

Japan to use artificial intelligence to match couples

11th December, 2020



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Japan is trying to get more men and women to go on dates. It wants to increase its birth rate because there are fewer and fewer babies being born. Japan is going to use artificial intelligence (AI) to match couples and help residents

find love. The government has decided to use \$19 million next year to set the software up. There are already matchmaking services in half of Japan's 47 prefectures. These involve filling out forms and answering questions on hobbies and interests. A worker then matches people based on the answers. Some prefectures are now starting AI projects to automate the system. AI software can perform a more advanced analysis of data and get better matches.

The government hopes the project will increase the size of the population. Japan's fertility rate is one of the lowest in the world. The average number of children a Japanese woman is expected to have in her lifetime is 1.36. This figure is continuing to go down, which is why the government is trying the AI programme. A government spokesperson said: "We hope this support will help reverse the decline in the nation's birth rate." Japan's population is rapidly ageing because people are living longer. The longevity rate for women is the highest in the world. This is a problem for the economy. There are fewer and fewer younger workers to pay for the pension and welfare costs of retired people.

Sources: japantimes.co.jp / uk.reuters.com / globaltimes.cn

Writing

Computer matchmaking is the best way to find a partner. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

dates / birth rate / artificial intelligence / residents / love / software / system / data / government / fertility rate / average / figure / decline / population / pension / welfare

True / False

- a) Japan wants more men and women to start dating. T / F
- b) A new A.I. project will help residents find love. T / F
- c) Nearly a third of Japan's prefectures have a matchmaking service. T / F
- d) The article says humans matchmaking get better matches than A.I. T / F
- e) Japan has one of the highest fertility rates in the world. T / F
- f) The average Japanese woman will have 1.36 children during her life. T / F
- g) The article says Japanese people are ageing because they exercise. T / F
- h) The number of younger Japanese workers is increasing. T / F

Synonym Match

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

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| 1. increase | a. existence |
| 2. match | b. evaluation |
| 3. residents | c. wants |
| 4. filling out | d. suit |
| 5. analysis | e. quickly |
| 6. hopes | f. grow |
| 7. lifetime | g. decrease |
| 8. decline | h. youthful |
| 9. rapidly | i. citizens |
| 10. younger | j. completing |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of matchmaking?
- b) What's the best way to find a partner?
- c) Why might A.I. matchmaking be better than a person at matchmaking?
- d) Are parents good matchmakers?
- e) Have you ever fallen in love at first sight?
- f) Where's the best place to go on a first date?
- g) How do you feel on a first date?
- h) How important is it your partner has the same hobbies as you?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. get more men and women | a. answering questions |
| 2. It wants to increase its | b. services |
| 3. there are fewer and fewer | c. decline |
| 4. matchmaking | d. to go on dates |
| 5. These involve filling out forms and | e. rate |
| 6. Japan's fertility | f. retired people |
| 7. expected to have in | g. birth rate |
| 8. help reverse the | h. for women |
| 9. The longevity rate | i. babies being born |
| 10. pension and welfare costs of | j. her lifetime |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What problems does a shrinking population cause?
- How can the government get people to have more children?
- What is the best thing about falling in love?
- What kind of person is your ideal partner?
- Is it ever too old to fall in love?
- Would you use the A.I. matchmaking service?
- What questions would you like to ask Japan's government?

Spelling

- iarcesne its birth rate
- match cpesluo and help residents
- These ielvnov filling out forms
- answering questions on hobbies and nieertsts
- etumoata the system
- advanced snslyiaa of data
- Japan's yreliftti rate
- epcexted to have in her lifetime
- help eesrrev the decline
- The vyegolitr rate for women
- fewer younger workers to pay for the nneispo
- welfare costs of eitrred people

Answers – Synonym Match

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

Role Play

Role A – Movie Theatre

You think a movie theatre is the best first date. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their dates. Also, tell the others which is the least romantic of these (and why): hiking, restaurant lunch or picnic on the beach.

Role B – Hiking

You think hiking is the best first date. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their dates. Also, tell the others which is the least romantic of these (and why): movie theatre, restaurant lunch or picnic on the beach.

Role C – A Restaurant Lunch

You think a restaurant lunch is the best first date. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their dates. Also, tell the others which is the least romantic of these (and why): hiking, movie theatre or picnic on the beach.

Role D – A Picnic On The Beach

You think a picnic on the beach is the best first date. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their dates. Also, tell the others which is the least romantic of these (and why): hiking, restaurant lunch or movie theatre.

Speaking – First Date

Rank these with your partner. Put the best first dates at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| • Movie theatre | • A bar |
| • Hiking | • An amusement park |
| • A museum | • Picnic on the beach |
| • A disco / club | • Restaurant lunch |

Answers – True False

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