

2016 KKC Fellow Lesson Plan

Japan: The Economic Impact on a Declining Population

Courses: Economics, Geography, World History, United States History

Grades: 9-12

Length: 2-3 days (50 minute class period)

Objective: SWBAT understand the impact of Japan's declining population on its economy; examine potential solutions for dealing with a shrinking labor force in Japan; discuss the pros and cons of each potential solution; decide which of the potential solutions is the most feasible and should be pursued by the Japanese government and/or Japanese businesses

NJ Social Studies Standards: 6.1.12.A.16.c, 6.1.12.C.16.c, 6.2.12.C.5.a, 6.2.12.C.6.b, 6.2.12.C.6.c, 6.2.12.C.6.d, 6.2.12.D.6.a

Anticipatory Set (Bell Ringer): Students watch a 3 minute video clip ([link](#)) which introduces them to the population issue that is currently facing Japan. The teacher uses the following questions as prompts to initiate a discussion about Japan's population problem: *According to the video, what is happening to the Japanese population? What may be some short-term and long-term effects of a shrinking population on the country of Japan?*

Lesson Development: This lesson is based on the *Choices Program* lesson model from Brown University (see website link below for more information). The goals of this lesson are to allow students to explore multiple solutions to Japan's population issue and to debate/discuss potential solutions. Each article cites a potential solution, which can be further explored in classroom discussion.

- A.) Teacher breaks students into four separate groups
- B.) Each group receives a different news article and a note-taking worksheet (attached)
- C.) Each group reads its article and make a list of the main points. They then present these main points/facts to their classmates. *(Students are free to be creative in their presentation. Suggestions include using dry erase boards, creating posters, or making a PowerPoint, Prezi, or Google Slides presentation.)*
- D.) As one group is presenting its summary of the solution to the class, the other groups will listen and take notes in the section of the box labeled "main points" of their worksheet. Any questions a student or group may have should be written below the main points in the section labeled "questions". This will ensure that presentations will not be interrupted and that students will be able to ask any questions that arise during the presentation.
- E.) Each group will entertain questions from the class following their presentation. These questions may be clarifying questions or those meant to critique the potential solution presented in the article.

F.) When all groups have completed their presentations and asked their classmates any questions they may have, the teacher is to instruct students to complete the reflection questions on the back of their note-taking worksheet (this will help set up the closure activity)

Closure: After all groups have presented and students have had time to complete the questions on the reverse side of their worksheet, the teacher leads students in a discussion about which of the four solutions is the most realistic in addressing the economic impact of a declining population in Japan. The reflection questions from the worksheet are as follows:

- 1.) *Which group did the best job presenting? Why?*
- 2.) *Which solution do think is the most feasible? Why?*

Resources:

Choices Program: Brown University: <http://www.choices.edu/resources/tools.php>

Background Video on Japanese Population: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Gpg6ZcAR9I>

NPR: <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/01/05/460801951/will-more-day-care-help-boost-japans-sluggish-economy>

Business Insider: <http://www.businessinsider.com/japanese-airport-gets-robot-exoskeletons-to-offset-declining-birthrate-2015-7>

International Business Times: <http://www.ibtimes.com/japan-encourages-young-people-date-mate-reverse-birth-rate-plunge-it-may-be-too-late-1562867>

The Economist: <http://www.economist.com/news/asia/21705376-begrudgingly-japan-beginning-accept-it-needs-more-immigrants-narrow-passage?fsrc=scn/fb/te/pe/ed/anarrowpassage>

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