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**Level 2 – 25th February, 2021**

## **Japan government creates a minister of loneliness**

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<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2102/210225-minister-of-loneliness-2.html>

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**Please try Levels 0, 1 and 3. They are (a little) harder.**

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# THE READING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2102/210225-minister-of-loneliness-2.html>

Japan has a "minister of loneliness" for the first time. Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga created the role in early February. Mr Suga wanted to do something about the rise in suicide cases. More people are taking their own lives in the pandemic. Japan's police agency said 20,919 people died by suicide in 2020. This is 750 more than the year before. It is also the first two-year rise in suicides in 11 years. The minister told reporters: "I hope to promote activities that prevent loneliness and social isolation and to improve the ties between people."

The police agency said there was a bigger rise in suicides among women. Prime Minister Suga said women have been struggling with loneliness since the coronavirus pandemic started. He told reporters: "Women are suffering from isolation more than men are, and the number of suicides is...rising." There has been a 70 per cent increase in the number of women taking their own lives. A 23-year-old designer said she has suffered from loneliness. She said: "Not seeing people smile behind their mask makes me sad and lonely." She added: "I want to see happy faces."

Sources: <https://thehill.com/policy/international/asia-pacific/539917-japanese-prime-minister-appoints-minister-of-loneliness-to>  
<https://nypost.com/2021/02/22/japan-creates-minister-of-loneliness-to-fight-covid-suicides/>  
<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/02/12/national/loneliness-isolation-minister/>

# PHRASE MATCHING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2102/210225-minister-of-loneliness-2.html>

## PARAGRAPH ONE:

- |                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. for the                 | a. than the year before |
| 2. Suga created the role   | b. by suicide           |
| 3. people are taking       | c. loneliness           |
| 4. Japan's police          | d. in early February    |
| 5. 20,919 people died      | e. rise in suicides     |
| 6. This is 750 more        | f. first time           |
| 7. the first two-year      | g. agency               |
| 8. activities that prevent | h. their own lives      |

## PARAGRAPH TWO:

- |                                   |                    |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. a bigger rise in suicides      | a. smile           |
| 2. women have been struggling     | b. is rising       |
| 3. since the coronavirus pandemic | c. faces           |
| 4. the number of suicides         | d. from loneliness |
| 5. she has suffered               | e. sad             |
| 6. Not seeing people              | f. with loneliness |
| 7. mask makes me                  | g. among women     |
| 8. I want to see happy            | h. started         |

# LISTEN AND FILL IN THE GAPS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2102/210225-minister-of-loneliness-2.html>

Japan has a "minister of loneliness" (1) \_\_\_\_\_ time. Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga (2) \_\_\_\_\_ in early February. Mr Suga wanted to do something about (3) \_\_\_\_\_ suicide cases. More people are taking their (4) \_\_\_\_\_ the pandemic. Japan's police agency said 20,919 people died by suicide in 2020. This is 750 more than (5) \_\_\_\_\_. It is also the first two-year rise in suicides in 11 years. The minister told reporters: "I hope to promote (6) \_\_\_\_\_ loneliness and social isolation and to improve the ties between people."

The police agency said there was a (7) \_\_\_\_\_ suicides among women. Prime Minister Suga said women have (8) \_\_\_\_\_ loneliness since the coronavirus pandemic started. He told reporters: "Women are suffering from isolation more than men are, and (9) \_\_\_\_\_ suicides is...rising." There has been a 70 per cent increase in the number of women taking (10) \_\_\_\_\_. A 23-year-old designer said she has suffered from loneliness. She said: "Not seeing people (11) \_\_\_\_\_ mask makes me sad and lonely." She added: "I want to (12) \_\_\_\_\_."

# PUT A SLASH ( / ) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2102/210225-minister-of-loneliness-2.html>

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# LONELINESS SURVEY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2102/210225-minister-of-loneliness-2.html>

Write five GOOD questions about loneliness 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.

## WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student A: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

d) \_\_\_\_\_

e) \_\_\_\_\_

f) \_\_\_\_\_

*Japan government creates a minister of loneliness – 25th February, 2021*  
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## WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student B: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

d) \_\_\_\_\_

e) \_\_\_\_\_

f) \_\_\_\_\_

# WRITING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2102/210225-minister-of-loneliness-2.html>

Write about **loneliness** for 10 minutes. Read and talk about your partner’s paper.

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