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## Level 6

### Japan attempts to ease working hours

5th March, 2017

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours.html>

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**Please try Levels 5 and 4 (they are easier).**

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# THE ARTICLE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours.html>

Japan's government has backed an initiative to ease the pressure on Japanese workers and simultaneously boost consumer spending. The new measure is called "Premium Friday". A spokesperson from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry said the campaign would encourage workers to leave work earlier on the last Friday of each month to relax and/or go shopping. Around 130 companies across Japan have signed up to participate in the initiative, including many major employers. Skeptics are unsure whether the scheme will succeed or not because of the infamous workaholic nature of Japanese workers. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told reporters: "It will take time for Premium Friday to take root."

The idea for Premium Friday was partly prompted by the suicide of an employee who was continually required to work excessive overtime at the ad agency Dentsu. A court ruled the suicide was "death by overwork" and stressed the need to address what is a common problem in Japan - overworking. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is leading by example. He promoted the campaign by leaving the office early for a meditation session at a Tokyo temple at 3:30 p.m. Mr Suga said it was essential for both the government and the private sector to create an atmosphere where workers feel comfortable in leaving early. However, many workers said they would just have to work on Saturdays instead to finish their work.

Sources: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/02/24/national/premium-friday-drive-kicks-off-energize-weary-workers-feeble-economy/>  
<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-overwork-reforms-idUSKBN16300C>  
<https://www.japantoday.com/category/business/view/japans-first-premium-friday-shows-mixed-results>

# WARM-UPS

**1. WORKING HOURS:** Students walk around the class and talk to other students about working hours. Change partners often and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, talk about these topics or words from the article. What will the article say about them? What can you say about these words and your life?

initiative / pressure / workers / consumer spending / campaign / relax / workaholic / suicide / employee / overtime / meditation / temple / private sector / atmosphere

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

**3. OVERTIME:** Students A **strongly** believe overtime should be banned; Students B **strongly** believe it shouldn't. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**4. WORKING CONDITIONS:** How could these be better? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners often and share what you wrote.

	How they could be better	Would companies be happy?
Hours		
Salary		
Overtime		
Bonuses		
Bosses		
Promotion		

**5. WORKAHOLIC:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "workaholic". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**6. WORKERS' STRESS:** Rank these with your partner. Put the biggest workers' stresses at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- overtime
- boss
- colleagues
- deadlines
- boredom
- meetings
- no promotion
- customers

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours.html>

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- a. Japan wants to give workers time off and boost consumer spending. **T / F**
- b. Workers can now leave work early every Friday to go shopping. **T / F**
- c. About 130 companies have joined a scheme to let workers off early. **T / F**
- d. A spokesman said it would take time for the plan to take root. **T / F**
- e. The initiative was partly because of the suicide of a worker. **T / F**
- f. A court said the worker had not done too much overtime. **T / F**
- g. Japan's Prime Minister did not leave the office early. **T / F**
- h. Many workers said they would not go into work on Saturdays. **T / F**

## 2. SYNONYM MATCH:

Match the following synonyms. The words in **bold** are from the news article.

- |                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. <b>backed</b>    | a. concept            |
| 2. <b>ease</b>      | b. become established |
| 3. <b>skeptics</b>  | c. unreasonable       |
| 4. <b>infamous</b>  | d. judged             |
| 5. <b>take root</b> | e. supported          |
| 6. <b>idea</b>      | f. doubters           |
| 7. <b>excessive</b> | g. vital              |
| 8. <b>ruled</b>     | h. relieve            |
| 9. <b>essential</b> | i. simply             |
| 10. <b>just</b>     | j. well-known         |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. Japan's government has backed                | a. root                     |
| 2. ease the                                     | b. spending                 |
| 3. simultaneously boost consumer                | c. workers feel comfortable |
| 4. Skeptics are                                 | d. suicide of an employee   |
| 5. It will take time for Premium Friday to take | e. is a common problem      |
| 6. partly prompted by the                       | f. an initiative            |
| 7. continually required to work                 | g. session                  |
| 8. the need to address what                     | h. pressure                 |
| 9. a meditation                                 | i. excessive overtime       |
| 10. create an atmosphere where                  | j. unsure                   |

# GAP FILL

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours.html>

Japan's government has backed an initiative to (1) \_\_\_\_\_ the pressure on Japanese workers and simultaneously boost consumer spending. The new (2) \_\_\_\_\_ is called "Premium Friday". A spokesperson from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry said the campaign would (3) \_\_\_\_\_ workers to leave work earlier on the (4) \_\_\_\_\_ Friday of each month to relax and/or go shopping. Around 130 companies across Japan have signed up to (5) \_\_\_\_\_ in the initiative, including many major employers. Skeptics are unsure whether the scheme will (6) \_\_\_\_\_ or not because of the infamous (7) \_\_\_\_\_ nature of Japanese workers. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told reporters: "It will take time for Premium Friday to take (8) \_\_\_\_\_."

*last*  
*succeed*  
*ease*  
*root*  
*encourage*  
*workaholic*  
*measure*  
*participate*

The idea for Premium Friday was (9) \_\_\_\_\_ prompted by the suicide of an employee who was continually required to work (10) \_\_\_\_\_ overtime at the ad agency Dentsu. A court (11) \_\_\_\_\_ the suicide was "death by overwork" and stressed the need to (12) \_\_\_\_\_ what is a common problem in Japan - overworking. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is leading by (13) \_\_\_\_\_. He promoted the campaign by leaving the office early for a meditation session at a Tokyo temple at 3:30 p.m. Mr Suga said it was (14) \_\_\_\_\_ for both the government and the private (15) \_\_\_\_\_ to create an atmosphere where workers feel (16) \_\_\_\_\_ in leaving early. However, many workers said they would just have to work on Saturdays instead to finish their work.

*essential*  
*ruled*  
*comfortable*  
*partly*  
*address*  
*sector*  
*excessive*  
*example*

# LISTENING – Guess the answers. Listen to check.

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours.html>

- 1) Japan's government has backed an initiative to ease the \_\_\_\_\_ workers
  - a. pressure in Japanese
  - b. pressured on Japanese
  - c. pressure on Japanese
  - d. pressure on a Japanese
- 2) the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry said the campaign would \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. encourages workers
  - b. encourage worker
  - c. encouraged workers
  - d. encourage workers
- 3) Around 130 companies across Japan have signed up to participate \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. on the initiative
  - b. in an initiative
  - c. in the initiative
  - d. in the initial tiff
- 4) unsure whether the scheme will succeed or not because of the infamous \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. workaholic nature
  - b. work-alcoholic nature
  - c. worker holly nature
  - d. work a holy nature
- 5) Suga told reporters: "It will take time for Premium Friday \_\_\_\_\_."
  - a. to take loot
  - b. to take rude
  - c. to take root
  - d. to take lute
- 6) The idea for Premium Friday was partly prompted by the suicide \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. off the employee
  - b. of an employee
  - c. off a employee
  - d. of an employed
- 7) A court ruled the suicide was " \_\_\_\_\_ "
  - a. death by overwork
  - b. death to overwork
  - c. death of overwork
  - d. death but overwork
- 8) He promoted the campaign by leaving the office early for a \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. meditation season
  - b. meditation section
  - c. meditation suction
  - d. meditation session
- 9) Mr Suga said it was essential for both the government and \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. the private sector
  - b. the privacy sector
  - c. the privates sector
  - d. the privy sector
- 10) create an atmosphere where workers feel comfortable \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. on leaving early
  - b. in leaving early
  - c. to leaving early
  - d. of leaving early

# LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours.html>

Japan's government has backed (1) \_\_\_\_\_ ease the pressure on Japanese workers and simultaneously boost consumer spending. The new (2) \_\_\_\_\_ "Premium Friday". A spokesperson from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry said the campaign would encourage workers to leave (3) \_\_\_\_\_ the last Friday of each month to relax and/or go shopping. Around 130 companies across Japan have (4) \_\_\_\_\_ participate in the initiative, including many major employers. Skeptics (5) \_\_\_\_\_ the scheme will succeed or not because of the infamous workaholic nature of Japanese workers. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told reporters: "It will take time for Premium Friday (6) \_\_\_\_\_."

The idea for Premium Friday was partly prompted (7) \_\_\_\_\_ employee who was continually required to work excessive overtime at the ad agency Dentsu. A court ruled the suicide was (8) \_\_\_\_\_ and stressed the (9) \_\_\_\_\_ what is a common problem in Japan - overworking. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is leading by example. He promoted the campaign by leaving the (10) \_\_\_\_\_ meditation session at a Tokyo temple at 3:30 p.m. Mr Suga said it was essential for both the government and the private sector (11) \_\_\_\_\_ atmosphere where workers feel comfortable in leaving early. However, many workers said they would just (12) \_\_\_\_\_ Saturdays instead to finish their work.

# COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours.html>

1. What does the Japanese government want to ease?
2. What does the Japanese government want to boost?
3. How many companies have signed up to Premium Friday?
4. What are Japanese workers infamous for being?
5. What did a spokesman say it would take time for the scheme to do?
6. What partly prompted the Premium Friday scheme?
7. What did a court rule that the death was caused by?
8. Where did Japan's Prime Minister go when he left the office early?
9. How is it essential for workers to feel?
10. What did workers say they would do if they left early on Fridays?



# MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours.html>

- 1) What does the Japanese government want to ease?
  - a) spending
  - b) the pressure on workers
  - c) laws
  - d) taxes
- 2) What does the Japanese government want to boost?
  - a) measures
  - b) pressure
  - c) its image
  - d) consumer spending
- 3) How many companies have signed up to Premium Friday?
  - a) exactly 130
  - b) no more than 130
  - c) around 130
  - d) at least 130
- 4) What are Japanese workers infamous for being?
  - a) workaholics
  - b) fast
  - c) employees
  - d) excessive
- 5) What did a spokesman say it would take time for the scheme to do?
  - a) branch out
  - b) take root
  - c) bud and flower
  - d) germinate
- 6) What partly prompted the Premium Friday scheme?
  - a) a worker's suicide
  - b) Premium Monday
  - c) an overtime ban
  - d) an example
- 7) What did a court rule that the death was caused by?
  - a) a faulty wire
  - b) natural causes
  - c) overwork
  - d) a bad boss
- 8) Where did Japan's Prime Minister go when he left the office early?
  - a) a temple
  - b) a hot spring
  - c) a gold course
  - d) to see a baseball game
- 9) How is it essential for workers to feel (according to the article)?
  - a) busy
  - b) warm
  - c) appreciated
  - d) comfortable
- 10) What did workers say they would do if they left early on Fridays?
  - a) sleep
  - b) party
  - c) work on Saturdays
  - d) finish their work

# ROLE PLAY

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours.html>

## **Role A – Overtime**

You think overtime is the biggest stress for workers. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them how their things can be less stressful. Also, tell the others which is the least stressful of these (and why): the boss, boredom or customers.

## **Role B – The Boss**

You think the boss is the biggest stress for workers. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them how their things can be less stressful. Also, tell the others which is the least stressful of these (and why): overtime, boredom or customers.

## **Role C – Boredom**

You think boredom is the biggest stress for workers. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them how their things can be less stressful. Also, tell the others which is the least stressful of these (and why): the boss, overtime or customers.

## **Role D – Customers**

You think customers are the biggest stress for workers. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them how their things can be less stressful. Also, tell the others which is the least stressful of these (and why): the boss, boredom or overtime.

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours.html>

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'working' and 'hour'.

working	hour

- 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"><li>• ease</li><li>• new</li><li>• last</li><li>• signed</li><li>• major</li><li>• root</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• partly</li><li>• court</li><li>• common</li><li>• temple</li><li>• feel</li><li>• instead</li></ul>
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# WORKING HOURS SURVEY

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours.html>

Write five GOOD questions about working hours 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.

# WORKING HOURS DISCUSSION

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

1. What did you think when you read the headline?
2. What springs to mind when you hear the term 'working hours'?
3. How much pressure is there on workers?
4. What do you think of the name 'Premium Friday'?
5. How much effect do you think Premium Friday will have?
6. Why are skeptics unsure about Premium Friday?
7. Why are Japanese people seen as workaholics?
8. What are the good and bad things about being a workaholic?
9. How much of a workaholic are you?
10. What advice do you have for Japanese workers?

*Japan attempts to ease working hours – 5th March, 2017*  
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# WORKING HOURS DISCUSSION

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

11. What do you think of when you hear the word 'premium'?
12. What do you think about what you read?
13. How much overtime is too much?
14. Do employers have too much power over employees?
15. How much of a problem is overworking in your country?
16. What do you think of Shinzo Abe for leading by example?
17. What would you do with a Friday afternoon off?
18. Would you feel comfortable leaving work early?
19. Why is Premium Friday at the end of the month when it's busy?
20. What questions would you like to ask a workaholic?

# DISCUSSION (Write your own questions)

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

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

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# DISCUSSION (Write your own questions)

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

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

# LANGUAGE - CLOZE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours.html>

Japan's government has (1) \_\_\_\_\_ an initiative to ease the pressure on Japanese workers and simultaneously (2) \_\_\_\_\_ consumer spending. The new measure is called "Premium Friday". A spokesperson from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry said the campaign would encourage workers to leave work earlier on the last Friday of each month to relax (3) \_\_\_\_\_ go shopping. Around 130 companies across Japan have signed (4) \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in the initiative, including many major employers. Skeptics are unsure whether the scheme will succeed or not because of the infamous workaholic (5) \_\_\_\_\_ of Japanese workers. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told reporters: "It will take time for Premium Friday to take (6) \_\_\_\_\_."

The idea for Premium Friday was (7) \_\_\_\_\_ prompted by the suicide of an employee who was continually required to work excessive overtime at the ad agency Dentsu. A court ruled the suicide was "death (8) \_\_\_\_\_ overwork" and stressed the need to address what is a common problem in Japan - overworking. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is (9) \_\_\_\_\_ by example. He promoted the campaign by leaving the office early for a meditation session at a Tokyo temple at 3:30 p.m. Mr Suga said it was essential (10) \_\_\_\_\_ both the government and the private sector to create an atmosphere where workers feel comfortable (11) \_\_\_\_\_ leaving early. However, many workers said they would just have to work on Saturdays (12) \_\_\_\_\_ to finish their work.

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

- |     |                 |             |               |                 |
|-----|-----------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1.  | (a) sided       | (b) backed  | (c) fronted   | (d) upped       |
| 2.  | (a) baste       | (b) boost   | (c) beast     | (d) best        |
| 3.  | (a) neither/nor | (b) so/such | (c) to/from   | (d) and/or      |
| 4.  | (a) down        | (b) up      | (c) so        | (d) as          |
| 5.  | (a) natural     | (b) nature  | (c) naturally | (d) naturism    |
| 6.  | (a) leaf        | (b) stem    | (c) root      | (d) flower      |
| 7.  | (a) parted      | (b) party   | (c) partly    | (d) parting     |
| 8.  | (a) for         | (b) by      | (c) on        | (d) of          |
| 9.  | (a) lending     | (b) lading  | (c) loading   | (d) leading     |
| 10. | (a) as          | (b) of      | (c) by        | (d) for         |
| 11. | (a) in          | (b) on      | (c) to        | (d) as          |
| 12. | (a) prefer      | (b) place   | (c) instead   | (d) alternative |

# SPELLING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours.html>

## Paragraph 1

1. backed an vtaieniit
2. ytnoaulusimsel boost consumer spending
3. the campaign would aecgenour workers
4. signed up to aitpacritpe
5. the seechm will succeed
6. the asnmfoui workaholic nature

## Paragraph 2

7. the iediucs of an employee
8. work viscexees overtime
9. the need to saesddr what is a common problem
10. a meditation snsseio
11. it was taeslenis
12. private sceotr



# PUT THE TEXT BACK TOGETHER

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours.html>

**Number these lines in the correct order.**

- ( ) boost consumer spending. The new measure is called "Premium Friday". A spokesperson from the Ministry of
- ( ) workers. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told reporters: "It will take time for Premium Friday to take root."
- ( ) succeed or not because of the infamous workaholic nature of Japanese
- ( **1** ) Japan's government has backed an initiative to ease the pressure on Japanese workers and simultaneously
- ( ) earlier on the last Friday of each month to relax and/or go shopping. Around 130 companies across Japan have signed
- ( ) temple at 3:30 p.m. Mr Suga said it was essential for both the government and the private sector to create an
- ( ) the need to address what is a common problem in Japan - overworking. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is leading
- ( ) by example. He promoted the campaign by leaving the office early for a meditation session at a Tokyo
- ( ) up to participate in the initiative, including many major employers. Skeptics are unsure whether the scheme will
- ( ) workers said they would just have to work on Saturdays instead to finish their work.
- ( ) atmosphere where workers feel comfortable in leaving early. However, many
- ( ) The idea for Premium Friday was partly prompted by the suicide of an employee who was continually required
- ( ) Economy, Trade and Industry said the campaign would encourage workers to leave work
- ( ) to work excessive overtime at the ad agency Dentsu. A court ruled the suicide was "death by overwork" and stressed

# PUT THE WORDS IN THE RIGHT ORDER

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours.html>

1. An Japanese pressure ease initiative workers on the to .
2. Friday month earlier last each work the of Leave on .
3. have Japan across companies 130 Around up signed .
4. infamous nature Japanese The workaholic of workers .
5. Friday root take Premium take will for to It time .
6. an of suicide the by prompted Partly employee .
7. excessive work to required Continually overtime .
8. suicide ruled overwork" court was by A the "death .
9. He leaving promoted the the office campaign early by .
10. Create atmosphere workers comfortable an where feel .

# CIRCLE THE CORRECT WORD (20 PAIRS)

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours.html>

Japan's government has backed an initiative to *easy / ease* the pressure on Japanese workers and simultaneously *boast / boost* consumer spending. The new *measure / measurement* is called "Premium Friday". A spokesperson from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry said the campaign would *encouraging / encourage* workers to leave work earlier on the *last / past* Friday of each month to *relax / relaxation* and/or go shopping. Around 130 companies across Japan have *singed / signed* up to participate in the initiative, including many major employers. Skeptics are *surely / unsure* whether the scheme will succeed or not because of the infamous workaholic *nature / natural* of Japanese workers. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told reporters: "It will take time for Premium Friday to take *root / branch*."

The idea for Premium Friday was *partly / party* prompted by the suicide of an employee who was *continually / continued* required to work excessive overtime at the ad agency Dentsu. A court *ruled / ruling* the suicide was "death by overwork" and stressed the need to *address / envelope* what is a common problem in Japan - overworking. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is leading *at / by* example. He promoted the campaign *by / to* leaving the office early for a meditation *season / session* at a Tokyo temple at 3:30 p.m. Mr Suga said it was *essential / essentially* for both the government and the private sector to create an atmosphere where workers feel comfortable in *leaving left / early*. However, many workers said they would just have to work on Saturdays *rather / instead* to finish their work.

**Talk about the connection between each pair of words in italics, and why the correct word is correct.**

# INSERT THE VOWELS (a, e, i, o, u)

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours.html>

J\_p\_n's g\_v\_rnm\_nt h\_s b\_ck\_d\_n \_n\_t\_t\_v\_t \_\_s\_ th\_pr\_ss\_r \_\_n J\_p\_n\_s\_w\_rk\_rs \_nd s\_m\_lt\_n \_\_sly b\_\_st c\_ns\_m\_r sp\_nd\_ng. Th\_n\_w m\_\_s\_r \_\_s c\_ll\_d "Pr\_m\_\_m Fr\_d\_y". \_\_sp\_k\_sp\_rs\_n fr\_m th\_M\_n\_stry \_f \_c\_n\_my, Tr\_d\_\_nd \_\_nd\_stry s\_\_d th\_c mp\_\_gn w\_\_ld \_nc\_\_r\_g\_w\_rk\_rs t\_l\_\_v\_w\_rk \_\_rl\_\_r\_n th\_l\_st Fr\_d\_y \_f \_\_ch m\_nth t\_r\_l\_x \_\_nd/\_r\_g\_sh\_pp\_ng. \_r\_\_nd 130 c\_mp\_n\_\_s \_cr\_ss J\_p\_n h\_v\_s\_gn\_d \_p\_t\_p\_rt\_c\_p\_t\_\_n th\_\_n\_t\_t\_v\_\_, \_ncl\_d\_ng m\_ny m\_j\_r \_\_mpl\_y\_rs. Sk\_pt\_cs \_r\_\_ns\_r\_w\_h\_th\_r th\_sch\_m\_w\_ll s\_cc\_\_d \_r\_n\_t b\_c\_\_s \_\_f th\_\_nf\_m\_\_s w\_rk\_h\_l\_c\_n\_t\_r\_\_f J\_p\_n\_s\_w\_rk\_rs. Ch\_\_f C\_b\_n\_t S\_cr\_t\_ry Y\_sh\_h\_d S\_g\_t\_ld r\_p\_rt\_rs: "\_t\_w\_ll t\_k\_t\_m\_f\_r Pr\_m\_\_m Fr\_d\_y t\_t\_k\_r\_\_t."

Th\_\_d\_\_f\_r Pr\_m\_\_m Fr\_d\_y w\_s p\_r\_tly pr\_mpt\_d by th\_s\_\_c\_d\_\_ \_f \_n \_\_mpl\_y\_\_ w\_h\_w\_s c\_nt\_n\_\_lly r\_q\_\_r\_d t\_w\_rk \_\_xc\_ss\_v\_\_v\_r\_t\_m\_\_t th\_\_d \_\_g\_ncy D\_n\_t\_s\_\_. \_\_c\_\_rt\_r\_l\_d th\_s\_\_c\_d\_w\_s "d\_\_th by \_v\_rw\_rk" \_\_nd str\_ss\_d th\_n\_\_d t\_\_ddr\_ss w\_h\_t\_s \_\_c\_mm\_n pr\_bl\_m \_\_n J\_p\_n - \_v\_rw\_rk\_ng. J\_p\_n's Pr\_m\_M\_n\_st\_r Sh\_nz \_\_b\_\_s l\_\_d\_ng by \_\_x\_mpl\_\_. H\_\_pr\_m\_t\_d th\_c mp\_\_gn by l\_\_v\_ng th\_\_ff\_c\_\_rly f\_r \_\_m\_d\_t\_t\_n s\_ss\_\_n\_t \_\_T\_ky\_t\_mpl\_\_t 3:30 p.m. Mr S\_g\_\_s\_\_d \_\_t\_w\_s \_\_ss\_nt\_\_l f\_r b\_th th\_g\_v\_rnm\_nt \_\_nd th\_pr\_v\_t\_s\_ct\_r\_t\_cr\_\_t\_\_n \_\_tm\_sph\_r\_w\_h\_r\_w\_rk\_rs f\_\_l\_c\_mf\_rt\_bl\_\_n l\_\_v\_ng \_\_rly. H\_w\_v\_r, m\_ny w\_rk\_rs s\_\_d th\_y w\_\_ld j\_st h\_v\_t\_w\_rk \_\_n S\_t\_rd\_ys \_\_nst\_\_d t\_f\_n\_sh th\_\_r w\_rk.

# PUNCTUATE THE TEXT AND ADD CAPITALS

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours.html>

japan's government has backed an initiative to ease the pressure on japanese workers and simultaneously boost consumer spending the new measure is called "premium friday" a spokesperson from the ministry of economy trade and industry said the campaign would encourage workers to leave work earlier on the last friday of each month to relax and/or go shopping around 130 companies across japan have signed up to participate in the initiative including many major employers skeptics are unsure whether the scheme will succeed or not because of the infamous workaholic nature of japanese workers chief cabinet secretary yoshihide suga told reporters "it will take time for premium friday to take root"

the idea for premium friday was partly prompted by the suicide of an employee who was continually required to work excessive overtime at the ad agency dentsu a court ruled the suicide was "death by overwork" and stressed the need to address what is a common problem in japan - overworking japan's prime minister shinzo abe is leading by example he promoted the campaign by leaving the office early for a meditation session at a tokyo temple at 330 pm mr suga said it was essential for both the government and the private sector to create an atmosphere where workers feel comfortable in leaving early however many workers said they would just have to work on saturdays instead to finish their work

# PUT A SLASH ( / ) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours.html>

Japan's government has backed an initiative to ease the pressure on Japanese workers and simultaneously boost consumer spending. The new measure is called "Premium Friday". A spokesperson from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry said the campaign would encourage workers to leave work earlier on the last Friday of each month to relax and go shopping. Around 130 companies across Japan have signed up to participate in the initiative, including many major employers. Skeptics are unsure whether the scheme will succeed or not because of the infamous workaholic nature of Japanese workers. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told reporters: "It will take time for Premium Friday to take root." The idea for Premium Friday was partly prompted by the suicide of an employee who was continually required to work excessive overtime at the agency Dentsu. A court ruled the suicide was "death by overwork" and stressed the need to address what is a common problem in Japan - overworking. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is leading by example. He promoted the campaign by leaving the office early for a meditation session at a Tokyo temple at 3:30 p.m. Mr Suga said it was essential for both the government and the private sector to create an atmosphere where workers feel comfortable in leaving early. However, many workers said they would just have to work on Saturdays instead to finish their work.







# 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 Premium Friday. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. WORKING HOURS:** Make a poster about working hours. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. OVERWORKING:** Write a magazine article about fining companies that make their workers do too much overtime. Include imaginary interviews with people who are for and against it.

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. WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?** Write a newspaper article about the next stage in this news story. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Give each other feedback on your articles.

**6. LETTER:** Write a letter to an expert on workaholics. Ask him/her three questions about them. Give him/her three of your ideas on how people can avoid becoming workaholics. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE (p.4)

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

## SYNONYM MATCH (p.4)

- |              |                       |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| 1. backed    | a. supported          |
| 2. ease      | b. relieve            |
| 3. skeptics  | c. doubters           |
| 4. infamous  | d. well-known         |
| 5. take root | e. become established |
| 6. idea      | f. concept            |
| 7. excessive | g. unreasonable       |
| 8. ruled     | h. judged             |
| 9. essential | i. vital              |
| 10. just     | j. simply             |

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS (p.8)

1. The pressure on workers
2. Consumer spending
3. Around 130
4. Workaholics
5. Take root
6. An employee's suicide
7. Overwork
8. A Tokyo temple
9. Comfortable
10. Work on Saturdays

## MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ (p.9)

1. b    2. d    3. c    4. a    5. b    6. a    7. c    8. a    9. d    10. c

## ALL OTHER EXERCISES

Please check for yourself by looking at the Article on page 2.  
(It's good for your English ;-)