

WHO WILL LOOK AFTER JAPAN'S ELDERLY?

article-based lesson



PRE-READING activity: Match the words to their Polish equivalents.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. a nursing home/ a care home | a) biorąc pod uwagę, że |
| 2. a facility | b) bogaty, majątny |
| 3. wealthy | c) dom opieki |
| 4. it is my calling | d) okrutny, surowy, nieprzyjemny (np. komentarz) |
| 5. it comes at a cost | e) naciągnięty, nadszarpnięty (np. budżet), przeciążony (np. szpital) |
| 6. to turn 100 | f) przyływ, napływ czegoś (np. gotówki, imigrantów) |
| 7. a one-off (cost/chance) | g) placówka, obiekt |
| 8. to shrink / shrinking population | h) jednorazowy (np. koszt, szansa) |
| 9. staggering statistics | i) kurczyć się, maleć / kurczące się społeczeństwo |
| 10. to set the bar high | j) wysoko postawić poprzeczkę |
| 11. to prompt sth | k) to jest moje powołanie |
| 12. harsh (remark / feedback) | l) znacząco się różnić, być dalekim od czegoś, w niczym czegoś nie przypominać |
| 13. be a far cry from sth | m) skłaniać do czegoś, prowokować coś (np. pytania) |
| 14. influx | n) skończyć 100 lat |
| 15. given that | o) szokujące (statystyki) |
| 16. overstretched | p) krewny, członek rodziny |
| 17. a relative | r) to ma swoją cenę = pewne negatywne konsekwencje |

READ THE TEXT: *Who will look after Japan's elderly?* by Mariko Oi for BBC News and answer the questions below.

- What does Midori Ide do for a living? What is her family situation?
- What problem is Japan facing at the moment? What are the statistics?
- What is the possible solution to the problem? Why isn't it as easy as it may seem?





WHO WILL LOOK AFTER JAPAN'S ELDERLY?

by Mariko Oi for BBC News

Several times a night, Midori Ide wakes up to help her 96-year-old grandmother use the toilet. To make sure she can assist immediately, Midori sleeps right next to her grandmother. It is not a duty that many 29-year-olds would enjoy. But she tells me she feels guilty that she can only do it once a week.

Midori works the other six nights of the week at a **nursing home** caring for other elderly people while her grandmother stays at a different **facility**.

"It's a dilemma but I need to earn money because my family isn't **wealthy**," she said. "I also want to continue working because ever since my grandfather died when I was 15, I've decided to become a care worker and **it is my calling**."

But **it comes at a cost**. Midori dreams of going abroad. She misses spending time with her friends. "I don't want my grandma to hear this but I am almost 30 and I worry if I can start my own family one day," she whispers. "But I don't want to think about when my grandmother will stop waking me up. I want to be with her when she achieves her dream of **turning 100**," she says.

Midori is one of 177,600 people in Japan aged between 15 and 29 who are caring for a family member. Not many would be as content as her with their decisions. There is also a growing number of households where one elderly person is looking after another in need of nursing care.

Just last month, a 71-year-old husband was arrested for killing his wife who had dementia. "I got too tired from looking after her," he confessed, according to local media. "I wanted to take my own life, too."

It was not a **one-off** tragedy. And they are the real people behind some **staggering** statistics about Japan's ageing and **shrinking** population. Today, more than a quarter of Japan's population is aged over 65. This is set to increase to 40% by 2055, when the population will have shrunk from the current 127 million to 90 million. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has warned that Japan will need to add one million nurses and care workers by 2025.

Encouraging immigration may seem like a simple solution - but it's not a popular one. Japan is still one of the most ethnically homogeneous countries in the world, with foreigners making up less than 2% of the population. Opening up Japan to large-scale immigration is a very sensitive subject.

In 2008, the government started allowing foreign nurses and care workers in. But **the bar is set high**. Having to pass the national exam in Japanese is incredibly difficult and only 304 foreign nurses and carers have so far managed to make Japan their temporary home.

"Japan needs 10 million immigrants over the next 50 years and we need to accept them as new members of our society," says Hidenori Sakanaka, executive director at Japan Immigration Policy Institute.

"If we educate our young people that Japan needs to become more multiracial to tackle the population problem, I think we can achieve it without causing major problems."

But his opinions seem optimistic in light of a recent column by well-known author Ayako Sono.



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by Mariko Oi for BBC News



While Ms Sono supported removing strict requirements to allow more foreign workers to enter Japan to look after the old, she said these workers should live in separate communities - **prompting** claims she was advocating policies similar to apartheid.

Her views are not mainstream. But the service industry, which hires foreign students as part-time employees, also received **harsh** feedback, especially at the beginning, from those unused to dealing with foreigners. "In our survey, customers asked why they had to be served by waiters who cannot speak Japanese properly," said Naoki Ishino of restaurant chain Negishi. "Some simply asked why we were hiring Chinese people. "There were also cultural differences. For example, our foreign staff found it very difficult to apologise when a customer complained about a mistake made by a colleague." After training them under a supervisor from their own country, Mr Ishino says things started to improve.

But allowing a limited number of foreign students to work in restaurants **is a far cry** from the **influx** needed to care for Japan's rising number of elderly people. And there are no immediate solutions on the horizon.

"Japan has been excessively conservative about the introduction of immigrants and we need to deregulate," says Seiji Takeshita of Mizuho International. But he says Japan needs to be sure this would not harm "the homogeneous group ideology", **given that** "failure of multiculturalism in Europe" has, he says, led to social conflict.

Midori says she enjoys caring for her grandmother but she's likely in a minority. She also has elderly parents who will soon need to be looked after. For those who don't have a **relative** to help them, with indigenous resources **overstretched**, the future is a worry.

Japan needs to find a solution, fast.

POST-READING vocabulary practice. Fill in the gaps with the words from the text.

- I'm trying to take 8,000 steps per day, but **g**_____ **t**____ I work from home, it's a challenge.
- The manager said some **h**_____ words about the new hire. He doesn't seem to be happy with her work.
- Lots of people are worried about the sudden **i**_____ of immigrants.
- Are there any living **r**_____ of Marilyn Monroe?
- Don't you think you've **s**__ **the b**__ a little bit too high for her? She's still a trainee.
- He's a very **w**_____ man. He owns two villas in Tuscany and a lovely cottage house in Provence.
- Yesterday my son **t**_____ 18. I can't believe it!
- I make decent money but it **c**_____ **at a** _____. I hardly ever see my kids.



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vocabulary practice - answer key



PRE-READING vocabulary practice

1c 2g 3b 4k 5r 6n 7h 8i 9o 10j 11m 12d 13l 14f 15a 16e 17p

POST-READING vocabulary practice

I'm trying to take 8,000 steps per day, but **given that** I work from home, it's a challenge.

The manager said some **harsh** words about the new hire. He doesn't seem to be happy with her work.

Lots of people are worried about the sudden **influx** of immigrants.

Are there any living **relatives** of Marilyn Monroe?

Don't you think you've **set the bar** a little bit too high for her? She's still a trainee.

He's a very **wealthy** man. He owns two villas in Tuscany and a lovely cottage house in Provence.

Yesterday my son **turned** 18. I can't believe it!

I make decent money but it **comes at a cost**. I hardly ever see my kids.

