

Japan lowers age of adulthood to 18

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Japan's government has lowered the age at which people become adults. It is the first time since 1876 that this has happened. From the year 2022, teenagers will become adults at the age of 18,

which is two years earlier than the age at which adulthood currently legally happens. However, even though the age has been lowered, there are still certain things that will not change. The legal age for drinking alcohol, smoking and gambling will remain fixed at 20. The new law will enable 18-year-olds to get married without parental consent, and allow them to apply for loans and credit cards. Transgender men and women aged 18 and over will be able to apply to courts to have their gender officially recognized.

The new law has been passed in an effort to bring about social and economic change in Japan. The government hopes to see an increase in the number of young people getting married and starting families. This will help to address the nation's dwindling birthrate and ageing population. Greater financial freedoms could be a boost to the economy and provide more tax revenue. This is vital for a government struggling to cope with increasing pension and healthcare payments. Many of Japan's young people were more concerned about how the law would affect the traditional Coming of Age Day. This is a national holiday held in January in which 20-year-olds dress up in traditional kimonos to celebrate adulthood.

Sources: cnn.com / theguardian.com / japantimes.com

Writing

What is the real age for society to accept people as adults? Why?

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

Japan / age / adults / teenagers / drinking / gambling / smoking / married / loans / gender / social / economic change / birth rate / pension / pension / traditional / kimono

True / False

- a) The last time Japan changed the age of adulthood was in 1876. T / F
- b) Eighteen-year-olds in Japan will be adults from the year 2020. T / F
- c) Japan's 18-year-old adults will be able to smoke and gamble. T / F
- d) Japan's 18-year-old adults will be able to take out loans. T / F
- e) Japan's government hopes more young people will get married. T / F
- f) The new adults should bring more tax revenue to Japan's government. T / F
- g) Japan is making fewer pension payments. T / F
- h) Young Japanese people want two Coming of Age ceremonies. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| 1. lowered | a. worried |
| 2. happened | b. sex |
| 3. certain | c. attempt |
| 4. consent | d. deal with |
| 5. gender | e. occurred |
| 6. effort | f. particular |
| 7. address | g. commemorate |
| 8. dwindling | h. reduced |
| 9. concerned | i. decreasing |
| 10. celebrate | j. agreement |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What are the good and bad things about being an adult?
- c) What social change will the new law bring?
- d) What are the dangers of an ageing population?
- e) Are we sad at no longer being a child or happy at becoming an adult?
- f) Should people be allowed to choose not to become an adult?
- g) How do people celebrate adulthood in your country?
- h) What questions would you like to ask a 20-year-old?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. It is the first time since 1876 that | a. in traditional kimonos |
| 2. the age at which adulthood currently | b. recognized |
| 3. The legal age | c. payments |
| 4. get married without parental | d. to cope |
| 5. have their gender officially | e. for drinking alcohol |
| 6. help to address the nation's | f. legally happens |
| 7. a boost | g. dwindling birth rate |
| 8. vital for a government struggling | h. consent |
| 9. pension and healthcare | i. to the economy |
| 10. dress up | j. this has happened |

Discussion – Student B

- When does adulthood start?
- How did you feel when you became an adult?
- Is it best to be an adult or a child?
- How much of an adult is an 18-year-old?
- When did you feel like an adult?
- When is the earliest someone should be allowed to marry?
- When is the earliest someone should be allowed to get a loan?
- Are you an adult if you cannot smoke or gamble?

Spelling

- Japan's vgotenremn
- there are still rictane things
- drinking lloaho
- aebeln 18-year-olds
- get married without taprnael consent
- have their gender lficyfiao recognized
- social and ocoimcen change
- the nation's ndiwdglin birth rate
- tax vnereue
- This is ltvai
- pnnsieo and healthcare payments
- ceetblare adulthood

Answers – Synonym Match

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

Role Play

Role A – Getting Married

You think getting married is the best thing about being an adult. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): independence, money or working.

Role B – Independence

You think independence is the best thing about being an adult. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): getting married, money or working.

Role C – Money

You think money is the best thing about being an adult. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): independence, getting married or working.

Role D – Working

You think working is the best thing about being an adult. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): independence, money or getting married.

Speaking – Being an adult

Rank these with your partner. Put the best things about being an adult at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| • Having children | • No parental rules |
| • Money | • Getting married |
| • Driving a car | • Working |
| • Credit cards | • Independence |

Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	F	d	T	e	T	f	T	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.