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**Level 6 – 15th May 2023**

## Pope says Italians should have babies, not pets

**FREE online quizzes, mp3 listening and more for this lesson here:**

<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets.html>

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

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# THE ARTICLE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets.html>

Birth rates in many countries are falling to alarmingly low levels. Politicians in Japan and South Korea are pondering questions about the future economic viability of their countries. A recent conference in Italy has addressed the country's looming demographic crisis. Italy has one of the lowest birth rates in the world. The government is warning of considerable strains on pensions and the welfare system as Italy's population rapidly ages. The head of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis, has warned that having children is becoming more unaffordable for many couples. He lamented that starting a family in Italy is now a "titanic effort" that only the rich and wealthy can afford.

Pope Francis encouraged Italians to have more children, even amid rising prices. He cautioned young couples for making "selfish, egotistical" choices that are resulting in record low birth rates. He said this is threatening Italy's economic future. He called the situation a "demographic winter". Italy saw a record low number of births last year of 392,000, which combined with an elevated number of deaths - 713,000. The Pope urged couples to have babies instead of pets. He rebuked a woman who asked him to bless her "baby," which was actually a dog. The BBC wrote that Italy is often dubbed "the country of empty cribs". It quoted Elon Musk as tweeting that: "Italy is disappearing."

Sources: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-65572153>  
<https://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory/pope-joins-meloni-urging-italians-kids-pets-99277457>  
<https://www.foxnews.com/world/pope-joins-conservative-pm-calling-italians-more-babies-less-pets>

# WARM-UPS

**1. CHILDREN:** Students walk around the class and talk to other students about children. 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?

birth rates / low levels / questions / economic viability / demographic crisis / titanic / Italians / children / pets / selfish / egotistical / winter / babies / dog / disappearing

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

**3. COUPLES:** Students A **strongly** believe pets are better for couples than children; Students B **strongly** believe the opposite. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**4. DEMOGRAPHIC CRISIS:** How might a demographic crisis affect these things? How can we resolve this? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners often and share what you wrote.

	Effects	Resolutions
Education		
Healthcare		
Crime		
Care for the aged		
Jobs		
Government services		

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

**6. PETS:** Rank these with your partner. Put the best pets at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Dogs
- Hamsters
- Rabbits
- Horses
- Goldfish
- Snakes
- Beetles
- Elephants

# VOCABULARY MATCHING

## Paragraph 1

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| 1. pondering   | a. A severe or excessive demand on the strength, resources, or abilities of someone or something |
| 2. viability   | b. Seemingly about to happen and regarded as scary or worrying.                                  |
| 3. looming     | c. The ability to work or operate successfully.  |
| 4. demographic | d. Of amazing strength, size, or power.  |
| 5. strain      | e. Thinking about something carefully.   |
| 6. lamented    | f. Relating to the structure of populations.   |
| 7. titanic     | g. Expressed regret or disappointment about something.   |

## Paragraph 2

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 8. amid         | h. Of a level or amount that is higher or greater than normal.                                |
| 9. egotistical  | i. Gave an unofficial name or nickname to.  |
| 10. threatening | j. Expressed sharp disapproval or criticism of someone because of their behaviour or actions. |
| 11. elevated    | k. Excessively thinking or absorbed in oneself; self-centered.                                |
| 12. rebuked     | l. A child's bed.   |
| 13. dubbed      | m. In the middle of.  |
| 14. crib        | n. Causing someone or something to be vulnerable or at risk; endanger.                        |

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets.html>

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

1. The article says birth rates in every country are falling. **T / F**
2. The article says Japanese politicians are worried about Japan's future. **T / F**
3. Italy has the lowest birth rate in the world. **T / F**
4. The Pope said the people should watch the movie Titanic. **T / F**
5. The Pope said childfree young couples were selfish. **T / F**
6. The Pope said Italians have fewer children in winter. **T / F**
7. The Pope wasn't happy that a woman asked him to bless her dog. **T / F**
8. Elon Musk warned that Italy is disappearing. **T / F**

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** (The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. <b>falling</b>     | a. self-centred   |
| 2. <b>pondering</b>   | b. pressures      |
| 3. <b>vitality</b>    | c. scolded        |
| 4. <b>strains</b>     | d. thinking about |
| 5. <b>titanic</b>     | e. nicknamed      |
| 6. <b>cautioned</b>   | f. huge           |
| 7. <b>egotistical</b> | g. plunging       |
| 8. <b>threatening</b> | h. warned         |
| 9. <b>rebuked</b>     | i. dynamism       |
| 10. <b>dubbed</b>     | j. endangering    |

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

- |                                       |                           |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. falling to alarmingly              | a. "demographic winter"   |
| 2. pondering questions                | b. demographic crisis     |
| 3. addressed the country's looming    | c. rising prices          |
| 4. considerable strains on pensions   | d. number of deaths       |
| 5. a titanic                          | e. about the future       |
| 6. even amid                          | f. choices                |
| 7. making "selfish, egotistical"      | g. effort                 |
| 8. He called the situation a          | h. low levels             |
| 9. combined with an elevated          | i. of empty cribs         |
| 10. Italy is often dubbed the country | j. and the welfare system |

# GAP FILL

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets.html>

Birth rates in many countries are falling to (1) \_\_\_\_\_ low levels. Politicians in Japan and South Korea are (2) \_\_\_\_\_ questions about the future economic viability of their countries. A recent conference in Italy has addressed the country's (3) \_\_\_\_\_ demographic crisis. Italy has one of the lowest birth rates in the world. The government is warning of considerable (4) \_\_\_\_\_ on pensions and the (5) \_\_\_\_\_ system as Italy's population rapidly ages. The head of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis, has warned that having children is becoming more (6) \_\_\_\_\_ for many couples. He lamented that starting a family in Italy is now a "(7) \_\_\_\_\_ effort" that only the rich and wealthy can (8) \_\_\_\_\_.

*looming*  
*unaffordable*  
*strains*  
*titanic*  
*alarmingly*  
*afford*  
*welfare*  
*pondering*

Pope Francis encouraged Italians to have more children, even (9) \_\_\_\_\_ rising prices. He cautioned young couples for making "(10) \_\_\_\_\_, egotistical" choices that are resulting in record (11) \_\_\_\_\_ birth rates. He said this is threatening Italy's economic future. He called the situation a "demographic (12) \_\_\_\_\_". Italy saw a record low number of births last year of 392,000, which combined with an (13) \_\_\_\_\_ number of deaths - 713,000. The Pope urged couples to have babies instead of pets. He (14) \_\_\_\_\_ a woman who asked him to bless her "baby," which was actually a dog. The BBC wrote that Italy is often (15) \_\_\_\_\_ "the country of empty cribs". It (16) \_\_\_\_\_ Elon Musk as tweeting that: "Italy is disappearing."

*dubbed*  
*amid*  
*quoted*  
*elevated*  
*low*  
*rebuked*  
*selfish*  
*winter*

# LISTENING – Guess the answers. Listen to check.

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets.html>

- 1) Birth rates in many countries are falling to \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. alarm in allow levels
  - b. a lemming low levels
  - c. alarmingly low levels
  - d. all arming low levels
- 2) Japan and South Korea are pondering questions about the \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. future economics viability
  - b. future economic viability
  - c. future economical viability
  - d. future economy viability
- 3) considerable strains on pensions and the welfare system as Italy's \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. population rapidly ages
  - b. populated rabidly wages
  - c. population rapidly wages
  - d. population rabidly ages
- 4) Pope Francis, has warned that having children is \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. becoming more unforgettable
  - b. becoming more unaffable
  - c. becoming more unaffordable
  - d. becoming more run afford able
- 5) He lamented that starting a family in Italy is now \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. a "tighten nick effort"
  - b. a "tie tan nick effort"
  - c. a "tight tanning effort"
  - d. a "titanic effort"
- 6) Pope Francis encouraged Italians to have more children, even \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. armed rising prices
  - b. amid rising prices
  - c. aimed rising prices
  - d. arid rising prices
- 7) He cautioned young couples for making \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. "selfish, egotistical" choices
  - b. "shellfish, egotistical" choices
  - c. "selfish, egotistical" choice is
  - d. "selfish, egotistical" choice has
- 8) a record low number of births last year of 392,000, which combined with \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. an escalated number
  - b. an numerated number
  - c. an elevated number
  - d. an hell abated number
- 9) He rebuked a woman who asked him to \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. dress her baby
  - b. less her baby
  - c. bless her baby
  - d. blush her baby
- 10) The BBC wrote that Italy is often dubbed "the country \_\_\_\_\_"
  - a. of empty crabs
  - b. of empty clubs
  - c. of empty ribs
  - d. of empty cribs

# LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets.html>

Birth rates in many countries are (1) \_\_\_\_\_ low levels. Politicians in Japan and South Korea are (2) \_\_\_\_\_ the future economic viability of their countries. A recent conference in Italy has addressed the country's (3) \_\_\_\_\_. Italy has one of the lowest birth rates in the world. The government is warning of considerable strains on pensions and (4) \_\_\_\_\_ as Italy's population rapidly ages. The head of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis, has warned that having children is becoming (5) \_\_\_\_\_ many couples. He lamented that starting a family in Italy is now (6) \_\_\_\_\_ that only the rich and wealthy can afford.

Pope Francis encouraged Italians to have more children, (7) \_\_\_\_\_ prices. He cautioned young couples for making "selfish, egotistical" choices that are (8) \_\_\_\_\_ low birth rates. He said this is threatening Italy's economic future. He called the situation a "demographic winter". Italy saw a (9) \_\_\_\_\_ of births last year of 392,000, which combined with an elevated number of deaths - 713,000. The Pope (10) \_\_\_\_\_ have babies instead of pets. He rebuked a woman who asked him (11) \_\_\_\_\_ "baby," which was actually a dog. The BBC wrote that Italy (12) \_\_\_\_\_ "the country of empty cribs". It quoted Elon Musk as tweeting that: "Italy is disappearing."



# COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets.html>

1. Where are politicians worried about their nations' economic viability?
2. What happened in Italy that addressed the country's demographic crisis?
3. What will be strained in Italy in the future?
4. What kind of effort did the Pope say is needed to start a family in Italy?
5. Who did the Pope say could afford to start a family in Italy?
6. Who did the Pope caution?
7. What did the Pope say low birth rates were threatening in Italy?
8. How many births were there in Italy last year?
9. What did a woman ask the Pope to bless?
10. What did Elon Musk say was happening to Italy?

# MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets.html>

- 1) Where are politicians worried about their nations' economic viability?
  - a) Italy and France
  - b) Japan and South Korea
  - c) France and Japan
  - d) South Korea and Italy
- 2) What happened in Italy that addressed the country's demographic crisis?
  - a) more money
  - b) a new law
  - c) immigration
  - d) a conference
- 3) What will be strained in Italy in the future?
  - a) relations
  - b) tomatoes
  - c) pensions and the welfare system
  - d) backs
- 4) What kind of effort did the Pope say is needed to start a family in Italy?
  - a) a titanic effort
  - b) a good effort
  - c) a thoughtful effort
  - d) a heroic effort
- 5) Who did the Pope say could afford to start a family in Italy?
  - a) the government
  - b) the rich and wealthy
  - c) soccer players
  - d) the middle class
- 6) Who did the Pope caution?
  - a) young people
  - b) doctors
  - c) unmarried couples
  - d) men
- 7) What did the Pope say low birth rates were threatening in Italy?
  - a) hospitals
  - b) schools
  - c) Italy's economic future
  - d) sport
- 8) How many births were there in Italy last year?
  - a) 392,000
  - b) 932,000
  - c) 239,000
  - d) 329,000
- 9) What did a woman ask the Pope to bless?
  - a) her stomach
  - b) her baby
  - c) the world
  - d) her dog
- 10) What did Elon Musk say was happening to Italy?
  - a) It's becoming divided.
  - b) It's getting smaller.
  - c) It's disappearing.
  - d) It's getting older.

# ROLE PLAY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets.html>

## **Role A – Dogs**

You think dogs are the best pets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their pets. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): rabbits, goldfish or elephants.

## **Role B – Rabbits**

You think rabbits the best pets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their pets. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): dogs, goldfish or elephants.

## **Role C – Goldfish**

You think goldfish the best pets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their pets. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): rabbits, dogs or elephants.

## **Role D – Elephants**

You think elephants the best pets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their pets. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): rabbits, goldfish or dogs.

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets.html>

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

children	pets

- 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>• many</li><li>• recent</li><li>• strains</li><li>• rapidly</li><li>• becoming</li><li>• effort</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• even</li><li>• choices</li><li>• elevated</li><li>• urged</li><li>• BBC</li><li>• quoted</li></ul>
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# CHILDREN SURVEY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets.html>

Write five GOOD questions about children 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.

# CHILDREN DISCUSSION

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

1. What did you think when you read the headline?
2. What images are in your mind when you hear the word 'children'?
3. What do you think of children?
4. What kind of child were you?
5. What problems do falling birth rates bring?
6. How can we get couples to have more children?
7. Why are people having fewer or no children?
8. What do you think of the Pope?
9. What are the difficulties of raising children?
10. Why is starting a family a "titanic effort"?

*Pope says Italians should have babies, not pets – 15th May 2023*  
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# CHILDREN DISCUSSION

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

11. Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
12. What do you think of when you hear the word 'pets'?
13. What do you think about what you read?
14. What do you think of pets?
15. How selfish are you?
16. How egotistical are you?
17. With overpopulation, shouldn't we be encouraging having fewer kids?
18. Are pets better than children?
19. How expensive is it to raise children?
20. What questions would you like to ask the Pope?

# 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 <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets.html>

Birth rates in many countries are (1) \_\_\_\_\_ to alarmingly low levels. Politicians in Japan and South Korea are (2) \_\_\_\_\_ questions about the future economic viability of their countries. A recent conference in Italy has addressed the country's (3) \_\_\_\_\_ demographic crisis. Italy has one of the lowest birth rates in the world. The government is warning of considerable strains (4) \_\_\_\_\_ pensions and the welfare system as Italy's population rapidly ages. The head of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis, has warned that (5) \_\_\_\_\_ children is becoming more unaffordable for many couples. He lamented that starting a family in Italy is now a "titanic effort" that only the (6) \_\_\_\_\_ and wealthy can afford.

Pope Francis encouraged Italians to have more children, even (7) \_\_\_\_\_ rising prices. He cautioned young couples for making "selfish, egotistical" choices that are resulting (8) \_\_\_\_\_ record low birth rates. He said this is threatening Italy's economic future. He called the situation a "demographic winter". Italy (9) \_\_\_\_\_ a record low number of births last year of 392,000, which combined with an elevated number of deaths - 713,000. The Pope (10) \_\_\_\_\_ couples to have babies instead of pets. He rebuked a woman who asked him to bless her "baby," which was actually a dog. The BBC wrote that Italy is often (11) \_\_\_\_\_ "the country of empty cribs". It quoted Elon Musk (12) \_\_\_\_\_ tweeting that: "Italy is disappearing."

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

- |     |              |               |               |              |
|-----|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1.  | (a) falling  | (b) failing   | (c) fallen    | (d) felled   |
| 2.  | (a) pounding | (b) pandering | (c) pondering | (d) panting  |
| 3.  | (a) blooming | (b) blaming   | (c) looming   | (d) brimming |
| 4.  | (a) to       | (b) by        | (c) at        | (d) on       |
| 5.  | (a) having   | (b) halving   | (c) heaving   | (d) hovering |
| 6.  | (a) enrich   | (b) rich      | (c) richly    | (d) riche    |
| 7.  | (a) maid     | (b) aimed     | (c) dimmed    | (d) amid     |
| 8.  | (a) on       | (b) in        | (c) at        | (d) of       |
| 9.  | (a) watched  | (b) viewed    | (c) saw       | (d) spotted  |
| 10. | (a) merged   | (b) urged     | (c) purged    | (d) surged   |
| 11. | (a) dibbed   | (b) dabbed    | (c) daubed    | (d) dubbed   |
| 12. | (a) has      | (b) as        | (c) is        | (d) was      |



# SPELLING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets.html>

## Paragraph 1

1. falling to arllgamyin low levels
2. the future economic aitbilyvi of their countries
3. the country's looming oecamrdphgi crisis
4. considerable strains on snineosp
5. having children is becoming more ladunffborae
6. a aitcnti effort

## Paragraph 2

7. Pope Francis caguerenod Italians
8. He oiceatund young couples
9. making selfish, glosiaeicctt choices
10. an aleeedty number of deaths
11. He ruebdek a woman
12. dubbed the country of empty isrbc

# PUT THE TEXT BACK TOGETHER

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets.html>

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

- ( **1** ) Birth rates in many countries are falling to alarmingly low levels. Politicians in Japan
- ( ) of deaths - 713,000. The Pope urged couples to have babies instead of pets. He rebuked a woman who asked him
- ( ) on pensions and the welfare system as Italy's population rapidly ages. The head of the Catholic Church,
- ( ) rates. He said this is threatening Italy's economic future. He called the situation a "demographic
- ( ) couples for making "selfish, egotistical" choices that are resulting in record low birth
- ( ) winter". Italy saw a record low number of births last year of 392,000, which combined with an elevated number
- ( ) Pope Francis encouraged Italians to have more children, even amid rising prices. He cautioned young
- ( ) that starting a family in Italy is now a "titanic effort" that only the rich and wealthy can afford.
- ( ) to bless her "baby," which was actually a dog. The BBC wrote that Italy is often dubbed
- ( ) lowest birth rates in the world. The government is warning of considerable strains
- ( ) countries. A recent conference in Italy has addressed the country's looming demographic crisis. Italy has one of the
- ( ) and South Korea are pondering questions about the future economic viability of their
- ( ) Pope Francis, has warned that having children is becoming more unaffordable for many couples. He lamented
- ( ) "the country of empty cribs". It quoted Elon Musk as tweeting that: "Italy is disappearing."

# PUT THE WORDS IN THE RIGHT ORDER

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets.html>

1. viability . economic future about They're questions pondering the
2. A addressed conference demographic crisis . has looming the
3. on are of considerable warning pensions . strains Governments
4. Having more for couples . becoming is children unaffordable
5. is titanic family a now a effort . Starting
6. Francis to Italians more Pope children . have encouraged
7. birth Choices that resulted in low record rates .
8. threatening this is economic He said Italy's future .
9. demographic He situation the called winter . a
10. country "the dubbed empty cribs" . Italy is of

# CIRCLE THE CORRECT WORD (20 PAIRS)

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets.html>

Birth rates in *many / much* countries are falling to alarmingly low levels. Politicians in Japan and South Korea are *pounding / pondering* questions about the future economic *viability / viable* of their countries. A recent conference in Italy has *enveloped / addressed* the country's looming *reprographic / demographic* crisis. Italy has one of the lowest birth rates in the world. The government is *waning / warning* of considerable strains on pensions and the welfare system *as / was* Italy's population rapidly ages. The head *off / of* the Catholic Church, Pope Francis, has warned that having children is becoming more *unaffordable / affordable* for many couples. He lamented that starting a family in Italy is now a "titanic effort" that only the *enrich / rich* and wealthy can afford.

Pope Francis encouraged Italians to have more children, even *mid / amid* rising prices. He cautioned young couples for making "selfish, egotistical" choices that are resulting *on / in* record low birth rates. He said this is *threatening / entreating* Italy's economic future. He called *the / a* situation a "demographic winter". Italy saw a record *low / lowly* number of births last year of 392,000, which *combined / combed* with an elevated number of deaths - 713,000. The Pope urged couples to have babies *rather / instead* of pets. He rebuked a woman who asked him to *bless / bias* her "baby," which was actually a dog. The BBC wrote that Italy is often *dubbed / daubed* "the country of empty *crabs / cribs*". It quoted Elon Musk as tweeting that: "Italy is disappearing."

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

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

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets.html>

B\_rth r\_t\_s \_n m\_ny c\_\_ntr\_\_s \_r\_ f\_ll\_ng t\_\_l\_rn\_ngly l\_w l\_v\_ls. P\_l\_t\_c\_\_ns \_n J\_p\_n \_nd S\_\_th K\_r\_\_ \_r\_ p\_nd\_r\_ng q\_\_st\_\_ns \_b\_\_t th\_ f\_t\_r\_\_c\_n\_m\_c v\_\_b\_l\_t\_y \_f th\_\_r c\_\_ntr\_\_s. \_ r\_c\_nt c\_nf\_r\_nc\_ \_n \_t\_ly h\_s \_ddr\_ss\_d th\_ c\_\_ntry's l\_\_m\_ng d\_m\_gr\_ph\_c cr\_s\_s. \_t\_ly h\_s \_n\_ \_f th\_ l\_w\_st b\_rth r\_t\_s \_n th\_ w\_rld. Th\_ g\_v\_rnm\_nt \_s w\_rn\_ng \_f c\_ns\_d\_r\_bl\_ str\_\_ns \_n p\_ns\_\_ns \_nd th\_ w\_lf\_r\_ syst\_m \_s \_t\_ly's p\_p\_l\_t\_\_n r\_p\_dly \_g\_s. Th\_ h\_\_d \_f th\_ C\_th\_l\_c Ch\_rch, P\_p\_ Fr\_nc\_s, h\_s w\_rn\_d th\_t h\_v\_ng ch\_ldr\_n \_s b\_c\_m\_ng m\_r\_\_n\_ff\_r\_d\_bl\_ f\_r m\_ny c\_\_pl\_s. H\_ l\_m\_nt\_d th\_t st\_rtn\_g \_f\_m\_ly \_n \_t\_ly \_s n\_w \_ "t\_t\_n\_c \_ff\_rt" th\_t \_nly th\_ r\_ch \_nd w\_\_lthy c\_n \_ff\_r\_d.

P\_p\_ Fr\_nc\_s \_nc\_\_r\_g\_d \_t\_l\_\_ns t\_ h\_v\_ m\_r\_\_ch\_ldr\_n, \_v\_n \_m\_d r\_s\_ng pr\_c\_s. H\_ c\_\_t\_\_n\_d y\_\_ng c\_\_pl\_s f\_r m\_k\_ng "s\_lf\_sh, \_g\_t\_st\_c\_l" ch\_\_c\_s th\_t \_r\_ r\_s\_ltn\_g \_n r\_c\_rd l\_w b\_rth r\_t\_s. H\_ s\_\_d th\_s \_s thr\_\_t\_nng \_t\_ly's \_c\_n\_m\_c f\_t\_r\_. H\_ c\_ll\_d th\_ s\_t\_\_t\_\_n \_ "d\_m\_gr\_ph\_c w\_nt\_r". \_t\_ly s\_w \_ r\_c\_rd l\_w n\_mb\_r \_f b\_rths l\_st y\_\_r \_f 392,000, wh\_ch c\_mb\_n\_d w\_th \_n l\_v\_t\_d n\_mb\_r \_f d\_\_ths - 713,000. Th\_ P\_p\_ \_rg\_d c\_\_pl\_s t\_ h\_v\_ b\_b\_\_s \_nst\_\_d \_f p\_ts. H\_ r\_b\_k\_d \_ w\_m\_n wh\_ \_sk\_d h\_m t\_ bl\_ss h\_r "b\_by," wh\_ch w\_s \_ct\_\_lly \_d\_g. Th\_ BBC wr\_t\_ th\_t \_t\_ly \_s \_ft\_n d\_bb\_d "th\_ c\_\_ntry \_f \_mpty cr\_bs". \_t q\_\_t\_d \_l\_n M\_sk \_s tw\_\_tng th\_t: "\_t\_ly \_s d\_s\_pp\_\_r\_ng."

# PUNCTUATE THE TEXT AND ADD CAPITALS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets.html>

birth rates in many countries are falling to alarmingly low levels politicians in japan and south korea are pondering questions about the future economic viability of their countries a recent conference in italy has addressed the countrys looming demographic crisis italy has one of the lowest birth rates in the world the government is warning of considerable strains on pensions and the welfare system as italys population rapidly ages the head of the catholic church pope francis has warned that having children is becoming more unaffordable for many couples he lamented that starting a family in italy is now a titanic effort that only the rich and wealthy can afford

pope francis encouraged italians to have more children even amid rising prices he cautioned young couples for making selfish egotistical choices that are resulting in record low birth rates he said this is threatening italys economic future he called the situation a demographic winter italy saw a record low number of births last year of 392000 which combined with an elevated number of deaths 713000 the pope urged couples to have babies instead of pets he rebuked a woman who asked him to bless her baby which was actually a dog the bbc wrote that italy is often dubbed the country of empty cribs it quoted elon musk as tweeting that italy is disappearing

# PUT A SLASH ( / ) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2305/230515-children-and-pets.html>

Birth rates in many countries are falling to alarmingly low levels. Politicians in Japan and South Korea are pondering questions about the future economic viability of their countries. A recent conference in Italy has addressed the country's looming demographic crisis. Italy has one of the lowest birth rates in the world. The government is warning of considerable strains on pensions and the welfare system as Italy's population rapidly ages. The head of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis, has warned that having children is becoming more unaffordable for many couples. He lamented that starting a family in Italy is now a "titanic effort" that only the rich and wealthy can afford. Pope Francis encouraged Italians to have more children, even amid rising prices. He cautioned young couples from making "selfish, egoistical" choices that are resulting in record low birth rates. He said this is threatening Italy's economic future. He called the situation a "demographic winter". Italy saw a record low number of births last year of 392,000, which combined with an elevated number of deaths - 713,000. The Pope urged couples to have babies instead of pets. He rebuked a woman who asked him to bless her "baby," which was actually a dog. The BBC wrote that Italy is often dubbed "the country of empty cribs". It quoted Elon Musk as tweeting that: "Italy is disappearing."







# 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 this news story. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

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

**4. CHILDREN:** Write a magazine article about requiring all couples to have two or more children. Include imaginary interviews with people who are for and against this.

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 children. Ask him/her three questions about them. Give him/her three of your ideas on how to encourage couples to have more children. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## VOCABULARY (p.4)

1. e    2. c    3. b    4. f    5. a    6. g    7. d  
8. m    9. k    10. n    11. h    12. j    13. i    14. l

## TRUE / FALSE (p.5)

- 1 F    2 T    3 F    4 F    5 T    6 F    7 T    8 T

## SYNONYM MATCH (p.5)

1. g	2. d	3. i	4. b	5. f
6. h	7. a	8. j	9. c	10. e

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS (p.9)

- Japan and South Korea
- A conference
- Pensions and the welfare system
- A titanic effort
- The rich and wealthy
- Young people
- Italy's economic future
- 392,000
- Her dog
- It's disappearing

## WORDS IN THE RIGHT ORDER (p.19)

- They're pondering questions about the future economic viability.
- A conference has addressed the looming demographic crisis.
- Governments are warning of considerable strains on pensions.
- Having children is becoming more unaffordable for couples.
- Starting a family is now a titanic effort.
- Pope Francis encouraged Italians to have more children.
- Choices that resulted in record low birth rates.
- He said this is threatening Italy's economic future.
- He called the situation a demographic winter.
- Italy is dubbed "the country of empty cribs".

## MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ (p.10)

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 ;-)