Japan

1. Use the quotes below and your work on Japan to help you summarise the significant points about Japan’s population.

What is unique about their demographic change?

1. Read the Article “Japan’s Social Change”: What are some of the continuing issues surrounding marriage and gender imbalance in Japan?
2. Use the Link “Dementia Towns” as an example of a specific aging problem. What are some of the issues/challenges associated with rising dementia numbers, and what is one way this issue is being responded to?

Quotes

What Makes Japan Different?

On the one hand, Japan is in good company with respect to broad demographic trends. Looking across Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development data, there are many countries with declining populations, and likely more to come. Japan is also not alone—in the region or compared with other advanced economies—with respect to having a low fertility rate, which is common across most of the Group of Seven (G7). Japan also shares with other countries an improvement in health and average lifespan. This is a common trend across most advanced economies, though Japan is certainly doing better than average.

But this is not the whole story. Japan’s unique characteristics put demographic trends (and their macroeconomic and financial impact) in sharper relief than in other countries:

***Japan’s postwar baby boom was short*** —only about three years, compared to other G7 members, where such periods stretched anywhere from nine to twenty years. This means that Japan’s demographic structure will shift dramatically in just a few years—particularly as the boomers hit retirement age and become eligible for public pension and health care benefits.

***Japan leads the world in terms of life expectancy*** —surpassing all Group of Twenty economies as early as 1978. Extended life expectancy, combined with low fertility, accentuates demographic change in Japan and is manifested in a steady increase in the old-age dependency ratio (the number of retired people relative to the working-age population).

***Immigration flows are too small to make an impact*** —on aging and shrinking demographics. In comparison with other G7 economies, Japan is an outlier in terms of its very limited use of imported labor. Foreign workers accounted for only about 2.2 percent of Japan’s total labor force in 2018, compared with an estimated 17.4 percent in the United States and 17 percent in the United Kingdom.

https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2020/03/shrinkanomics-policy-lessons-from-japan-on-population-aging-schneider.htm

“Japan can be seen to be in Late Stage 5 in Demographic Transition Model due to negative NIR (Natural Increase Rate aka RNI), low CBR and CDR, high life expectancy, and low fertility rate. Characterized by efficient medication and medical procedures, growing secondary and tertiary sectors, shrinking primary sector, less conceived children due to effective contraceptives and less need in the workforce, and an older population that can live longer lives.”

“The benefits of immigration on Japan include saving its own economy from collapse while also promoting greater economic interaction with neighbouring Asian countries and an influx of scholars from lesser neighbouring countries. Negatives of immigration include the possibility of undocumented immigrants, raised consumption taxes, and overcrowding in the largest cities.”

(Can’t remember the source for this one! Opps)