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Level 6 – 1st June 2026

Japan's population falls three million in five years

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

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Please try Levels 4 and 5 (they are easier).

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THE ARTICLE

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

The population of Japan has fallen by over three million in the past five years. This is the largest drop since records began in 1920. Japan's internal affairs ministry has released preliminary figures for its 2025 census. This demographic survey is conducted every five years. The latest one reveals that the number of residents in October 2025 was 123,049,524. This was a drop of 3,096,575 from the 2020 survey — a fall of 2.5 per cent. The census is the third in a row to show a decrease. Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary said: "It was confirmed again that the population decline is advancing even further." He vowed to promote "comprehensive measures" to address the downturn.

The government attributed the decline to various factors. These included historically low birth rates. In 2025, there were around 706,000 births in Japan. This compared to around 2.5 million annual births during the postwar baby boom. Successive governments have introduced many measures to encourage couples to have babies. They have expanded child allowances, increased parental leave, and subsidized early years education. However, these have had little success. Japan is one of the world's oldest societies. The increasingly greying population is putting considerable 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/>

WARM-UPS

1. POPULATION DECREASE: Students walk around the class and talk to other students about population decrease. Change partners often and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, talk about these topics or words from the article. What will the article say about them? What can you say about these words and your life?

population / five years / records / demographic / survey / residents / census / decline
government / birth rates / baby boom / couples / parental leave / subsidies / pension

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

3. DEPOPULATION: Students A **strongly** believe depopulation is a good thing; Students B **strongly** believe the opposite. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

4. BIRTH RATE: What do you think of these ideas for increasing the birth rate? Would they make you act? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners often and share what you wrote.

	What I Think	Me
Free childcare		
Lower taxes for parents		
More playgrounds		
More public housing		
More support for fathers		
Family-friendly companies		

5. JAPAN: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "Japan". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

6. A SHRINKING POPULATION: Rank these with your partner. Put the most worrying things at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Fewer babies
- Emptying villages
- Bus services stopping
- Shop closures
- People living alone
- High taxes
- No pension money
- Nurse shortages

VOCABULARY MATCHING

Paragraph 1

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1. ministry | a. Related to a group of people and their characteristics. |
| 2. preliminary | b. Including many parts and dealing with everything important. |
| 3. census | c. A government department that is responsible for a particular area of public affairs. |
| 4. demographic | d. An official count of the people living in a country or area. |
| 5. in a row | e. Not final or complete yet. |
| 6. vowed | f. One after another with no break. |
| 7. comprehensive | g. Promised to do something. |

Paragraph 2

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 8. attributed | h. Things that help cause a result or situation. |
| 9. factors | i. A time of fast growth and success. |
| 10. boom | j. Paid part of the cost to make something cheaper. |
| 11. successive | k. Said that something was caused by a particular person or thing. |
| 12. measures | l. Pressure caused by too much demand or difficulty. |
| 13. subsidized | m. Actions taken to achieve a goal or solve a problem. |
| 14. strain | n. Following one after another. |

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

1. The drop in Japan's population is the biggest since records began. **T / F**
2. Japan conducts a demographic survey once a decade. **T / F**
3. The decline in population was over three per cent. **T / F**
4. It is the fourth consecutive census that has shown a fall in population. **T / F**
5. Japan is experiencing a fall in its birth rate it has not seen before. **T / F**
6. During the postwar baby boom, 2.5 million babies were born every year. **T / F**
7. Japan has taken many successful measures to increase its population. **T / F**
8. Japan's ageing population has negative effects on the pension system. **T / F**

2. SYNONYM MATCH: (The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| 1. preliminary | a. pressure |
| 2. conducted | b. steps |
| 3. in a row | c. deal with |
| 4. vowed | d. consecutive |
| 5. address | e. handouts |
| 6. attributed | f. initial |
| 7. measures | g. workers |
| 8. allowances | h. promised |
| 9. strain | i. carried out |
| 10. labour force | j. accredited |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. released preliminary | a. row |
| 2. demographic | b. on healthcare systems |
| 3. the third in a | c. address the downturn |
| 4. population decline is advancing | d. force |
| 5. comprehensive measures to | e. boom |
| 6. attributed the decline | f. even further |
| 7. historically low birth | g. figures |
| 8. during the postwar baby | h. rates |
| 9. putting considerable strain | i. survey |
| 10. the labour | j. to various factors |

GAP FILL

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

The population of Japan has (1) _____ by over three million in the past five years. This is the largest (2) _____ since records began in 1920. Japan's internal affairs ministry has released preliminary figures for its 2025 (3) _____. This demographic survey is conducted every five years. The latest one reveals that the number of (4) _____ in October 2025 was 123,049,524. This was a drop of 3,096,575 from the 2020 survey — a fall of 2.5 per cent. The census is the third in a (5) _____ to show a decrease. Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary said: "It was (6) _____ again that the population decline is advancing even (7) _____." He vowed to promote "comprehensive measures" to (8) _____ the downturn.

confirmed
drop
address
census
further
residents
fallen
row

The government attributed the decline to (9) _____ factors. These included historically low birth rates. In 2025, there were around 706,000 (10) _____ in Japan. This compared to around 2.5 million annual births during the postwar baby (11) _____. Successive governments have introduced many measures to encourage (12) _____ to have babies. They have expanded child allowances, increased parental leave, and subsidized early (13) _____ education. However, these have had little (14) _____. Japan is one of the world's oldest societies. The increasingly (15) _____ population is putting considerable strain on healthcare systems, pensions, and the labour (16) _____.

boom
years
force
various
success
couples
births
greying

LISTENING – Guess the answers. Listen to check.

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

- 1) Japan's internal affairs ministry has _____
 - a. released preliminary figurines
 - b. release preliminary figures
 - c. released pre-luminary figures
 - d. released preliminary figures
- 2) This was a drop of 3,096,575 from _____
 - a. the 2020 scurvey
 - b. the 2020 survey
 - c. the 2020 surveille
 - d. the 2020 surf way
- 3) The census is the third _____
 - a. inner row
 - b. in a row
 - c. in arrow
 - d. in the row
- 4) It was confirmed again that the population decline is _____
 - a. advancing even future
 - b. advancing even furrier
 - c. advancing even farther
 - d. advancing even further
- 5) He vowed to promote "comprehensive measures" to _____
 - a. address the U-turn
 - b. address the intern
 - c. address the downturn
 - d. address the upturn
- 6) The government attributed the decline _____
 - a. to various factors
 - b. to various factories
 - c. to various vectors
 - d. to various fractals
- 7) This compared to around 2.5 million annual births during the _____
 - a. postwar baby boom
 - b. postwar baby boon
 - c. postwar baby beam
 - d. postwar baby bone
- 8) expanded child allowances, increased parental leave, and subsidized _____
 - a. early year education
 - b. early ears education
 - c. early years education
 - d. earlyish years education
- 9) However, these have _____
 - a. had little success
 - b. had little succeed
 - c. had little excess
 - d. had little successive
- 10) putting considerable strain on healthcare systems, pensions, and _____
 - a. the labour fierce
 - b. the labour farce
 - c. the labour force
 - d. the labour fours

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

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

The population of Japan (1) _____ over three million in the past five years. This is the largest drop since records began in 1920. Japan's internal affairs ministry (2) _____ figures for its 2025 census. This demographic survey is conducted every five years. The latest one reveals that the (3) _____ in October 2025 was 123,049,524. This was a drop of 3,096,575 from the 2020 survey — a fall of 2.5 per cent. The census is the third (4) _____ to show a decrease. Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary said: "It was confirmed again that the population decline (5) _____ further." He vowed to promote "comprehensive measures" (6) _____ downturn.

The government attributed (7) _____ various factors. These included historically low birth rates. In 2025, there were around 706,000 births in Japan. This (8) _____ 2.5 million annual births during the postwar baby boom. Successive governments have introduced (9) _____ encourage couples to have babies. They have expanded child allowances, increased parental leave, and subsidized (10) _____. However, these have had little success. Japan is one of the (11) _____. The increasingly greying population is putting considerable strain on healthcare systems, pensions, and (12) _____.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

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

1. When did Japan first start to keep population records?
2. How often does Japan conduct a population census?
3. What was the fall in population as a percentage?
4. How many censuses in a row now show a population fall?
5. What did the government promise to promote?
6. What did the government attribute the drop to?
7. How many babies were born in Japan in 2025?
8. What happened in the postwar years?
9. What has the government subsidized?
10. What is the ageing population straining besides pensions and healthcare?

MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ

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

- 1) When did Japan first start to keep population records?
 - a) 1209
 - b) 1902
 - c) 1290
 - d) 1920
- 2) How often does Japan conduct a population census?
 - a) every three
 - b) every five years
 - c) every 10 years
 - d) every 20 years
- 3) What was the fall in population as a percentage?
 - a) 1.5
 - b) 2.0
 - c) 2.5
 - d) 3.0
- 4) How many censuses in a row now show a population fall?
 - a) three
 - b) four
 - c) five
 - d) six
- 5) What did the government promise to promote?
 - a) managers
 - b) parents
 - c) comprehensive measures
 - d) kindergarten teachers
- 6) What did the government attribute the drop to?
 - a) climate change
 - b) various factors
 - c) a weak yen
 - d) immigration
- 7) How many babies were born in Japan in 2025?
 - a) 702,000
 - b) 704,000
 - c) 705,000
 - d) 706,000
- 8) What happened in the postwar years?
 - a) There was a baby boom.
 - b) Maternity clinics were built.
 - c) There was free school milk.
 - d) Marriage hit an all-time high.
- 9) What has the government subsidized?
 - a) contraception
 - b) maternity care
 - c) early years education
 - d) IVF treatments
- 10) What is the ageing population straining besides pensions and healthcare?
 - a) community relations
 - b) the labour force
 - c) prices
 - d) education

ROLE PLAY

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

Role A – Fewer Babies

You think fewer babies is the biggest worry with depopulation. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as worrying. Also, tell the others which is the least serious of these (and why): higher taxes, emptying villages or fewer workers.

Role B – Higher Taxes

You think higher taxes is the biggest worry with depopulation. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as worrying. Also, tell the others which is the least serious of these (and why): fewer babies, emptying villages or fewer workers.

Role C – Emptying Villages

You think emptying villages is the biggest worry with depopulation. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as worrying. Also, tell the others which is the least serious of these (and why): higher taxes, fewer babies or fewer workers.

Role D – Fewer Workers

You think fewer workers is the biggest worry with depopulation. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as worrying. Also, tell the others which is the least serious of these (and why): higher taxes, emptying villages or fewer babies.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

1. WORD SEARCH: Look online / in your dictionary to find collocates, information on, synonyms for... the words 'population' and 'birth rates'.

population	birth rates

- 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">• past• figures• conducted• reveals• row• address	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• various• historically• compared• child• success• strain
--	--

POPULATION DECREASE SURVEY

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

POPULATION DECREASE DISCUSSION

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

1. What did you think when you read the headline?
2. What images are in your mind when you hear the word 'Japan'?
3. Are there too many or too few people in your country?
4. What do you think of the size of the global population?
5. What problems come with overpopulation?
6. Why has the world's population increased so much?
7. What problems come with shrinking populations?
8. Are shrinking populations good for the environment?
9. What measures can countries take to address shrinking populations?
10. What will the world's population be like a century from now?

Japan's population falls three million in five years – 1st June 2026
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POPULATION DECREASE DISCUSSION

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

11. Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
12. What do you think of when you hear the word 'population'?
13. What do you think about what you read?
14. Why are birth rates so low in many countries?
15. What can governments do to encourage couples to have children?
16. What do you think about maternal and paternal leave?
17. What are the problems of ageing societies?
18. What are your concerns about your old age?
19. Should retirement ages increase to 80?
20. What questions would you like to ask Japan's government?

DISCUSSION (Write your own questions)

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

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

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DISCUSSION (Write your own questions)

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

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

LANGUAGE - CLOZE

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

The population of Japan has (1) _____ by over three million in the past five years. This is the largest drop since records began in 1920. Japan's internal affairs ministry has released (2) _____ figures for its 2025 census. This demographic survey is conducted every five years. The latest one reveals that the number of (3) _____ in October 2025 was 123,049,524. This was a drop (4) _____ 3,096,575 from the 2020 survey — a fall of 2.5 per cent. The census is the third in a (5) _____ to show a decrease. Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary said: "It was confirmed again that the population decline is advancing even further." He (6) _____ to promote "comprehensive measures" to address the downturn.

The government (7) _____ the decline to various factors. These included historically low birth rates. In 2025, there were around 706,000 births in Japan. This compared (8) _____ around 2.5 million annual births during the postwar baby boom. Successive governments have introduced many measures to encourage (9) _____ to have babies. They have expanded child allowances, increased parental leave, and subsidized early years education. However, these have had (10) _____ success. Japan is one of the world's oldest societies. The increasingly (11) _____ population is putting considerable strain (12) _____ healthcare systems, pensions, and the labour force.

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

- | | | | | |
|-----|----------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1. | (a) felled | (b) fallen | (c) falls | (d) falling |
| 2. | (a) qualifying | (b) preliminary | (c) prelude | (d) pulmonary |
| 3. | (a) resides | (b) residents | (c) presidents | (d) residents |
| 4. | (a) at | (b) of | (c) in | (d) at |
| 5. | (a) low | (b) row | (c) mow | (d) pow |
| 6. | (a) wowed | (b) sowed | (c) vowed | (d) towed |
| 7. | (a) set | (b) held | (c) attributed | (d) stuck |
| 8. | (a) of | (b) at | (c) to | (d) by |
| 9. | (a) twos | (b) duos | (c) pairs | (d) couples |
| 10. | (a) little | (b) small | (c) few | (d) dearth |
| 11. | (a) greying | (b) grain | (c) groin | (d) granule |
| 12. | (a) by | (b) at | (c) on | (d) of |

SPELLING

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

Paragraph 1

1. Japan's internal affairs ytimnsr
2. ipmrareinly figures
3. crdmhgiopea survey
4. the number of esnresidt
5. the suecsn is the third in a row
6. pmoehsrvecnei measures

Paragraph 2

7. udteitatr the decline to various factors
8. csciuvsees governments
9. They have expanded child casloenlwa
10. isbiusezdd early years education
11. nrecedsboila strain on healthcare systems
12. iespsonn and the labour force

PUT THE TEXT BACK TOGETHER

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

Number these lines in the correct order.

- () census. This demographic survey is conducted every five years. The latest one reveals that the number
- () couples to have babies. They have expanded child allowances, increased parental
- () further." He vowed to promote "comprehensive measures" to address the downturn.
- () leave, and subsidized early years education. However, these have had little
- () of 2.5 per cent. The census is the third in a row to show a decrease. Japan's Chief Cabinet
- () of residents in October 2025 was 123,049,524. This was a drop of 3,096,575 from the 2020 survey — a fall
- () rates. In 2025, there were around 706,000 births in Japan. This compared to around 2.5 million annual births during
- (**1**) records began in 1920. Japan's internal affairs ministry has released preliminary figures for its 2025
- () Secretary said: "It was confirmed again that the population decline is advancing even
- () strain on healthcare systems, pensions, and the labour force.
- () success. Japan is one of the world's oldest societies. The increasingly greying population is putting considerable
- () The government attributed the decline to various factors. These included historically low birth
- () The population of Japan has fallen by over three million in the past five years. This is the largest drop since
- () the postwar baby boom. Successive governments have introduced many measures to encourage

PUT THE WORDS IN THE RIGHT ORDER

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

1. by fallen has Japan's million over population three .
2. began drop is largest records since the This .
3. affairs figures has internal Japan's ministry preliminary released .
4. advancing decline even further is population The .
5. address comprehensive downturn measures Promote the to .
6. attributed decline factors government The the to various .
7. Annual baby births boom during postwar the .
8. babies couples encourage have Many measures to to .
9. is Japan of oldest one societies the world's .
10. considerable healthcare is on putting strain systems This .

CIRCLE THE CORRECT WORD (20 PAIRS)

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

The population of Japan has *fallen / felled* by over three million in the past five years. This is the largest *drop / dropping* since records began in 1920. Japan's internal affairs ministry has released preliminary *figurines / figures* for its 2025 census. This demographic *scurvy / survey* is conducted every five years. The latest one reveals that the number of *residents / residence* in October 2025 was 123,049,524. This was a drop *at / of* 3,096,575 from the 2020 survey — a fall of 2.5 per cent. The census is the third *on / in* a row to show *a / the* decrease. Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary said: "It was *confirmed / conformed* again that the population decline is advancing even further." He vowed to promote "comprehensive measures" to address the *downturn / upturn*.

The government *contributed / attributed* the decline to various factors. These included historically low *born / birth* rates. In 2025, there were around 706,000 births in Japan. This *comparison / compared* to around 2.5 million annual births *while / during* the postwar baby *boom / boomers*. Successive governments have introduced many *measures / measurements* to encourage *couples / couple* to have babies. They have expanded child allowances, increased parental leave, and subsidized early years education. However, these have had *few / little* success. Japan is one of the world's oldest societies. The increasingly greying population is putting *considerable / considerate* strain on healthcare systems, pensions, and the labour *farce / force*.

Talk about the connection between each pair of words in italics, and why the correct word is correct. Look up the definition of new words.

INSERT THE VOWELS (a, e, i, o, u)

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

Th_ p_p_l_t__n _f J_p_n h_s f_ll_n by _v_r thr__
m_ll__n _n th_ p_st f_v_ y__rs. Th_s _s th_ l_rg_st
dr_p s_nc_ r_c_rds b_g_n _n 1920. J_p_n's _nt_rn_l
_ff__rs m_n_stry h_s r_l__s_d pr_l_m_n_ry f_g_r_s f_r
_ts 2025 c_ns_s. Th_s d_m_gr_ph_c s_rv_y _s
c_nd_ct_d _v_ry f_v_ y__rs. Th_ l_t_st _n_ r_v__ls
th_t th_ n_mb_r _f r_s_d_nts _n _ct_b_r 2025 w_s
123,049,524. Th_s w_s _ dr_p _f 3,096,575 fr_m th_
2020 s_rv_y - _ f_ll _f 2.5 p_r c_nt. Th_ c_ns_s _s
th_ th_rd _n _ r_w t_ sh_w _ d_cr__s_. J_p_n's Ch__f
C_b_n_t S_cr_t_ry s__d: "_t w_s c_nf_rm_d _g__n th_t
th_ p_p_l_t__n d_cl_n_ _s _dv_nc_ng _v_n f_rth_r." H_
v_w_d t_ pr_m_t_ "c_mpr_h_ns_v_ m__s_r_s" t_ _ddr_ss
th_ d_wnt_rn.

Th_ g_v_rnm_nt _ttr_b_t_d th_ d_cl_n_ t_ v_r__s
f_ct_rs. Th_s_ _ncl_d_d h_st_r_c_lly l_w b_rth r_t_s.
_n 2025, th_r_ w_r_ _r__nd 706,000 b_rths _n J_p_n.
Th_s c_mpr_d t_ _r__nd 2.5 m_ll__n _nn__l b_rths
d_rng th_ p_stw_r b_by b__m. S_cc_ss_v_ g_v_rnm_nts
h_v_ _ntr_d_c_d m_ny m__s_r_s t_ _nc__r_g_ c__pl_s
t_ h_v_ b_b__s. Th_y h_v_ _xp_nd_d ch_ld _ll_w_nc_s,
_ncr__s_d p_r_nt_l l__v_, _nd s_bs_d_z_d __rly y__rs
_d_c_t__n. H_w_v_r, th_s_ h_v_ h_d lttl_ s_cc_ss.
J_p_n _s _n_ _f th_ w_rld's _ld_st s_c__t__s. Th_
_ncr__s_ngly gr_y_ng p_p_l_t__n _s p_ttng
c_ns_d_r_bl_ str__n _n h__lthc_r_ syst_ms, p_ns__ns,
nd th l_b__r f_rc_.

PUNCTUATE THE TEXT AND ADD CAPITALS

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

the population of japan has fallen by over three million in the past five years this is the largest drop since records began in 1920 japans internal affairs ministry has released preliminary figures for its 2025 census this demographic survey is conducted every five years the latest one reveals that the number of residents in october 2025 was 123049524 this was a drop of 3096575 from the 2020 survey a fall of 25 per cent the census is the third in a row to show a decrease japans chief cabinet secretary said it was confirmed again that the population decline is advancing even further he vowed to promote comprehensive measures to address the downturn

the government attributed the decline to various factors these included historically low birth rates in 2025 there were around 706000 births in japan this compared to around 25 million annual births during the postwar baby boom successive governments have introduced many measures to encourage couples to have babies they have expanded child allowances increased parental leave and subsidized early years education however these have had little success japan is one of the worlds oldest societies the increasingly greying population is putting considerable strain on healthcare systems pensions and the labour force

PUT A SLASH (/) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

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

The population of Japan has fallen by over three million in the past five years. This is the largest drop since records began in 1920. Japan's internal affairs ministry has released preliminary figures for its 2025 census. This demographic survey is conducted every five years. The latest one reveals that the number of residents in October 2025 was 123,049,524. This was a drop of 3,096,575 from the 2020 survey—a fall of 2.5 percent. The census is the third in a row to show a decrease. Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary said: "It was confirmed again that the population decline is advancing even further." He vowed to promote "comprehensive measures" to address the downturn. The government attributed the decline to various factors. These included historically low birth rates. In 2025, there were around 706,000 births in Japan. This compared to around 2.5 million annual births during the postwar baby boom. Successive governments have introduced many measures to encourage couples to have babies. They have expanded child allowances, increased parental leave, and subsidized early years education. However, these have had little success. Japan is one of the world's oldest societies. The increasingly greying population is putting considerable strain on health care systems, pensions, and the labour force.

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 this news story. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. POPULATION DECREASE: Make a poster about population decrease. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. SHRINKING POPULATIONS: Write a magazine article about encouraging decreases in population. Include imaginary interviews with people who are for and against this.

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. WHAT HAPPENED NEXT? Write a newspaper article about the next stage in this news story. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Give each other feedback on your articles.

6. LETTER: Write a letter to an expert on population decrease. Ask him/her three questions about it. Give him/her three of your ideas about this. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

VOCABULARY (p.4)

1. c 2. e 3. d 4. a 5. f 6. g 7. b
8. k 9. h 10. i 11. n 12. m 13. j 14. l

TRUE / FALSE (p.5)

- 1 T 2 F 3 F 4 F 5 T 6 T 7 F 8 T

SYNONYM MATCH (p.5)

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

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS (p.9)

- 1920
- Every five years
- 2.5
- Three
- Comprehensive measures
- Various factors
- 706,000
- There was a baby boom
- Early years education
- The labour force

WORDS IN THE RIGHT ORDER (p.19)

- Japan's population has fallen by over three million.
- This is the largest drop since records began.
- Japan's internal affairs ministry has released preliminary figures.
- The population decline is advancing even further.
- Promote comprehensive measures to address the downturn.
- The government attributed the decline to various factors.
- Annual births during the postwar baby boom.
- Many measures to encourage couples to have babies.
- Japan is one of the world's oldest societies.
- This is putting considerable strain on healthcare systems.

MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ (p.10)

1. d 2. b 3. c 4. a 5. c 6. b 7. d 8. a 9. c 10. b

ALL OTHER EXERCISES

Please check for yourself by looking at the Article on page 2.
(It's good for your English ;-)