

# WHO WILL LOOK AFTER JAPAN'S ELDERLY?

## article-based lesson



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

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. to feel guilty                    | a) krewny, członek rodziny                           |
| 2. a nursing home/ a care home       | b) bogaty, majątny                                   |
| 3. a facility                        | c) dom opieki  |
| 4. a dilemma                         | d) szeptać   |
| 5. wealthy                           | e) wyznać coś  |
| 6. it is my calling                  | f) czuć się winnym                                   |
| 7. it comes at a cost                | g) placówka, obiekt                                  |
| 8. to whisper                        | h) jednorazowy (np. koszt, szansa)                   |
| 9. to turn 100                       | i) kurczyć się, maleć / kurczące się społeczeństwo   |
| 10. to confess                       | j) wysoko postawić poprzeczkę                        |
| 11. a one-off (cost/chance)          | k) to jest moje powołanie                            |
| 12. to shrink / shrinking population | l) przesadnie, nadmiernie (optymistyczny)            |
| 13. staggering statistics            | m) dylemat   |
| 14. to set the bar high              | n) skończyć 100 lat                                  |
| 15. overly (optimistic)              | o) szokujące (statystyki)                            |
| 16. a relative                       | p) to ma swoją cenę = pewne negatywne<br>konekwencje |

**POST-READING activity: Answer the questions.**

- 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?



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**READ THE TEXT:** *Who will look after Japan's elderly?* by Mariko Oi for BBC News (slightly adapted)

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 **overly** optimistic. For those who don't have a **relative** to help them, the future is a worry. Japan needs to find a solution, fast.



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

- 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.
- Yesterday my son **t** \_\_\_\_\_ 18. I can't believe it! (*past simple*)
- "I love you," he **w** \_\_\_\_\_ in my ear. (*past simple*)
- He's a very **w** \_\_\_\_\_ man. He owns two villas in Tuscany and a lovely cottage in Provence.
- I make decent money but **it c** \_\_\_\_\_ **at a** \_\_\_\_\_. I hardly ever see my kids.
- The school will be closed for 2 months, and this poses a serious **d** \_\_\_\_\_ for parents.
- When I was 13, I **o** \_\_\_\_\_ my parents talking about getting divorced. I know I wasn't supposed to hear it. (*past simple*)

## ANSWER KEY

### PRE-READING vocabulary activity

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

### POST-READING vocabulary practice

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.

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

"I love you," he **whispered** in my ear.

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

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

The school will be closed for 2 months, and this poses a serious **dilemma** for parents.

When I was 13, I **overheard** my parents talking about getting divorced. I know I wasn't supposed to hear it.

