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Level 5 – 1st June 2026

Japan's population falls three million in five years

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<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2606/260601-japans-shrinking-population-5.html>

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Please try Levels 4 and 6. They are (a little) harder.

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THE READING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2606/260601-japans-shrinking-population-5.html>

Japan's population has fallen by three million in the past five years. This is the largest drop since records began in 1920. Japan's government released figures for its 2025 census. This demographic survey is carried out every five years. The latest one reveals that the number of residents in October was around 123 million. This was a drop of just over 3 million from 2020. This is a fall of 2.5 per cent. The census is the third in a row to show a decrease. Japan's government confirmed that population decline is advancing. It vowed to take "comprehensive measures".

The government said a big reason for the decline was historically low birth rates. In 2025, there were just over 700,000 births. This compared to 2.5 million yearly births in the postwar baby boom. Many governments have introduced measures to encourage couples to have babies. These include expanded child allowances, more parental leave, and subsidized early years education. They have had little success. Japan is one of the world's oldest societies. Its greying population is putting a lot of strain on healthcare systems, pensions, and the labour force.

Sources: https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20260529_08/
<https://japantoday.com/category/national/update1-japan's-population-marks-sharpest-drop-to-123-mil.-in-2025-census>
<https://japannews.yomiuri.co.jp/society/general-news/20260529-329935/>

PHRASE MATCHING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2606/260601-japans-shrinking-population-5.html>

PARAGRAPH ONE:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Japan's population has | a. its 2025 census |
| 2. released figures for | b. is advancing |
| 3. demographic | c. of residents |
| 4. carried out | d. measures |
| 5. the number | e. in a row |
| 6. The census is the third | f. every five years |
| 7. confirmed that population decline | g. fallen by three million |
| 8. It vowed to take comprehensive | h. survey |

PARAGRAPH TWO:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. The government said a big | a. birth rates |
| 2. historically low | b. healthcare systems |
| 3. there were just over 700,000 | c. leave |
| 4. in the postwar baby | d. births |
| 5. encourage couples | e. force |
| 6. parental | f. reason |
| 7. putting a lot of strain on | g. to have babies |
| 8. the labour | h. boom |

LISTEN AND FILL IN THE GAPS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2606/260601-japans-shrinking-population-5.html>

Japan's population (1) _____ three million in the past five years. This is the largest drop since records began in 1920. Japan's government (2) _____ its 2025 census. This demographic survey is carried out every five years. The latest one reveals that the (3) _____ in October was around 123 million. This was a (4) _____ over 3 million from 2020. This is a fall of 2.5 per cent. The census is the third (5) _____ to show a decrease. Japan's government confirmed that population decline is advancing. It (6) _____ "comprehensive measures".

The government said a big reason (7) _____ was historically (8) _____. In 2025, there were just over 700,000 births. This compared to 2.5 million yearly births in the (9) _____. Many governments have introduced measures to encourage couples to have babies. These include expanded child allowances, (10) _____, and subsidized early years education. They have (11) _____. Japan is one of the world's oldest societies. Its greying population is putting a (12) _____ on healthcare systems, pensions, and the labour force.

PUT A SLASH (/) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2606/260601-japans-shrinking-population-5.html>

Japan's population has fallen by three million in the past five years. This is the largest drop since records began in 1920. Japan's government released figures for its 2025 census. This demographics survey is carried out every five years. The latest one reveals that the number of residents in October was around 123 million. This was a drop of just over 3 million from 2020. This is a fall of 2.5 percent. The census is the third in a row to show a decrease. Japan's government confirmed that population decline is advancing. It vowed to take "comprehensive measures". The government said a big reason for the decline was historically low birth rates. In 2025, there were just over 700,000 births. This compared to 2.5 million yearly births in the post-war baby boom. Many governments have introduced measures to encourage couples to have babies. These include expanded child allowances, more parental leave, and subsidized early years education. They have had little success. Japan is one of the world's oldest societies. Its greying population is putting a lot of strain on health care systems, pensions, and the labour force.

POPULATION DECREASE SURVEY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2606/260601-japans-shrinking-population-4.html>

Write five GOOD questions about population decrease 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) _____

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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) _____

