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World population aging at record rate

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THE ARTICLE

The world is getting older and older. Not the planet, but the people who live on it. A new report reveals the global population of older people is growing at its fastest rate ever. The United States Census Bureau calculated there were just over half a billion over-65s in 2008. Officials predict this number will more than double to 1.3 billion by 2040. Around 14 per cent of the world's population will be retirement age. Researchers say the number of elderly will soon outnumber the young for the first time in human history. This will have a big impact on our societies, economy, and the way we live. An older population will push up pension and healthcare costs. The workforce will have to pay much higher taxes to look after more old people.

America's National Institute of Aging reports: "Aging is affecting every country in every part of the world....Global aging is changing the social and economic nature of the planet and presenting difficult challenges." Japan is already dealing with these problems and they are expected to get worse. By 2040, experts predict one per cent of the Japanese population will be over 100 years old. There is a booming industry in Japan to cater for the aged. Engineers are developing robots to feed and clean up after the elderly. There are now robot companions on sale to keep old people company. One positive effect of our aging population is that we need to think again when middle age and old age is. We now often view a 60-year-old as being young.

WARM-UPS

1. OLD AGE: Walk around the class and talk to other students about old age. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

getting older / global population / over-65s / predictions / retirement / pensions / challenges / dealing with problems / booming industry / robots / being middle age

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. AGING POPULATION: How will more old people change your country? Complete this table with your partner. Change partners and share what you wrote. Change again and share what you heard.

	Challenges	Good or bad? - Why?
Economy		
Television shows		
Shops		
Government spending		
Roads and transport		
Jobs		

4. AGING: Students A **strongly** believe an aging population is good for societies; Students B **strongly** believe an aging population is a disaster for societies. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. GETTING OLD: Do you worry about getting old? Rate these and share your ratings with your partner: 10 = this is a huge worry; 1 = I'm not at all worried about this. Change partners and share your ratings again.

- graying hair / going bald
- loss of physical strength
- memory loss
- money
- loneliness
- boredom
- looking old
- personal safety

6. THE ELDERLY: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the elderly. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. The planet's population is getting older faster than ever before. T / F
- b. There are around a billion people aged 65 or older alive today. T / F
- c. The number of elderly people will increase by 14% by the year 2040. T / F
- d. More old people in society will mean higher taxes for working people. T / F
- e. There is not a part of the world that doesn't have an aging population. T / F
- f. One percent of Japan's population will be over 100 years old by 2040. T / F
- g. Japanese companies are developing robots to be friends for the elderly. T / F
- h. Societies will have to rethink what middle-aged and old age mean. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. reveals | a. touching |
| 2. rate | b. look at |
| 3. predict | c. qualities |
| 4. impact | d. effect |
| 5. push up | e. friends |
| 6. affecting | f. shows |
| 7. nature | g. managing |
| 8. dealing with | h. increase |
| 9. companions | i. forecast |
| 10. view | j. speed |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. The world is getting | a. over-65s |
| 2. growing at its fastest | b. for the aged |
| 3. just over half a billion | c. much higher taxes |
| 4. the number of elderly will soon | d. people company |
| 5. The workforce will have to pay | e. older and older |
| 6. Aging is affecting every country in | f. as being young |
| 7. changing the social and economic | g. rate ever |
| 8. a booming industry in Japan to cater | h. nature of the planet |
| 9. companions on sale to keep old | i. outnumber the young |
| 10. We now often view a 60-year-old | j. every part of the world |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

The world is _____ older and older. Not the planet, but the people who live on it. A new report _____ the global population of older people is growing at its fastest rate ever. The United States Census Bureau calculated there were _____ over half a billion over-65s in 2008. Officials predict this number will more than _____ to 1.3 billion by 2040. Around 14 per cent of the world's population will be retirement age. Researchers say the number of elderly will soon _____ the young for the first time in human history. This will have a big _____ on our societies, economy, and the way we live. An older population will _____ up pension and healthcare costs. The _____ will have to pay much higher taxes to look after more old people.

impact
reveals
double
push
workforce
getting
outnumber
just

America's National Institute of Aging reports: "Aging is _____ every country in every part of the world....Global aging is changing the social and economic _____ of the planet and presenting difficult challenges." Japan is already _____ with these problems and they are expected to get worse. By 2040, experts _____ one per cent of the Japanese population will be over 100 years old. There is a _____ industry in Japan to cater for the aged. Engineers are developing robots to _____ and clean up after the elderly. There are now robot companions on sale to keep old people _____. One positive effect of our aging population is that we need to think again when middle age and old age is. We now often _____ a 60-year-old as being young.

company
dealing
booming
affecting
view
feed
nature
predict

LISTENING: Listen and fill in the gaps.

The world is getting older and older. _____, but the people who live on it. A new report reveals the global population of older people is growing at its _____. The United States Census Bureau calculated there were just over half a _____ 2008. Officials predict this number will more than _____ by 2040. Around 14 per cent of the world's population will be retirement age. Researchers say the number of elderly will soon outnumber the young _____ in human history. This will have a big impact on our societies, economy, and the way we live. An older population will _____ and healthcare costs. The workforce will have to pay much higher taxes to look after more old people.

America's National Institute of Aging reports: "Aging is affecting every country _____ the world....Global aging is changing the social and economic nature of the planet and presenting difficult challenges." Japan is already _____ problems and they are expected to get worse. By _____ one per cent of the Japanese population will be over 100 years old. There is a booming industry in Japan to _____. Engineers are developing robots to feed and clean up after the elderly. There are now robot companions _____ old people company. One positive effect of our aging population is that we need to think again when middle age and old age is. We _____ -year-old as being young.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'old' and 'age'.

old	age
------------	------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• reveals• 2008• 14• outnumber• impact• taxes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• nature• dealing with• 100• feed• on sale• view
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

STUDENT OLD AGE SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about old age in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

AGING DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'aging'?
- c) Are you worried about getting old?
- d) Do you think it's a problem that the world's population is aging so fast?
- e) How will a greater number of aged affect your country?
- f) What signs of aging would / do you worry about?
- g) What benefits will an older population bring to your country?
- h) How are retired people treated in your country?
- i) What do you think you'll do with your old age?
- j) Is it right that people will have to pay higher taxes to look after the elderly?

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AGING DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) How do you think global aging is changing the planet?
- c) What problems are there with aging?
- d) Would you like to reach the age of 100?
- e) Would you like a robot to be your friend and to look after you when you are old?
- f) What software would a robot need to be an old person's friend?
- g) What do you think of people in their 60s, 70s, 80s, etc?
- h) If we all live to be over 100, when does middle age and old age begin?
- i) What do you think 100-year-olds think about being 100?
- j) What questions would you like to ask a 100-year-old?

LANGUAGE

The world is getting older and (1) _____. Not the planet, but the people who live on it. A new report reveals the global population of older people is growing at its fastest (2) _____ ever. The United States Census Bureau (3) _____ there were just over half a billion over-65s in 2008. Officials predict this number will more than double (4) _____ 1.3 billion by 2040. Around 14 per cent of the world's population will be retirement age. Researchers say the number of elderly will soon outnumber the young for the first time in (5) _____ history. This will have a big impact on our societies, economy, and the way we live. An older population will push up pension and healthcare costs. The workforce will have to pay much higher taxes to look (6) _____ more old people.

America's National Institute of Aging reports: "Aging is affecting every country in every part of the world....Global aging is changing the social and economic (7) _____ of the planet and presenting difficult challenges." Japan is already (8) _____ with these problems and they are (9) _____ to get worse. By 2040, experts predict one per cent of the Japanese population will be over 100 years old. There is a booming industry in Japan to cater (10) _____ the aged. Engineers are developing robots to feed and clean up after the elderly. There are now robot companions on sale to keep old people (11) _____. One positive effect of our aging population is that we need to think again when middle age and old age is. We now often (12) _____ a 60-year-old as being young.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. | (a) oldest | (b) older | (c) olden | (d) elder |
| 2. | (a) rating | (b) rated | (c) rate | (d) rater |
| 3. | (a) calculated | (b) calculating | (c) calculation | (d) calculate |
| 4. | (a) so | (b) from | (c) for | (d) to |
| 5. | (a) humane | (b) humans | (c) human | (d) humankind |
| 6. | (a) after | (b) up | (c) over | (d) before |
| 7. | (a) natures | (b) natural | (c) naturally | (d) nature |
| 8. | (a) dealt | (b) dealing | (c) deals | (d) dealer |
| 9. | (a) expectation | (b) expecting | (c) expects | (d) expected |
| 10. | (a) by | (b) with | (c) for | (d) at |
| 11. | (a) business | (b) company | (c) enterprise | (d) firm |
| 12. | (a) view | (b) look | (c) vision | (d) sight |

HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about the effects of aging on a person. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. AGING POPULATION: Make a poster about the advantages and disadvantages of an aging population. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. 100: Write a magazine article about someone who is 100. Include an imaginary interview with that person. Write about their life as a child and what it's like being 100 today.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to a robot companion to the elderly. Ask it three questions about its owner. Give it three ideas on how to be a better robot for the elderly. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. F c. F d. T e. T f. T g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. reveals | a. shows |
| 2. rate | b. speed |
| 3. predict | c. forecast |
| 4. impact | d. effect |
| 5. push up | e. increase |
| 6. affecting | f. touching |
| 7. nature | g. qualities |
| 8. dealing with | h. managing |
| 9. companions | i. friends |
| 10. view | j. look at |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. The world is getting | a. older and older |
| 2. growing at its fastest | b. rate ever |
| 3. just over half a billion | c. over-65s |
| 4. the number of elderly will soon | d. outnumber the young |
| 5. The workforce will have to pay | e. much higher taxes |
| 6. Aging is affecting every country in | f. every part of the world |
| 7. changing the social and economic | g. nature of the planet |
| 8. a booming industry in Japan to cater | h. for the aged |
| 9. companions on sale to keep old | i. people company |
| 10. We now often view a 60-year-old | j. as being young |

GAP FILL:

World population aging at record rate

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LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - b 2 - c 3 - a 4 - d 5 - c 6 - a 7 - d 8 - b 9 - d 10 - c 11 - b 12 - a