

Contemporary Japan's Economy

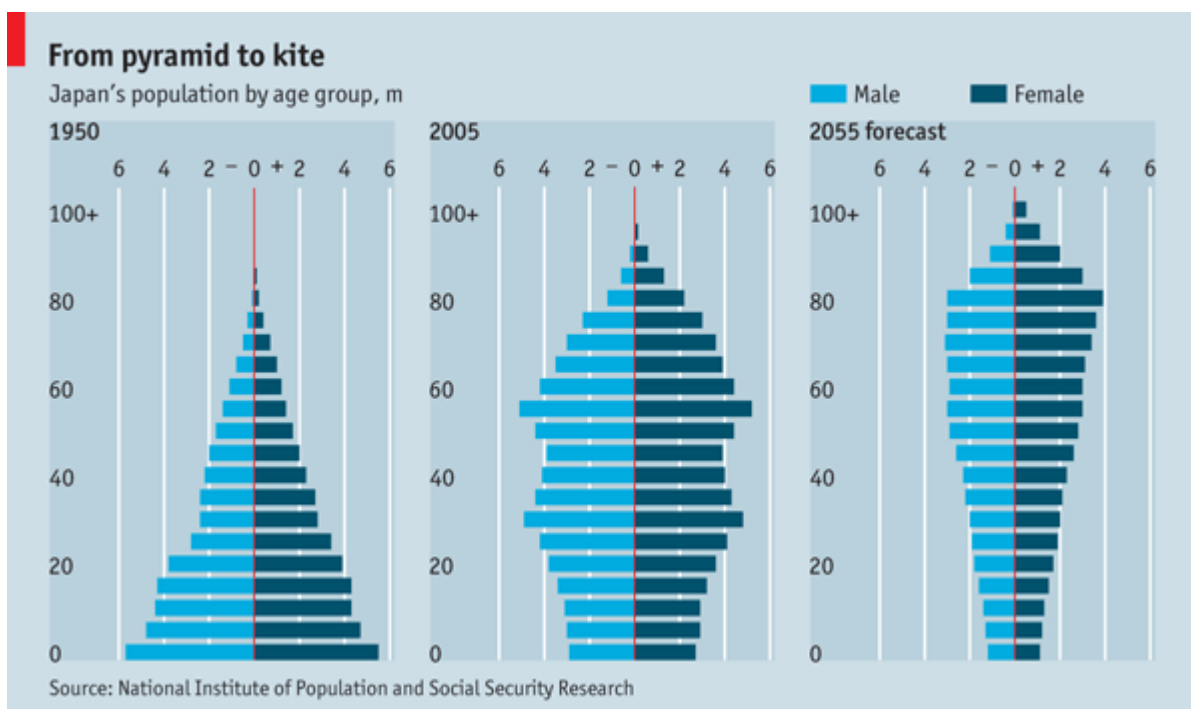
OBJECTIVE:

1. Analyze various data sources to describe the state of Japan's economy
2. Propose specific economic policies to stimulate economic growth.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Read this [background article](#) on Japan's economy
2. Analyze the documents below using the organizer
3. On [Google Classroom](#), answer the following question using support from the documents: What are the challenges and opportunities facing Japan's economy today? What policies should the government enact to help the economy?

DOCUMENT A SOURCE & BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The Economist Magazine



In one sentence what is the main idea of the document?

What are 2-3 specific details that support the main idea?

If the document presents a challenge to Japan's economy, how could the government address it?

DOCUMENT B SOURCE & BACKGROUND INFORMATION: [The Diplomat 2013](#)

Japan has one of the largest gender gaps in the world. The 2013 **Global Gender Gap Report** by the World Economic Forum, which captures national gender gaps on economic, political, education, and health-based criteria, ranked Japan at 105th among 136 countries. 40 percent of women in Japan don't work, which is a much higher number than in other developed nations.

Abe's proposal to implement practices that help close the gender gap includes expanding the eligibility of women to use daycare centers. This will make it easier for women to return to work after childbirth. This, however, is no easy task and has become a major obstacle to better integrating women in the workplace. According to Japanese government **statistics**, the biggest reason women quit their jobs after childbirth is because "working hours make child care unfeasible." **70 percent** of Japanese women give up work after they have their first child.

Currently, there is a shortage of day care spots and the waiting list is more than 25,000 places long. According to the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare, the **waiting list** is actually probably closer to 600,000-850,000 people. This includes people who have given up waiting, and also those who have moved to private, unsubsidized day care centers which can turn out to be twice as expensive.

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DOCUMENT C SOURCE & BACKGROUND INFORMATION: [The Economist](#) 2014

KAREN KAWABATA represents the best of Japan’s intellectual capital. She has just graduated from the University of Tokyo, the most prestigious in the country. In April she will join McKinsey, a consultancy that should give her immediate membership of a globe-trotting elite.

Yet Ms Kawabata sees obstacles in her path. She is acutely aware of the difficulties she would face at traditional Japanese companies, should she find herself joining one. Ferociously long working hours, often stretching past midnight, are followed by sessions of “nominication”, a play on the Japanese word for drinking, *nomu*, and the English word “communication”; these are where young hopefuls forge connections and build reputations. Nowadays women trying to impress the boss are allowed to drink plum wine mixed with plenty of soda instead of beer, says Ms Kawabata. But that is hardly a great improvement.

Above all, she worries that having a family will be nigh on impossible to combine with a demanding career. When she met her boyfriend’s father for the first time this year, she reassured him about her intentions at McKinsey. “I told him that I would rethink my career in a few years’ time,” she says.

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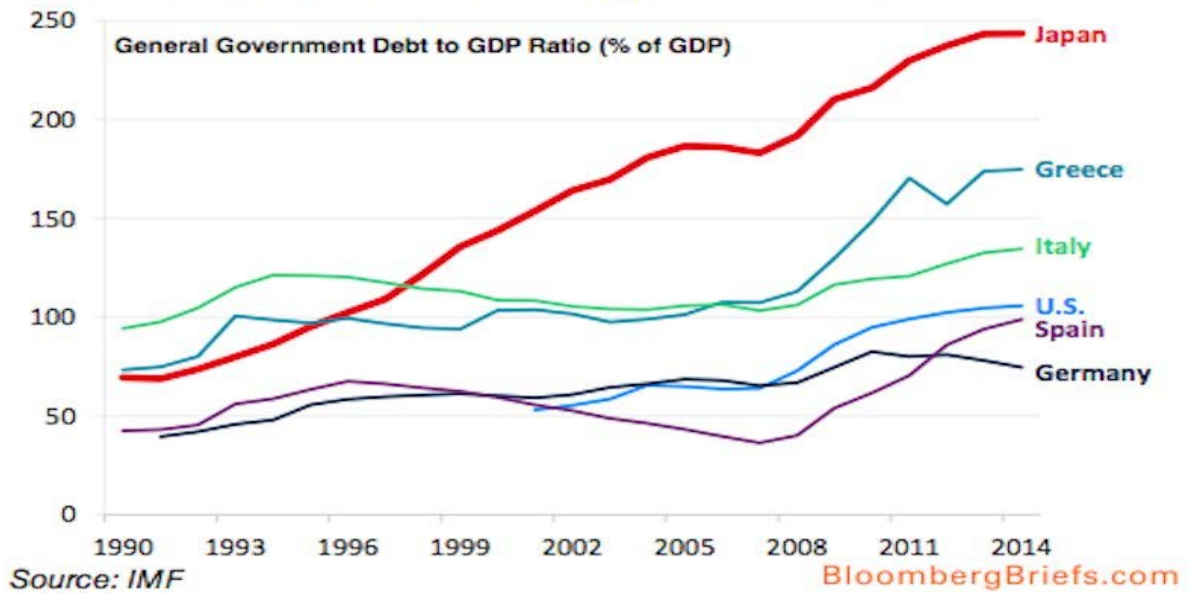
If the document presents a challenge to Japan’s economy, how could the government address it?



NOTE: Male unpaid work suggests household chores and caretaking of children.

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Japan's Public Debt the Highest in World



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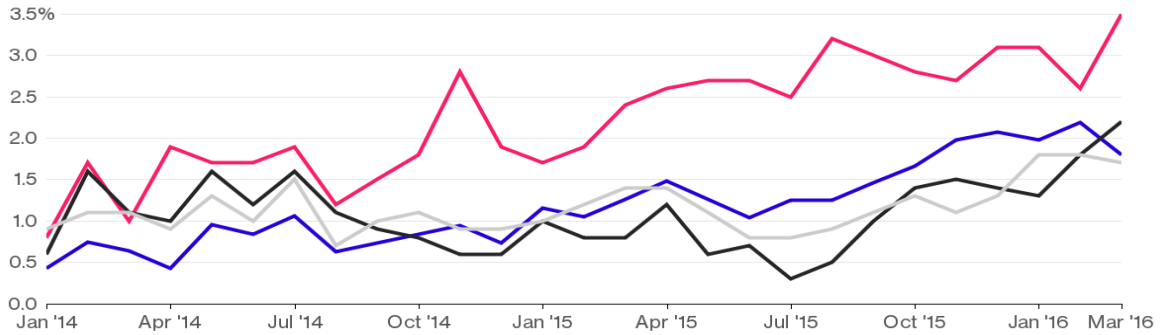
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DOCUMENT F SOURCE & BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Bloomberg

Part-Timers' Wages Are Rising

Average hourly wages year-on-year change

■ All
 ■ Clerical jobs
 ■ Manufacturing, logistics, cleaning
■ Restaurant staff, chefs, and other food-related jobs



Source: Recruit Jobs Co.

Note: Figures are average hourly wages in three major metropolitan areas

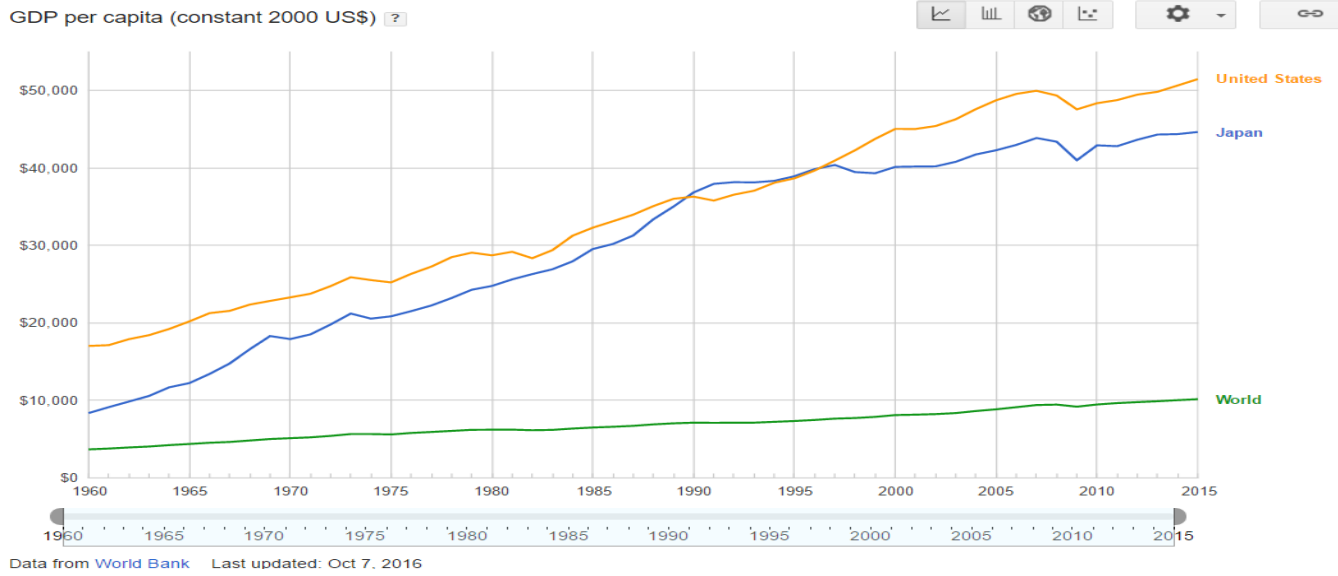
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DOCUMENT G SOURCE & BACKGROUND INFORMATION: [World Bank \(2016\)](#)



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DOCUMENT H SOURCE & BACKGROUND INFORMATION: [World Bank \(2016\)](#)

The term “Abenomics” refers to the policies advocated by Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe after his victory in the elections of 2012. These policies involve three arrows: fiscal stimulus, monetary easing and structural reforms to boost Japanese competitiveness. Its goal was and is to stimulate the Japanese economy which has remained stagnant over the last two decades, being characterised by low growth in output and wages as well as deflation. Abe’s structural policies as well as the sharp depreciation of the yen increased the competitiveness of the country’s exports resulting to a boost in corporate profits. More specifically, according to changes in the EPS total corporate profit expectations have increased by approximately 100% since Abe’s election at 2012.

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