# A Changing Japan

How government policies respond to an aging population

**7.C.3.4** "Examine how nations address population changes through government policies (e.g., education, health care, immigration)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline two population changes, circle one health care, one education, and one immigration policy, and draw an arrow from each circled policy to a need it addresses.

### More Older Adults, New Needs

1. At a train station in Japan, a crowded morning platform can hide a major change: the country has more older adults and fewer children than it did decades ago. People in Japan tend to live long lives, while births have stayed low. As a result, a smaller group of working-age adults must help support a growing older population. This change can mean fewer workers in some jobs and greater demand for medical care. Government policies can respond, but no single policy can instantly change a population's age balance.

2. Japan's government has expanded support for care at home and in communities. Its long-term care insurance program helps eligible older people pay for services such as home visits and day care. That policy addresses the greater need for care as the population ages. It also creates a challenge: care services need staff, even as the number of working-age people falls. To build a larger care workforce, public programs support training for care workers. Training is an education policy aimed at the same population shift, but preparing workers takes time.

3. Japan has also changed immigration rules to address worker shortages. In 2019, it introduced a visa for people with skills in fields facing shortages, including nursing care. Allowing qualified workers to move to Japan can add staff sooner than training new workers from the beginning. Still, a visa alone does not guarantee enough care workers: people must qualify, choose to move, and find places to work. Together, care services, training, and immigration show how one population change can lead to several policies with different benefits and limits.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does Japan's long-term care insurance program respond to a change in its population?

2. How does training care workers address Japan's changing population, and why might its effect take time?

3. How can Japan's 2019 visa policy address a worker shortage, and what is one limit of the policy?

4. Why would expanding care services alone be an incomplete response to Japan's aging population? Name another policy that could help.

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Harborland has fewer children and more older adults than before. In four sentences, propose two policies from different areas, education, health care, or immigration, and explain how each responds to the change and one possible limit of either policy.

ANSWER KEY

# A Changing Japan

GRADE 7 · 7.C.3.4

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two population changes, circle one health care, one education, and one immigration policy, and draw an arrow from each circled policy to a need it addresses. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | How does Japan's long-term care insurance program respond to a change in its population? | **It helps eligible older people pay for care services as the number of older adults grows.** |
| 2 | How does training care workers address Japan's changing population, and why might its effect take time? | **Training can increase the number of workers available to care for older adults, but preparing workers takes time.** |
| 3 | How can Japan's 2019 visa policy address a worker shortage, and what is one limit of the policy? | **It lets qualified workers in fields facing shortages move to Japan, which can add staff. Workers must qualify and choose to move, so the visa may not bring enough staff.** |
| 4 | Why would expanding care services alone be an incomplete response to Japan's aging population? Name another policy that could help. | **Care services need staff, but Japan has fewer working-age adults. Training care workers or allowing qualified workers to immigrate could help fill those jobs.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Harborland could offer scholarships for adults to study nursing instead of building new elementary schools. This education policy would prepare workers to serve its growing older population. It could also pay for mobile clinics that bring checkups to older people who cannot travel easily. These programs may cost more than the government can afford at first.

For the marking task, accept arrows to any passage wording that identifies a need the policy addresses. For the open task, accept feasible policies in two different areas if each is linked to a population change and one limit is explained.