressure** for 10 minutes. Correct your partner's paper.

[illegible]

# 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 the Japanese economy. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. PRESSURE:** Make a poster about the different kinds of pressure people are under nowadays. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. DRUNK:** Write a magazine article about the effects of Nakagawa's actions on the Japanese government. Include imaginary interviews with Nakagawa, Japan's Prime Minister Taro Aso and a Japanese citizen.

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. LETTER:** Write a letter to Shoichi Nakagawa. Ask him three questions about his actions. Give him your three suggestions on what he should do next. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

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

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. resigned    | a. quit          |
| 2. enormous    | b. huge          |
| 3. appeared    | c. seemed        |
| 4. combination | d. mix           |
| 5. blow        | e. setback       |
| 6. unpopular   | f. disliked      |
| 7. currently   | g. presently     |
| 8. slump       | h. recession     |
| 9. woes        | i. problems      |
| 10. careless   | j. irresponsible |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                       |                               |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. causing great                      | a. damage                     |
| 2. an enormous amount                 | b. of pressure                |
| 3. He slurred                         | c. his words                  |
| 4. He even appeared to fall           | d. asleep at one point        |
| 5. a huge blow                        | e. for Japan's Prime Minister |
| 6. Nakagawa's resignation could not   | f. come at a worse time       |
| 7. His popularity rating is currently | g. less than ten per cent     |
| 8. its worst economic slump           | h. since the world oil crisis |
| 9. A strong yen                       | i. against the dollar         |
| 10. adding                            | j. to Japan's economic woes   |

## GAP FILL:

### Japan minister quits over drunk at G7 claims

Japan's Finance Minister Shoichi Nakagawa **resigned** on Tuesday, causing great damage to the Japanese government. There was an enormous **amount** of pressure for Nakagawa to step **down** after he appeared to be drunk at an international meeting. He looked extremely **sleepy** at a Group of Seven news conference in Rome. He slurred his words and could hardly keep his eyes **open**. He even appeared to **fall** asleep at one point. Nakagawa denied being drunk. He said an unfortunate **combination** of a sip of wine and his cold medicine made him very drowsy. His explanation was not enough for Japan's **opposition** politicians, who immediately called for his resignation. This is a huge **blow** for Japan's Prime Minister Taro Aso in an election year.

Nakagawa's resignation could not come at a **worse** time for Prime Minister Aso. He is already one of Japan's most unpopular leaders in **modern** times. His popularity rating is currently less than ten per cent. Nakagawa resigned a day after Japan released its worst economic **data** for 35 years. The country is in its worst economic slump since the world oil **crisis** in 1974. Japan's Finance Ministry announced the economy **shrank** by 3.3 per cent between October and December. This is the same as a 12.7 percent **contraction** over a year. A strong yen against the dollar is adding to Japan's economic **woes**. Nakagawa apologized to the Japanese people, saying: "I have caused trouble to the people. I apologize for...my **careless** health management."

## LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d      2 - c      3 - b      4 - a      5 - c      6 - d      7 - b      8 - a      9 - b      10 - c      11 - a      12 - d