

Japan prepares for foreign workers

Japan is changing its immigration policy because it needs workers. Japan is an aging society. This means it does not have enough workers to work in many jobs. Japan's government has decided to allow many workers from other countries to come to Japan to help fill the jobs. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said his government will meet on December 28 to approve the plan. If the plan is approved, it will become law on April 1. The new law would allow up to 345,000 foreign workers to help with labour shortages. Many of these workers will work in the construction, fishing, healthcare and agriculture industries. They will be largely low-skilled workers and will need to pass a Japanese language test.

Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said that Japan had to change and allow more foreign workers in to help the economy. He also said the government would make sure the foreign workers can quickly adjust to life in smaller Japanese cities and towns. He said: "We want to ensure they have the right environment in which to live and work." Japanese people are having fewer children. The fertility rate is now only 1.4 children per woman and it should be 2.1 for Japan to have enough own nationality workers. Japan's population is already dropping by about 400,000 people a year.

(adapted from breakingnewsenglish.com)



Ex. 1 Find in the reading text the English equivalents of these words:

1. zagraniczny
2. rząd
3. państwo
4. budownictwo
5. gospodarka
6. narodowość

Ex. 2 What collocations can you make with the words in these two boxes?

aging / fertility / foreign / immigration / labour / language

policy / rate / shortage / society / test / worker

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

Ex. 3 Translate these sentences using words from the exercises above:

1. Pracownicy zagraniczni muszą zdać test językowy.
2. Obserwujemy (*observe*) poważne (*serious*) niedobory pracowników w sektorze budowlanym.
3. Odpowiednia (*right*) polityka imigracyjna może być rozwiązaniem (*solution*) dla starzejącego się społeczeństwa.

I know English idioms:

The last sentence of the text reads: "Japan's population is already dropping by about 400,000 people a year." It uses the verb "drop" (spaść, zmaleć). The one can be part of idiomatic expressions, such as this:

- to drop a hint = *to suggest something without saying it directly (rzucić aluzję)*
- He dropped a few hints about possible redundancies in the department.

Phrasals, phrasals...

And here's how "drop" can be used as a phrasal verb:

- to drop sb/sth off = *to take someone or something to a particular place, usually by car (podrzucić)*
- They dropped us off at the airport while they were going to the city center.

Grammar corner...

Let's observe this fragment of the text: "Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said that Japan had to change and allow more foreign workers in to help the economy. He also said the government would make sure the foreign workers can quickly adjust to life in smaller Japanese cities and towns." The underlined parts are examples of reported speech (mowa zależna). What we can notice is the tense change after the introductory verb ("said"): "had to" from originally "have to" and "would (make)" from "will (make)".

GLOSSARY

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| to prepare | przygotowywać się |
| foreign | zagraniczny |
| worker | pracownik |
| immigration policy | polityka imigracyjna |
| aging society | starzejące się społeczeństwo |
| to mean | oznaczać |
| enough | wystarczająco |
| government | rząd |
| to allow | zezwoić |
| country | kraj |
| to fill jobs | zapełnić miejsca pracy |
| Prime Minister | premier |
| to approve | zatwierdzić |
| to become law | stać się prawem |
| labour shortage | niedobór pracowników |
| construction | budownictwo |
| fishing | rybołówstwo |
| healthcare | służba zdrowia |
| agriculture | rolnictwo |
| industry | przemysł, tu: sektor |
| largely | głównie |
| low-skilled | niewykwalifikowany |
| to pass | zdać |
| language test | test językowy |
| Chief Cabinet Secretary | główny sekretarz gabinetu |
| economy | gospodarka |
| to make sure / to ensure | zapewnić |
| quickly | szybko |
| to adjust | przystosować się |
| right | właściwy |
| environment | środowisko |
| fewer | mniej |
| fertility rate | współczynnik płodności |
| nationality | narodowość |
| to drop | maleć |

ANSWER KEY

Ex.1

1. foreign
2. government
3. country
4. construction
5. economy
6. nationality

Ex.2

1. aging society
2. fertility rate
3. foreign worker
4. immigration policy
5. labour shortage
6. language test

Ex.3

1. Foreign workers must / have to pass a language test.
2. We can observe serious labour shortages in the construction industry / sector.
3. The right immigration policy may be a solution for the aging society.