



■ *Study the source text and then complete the double crossword puzzle in pairs.*

■ Japan is one of the world's highly developed countries; at the same time, however, it faces one of the most serious demographic challenges of the present day. In 2025, Japan had approximately **123 million inhabitants**, yet the population has been **continuously declining for more than 15 years**.

Japanese society is among the **fastest-ageing** in the world. About one third of the population is over 65 years of age, which is the highest proportion globally. The **average age** has reached **49.8 years**, significantly higher than, for example, in Czechia (about 43 years).

Japan also has a **record number of centenarians**, around 100,000 people. Life expectancy is among the highest in the world, which is related to a healthy diet, lifestyle, and a high-quality healthcare system.

A major problem is **extremely low fertility**. The total fertility rate is around **1.15-1.20 children per woman**, which is far below the replacement level of **2.1**.

■ Urbanisation and Population Distribution

Japan is a highly urbanised country. Approximately **92% of the population lives in cities** (compared to about 75% in Czechia). Population **density** averages around **330 inhabitants per square kilometre**, more than double that of Czechia. The population is concentrated mainly in **lowland and coastal areas**, while the mountainous interior is sparsely populated.

■ Ethnic and Cultural Structure

Japanese society is **ethnically and culturally very homogeneous**. About **97.4% of the population are ethnic Japanese**. Adaptation to immigration-related changes is relatively slow, mainly due to a strong cultural identity, language barriers, and concerns about maintaining social cohesion.

■ Religion and Values

Religious life in Japan has a specific character. The dominant religions are **Shintoism and Buddhism**, and many Japanese identify with both at the same time. Social behaviour is strongly influenced by traditional values such as **discipline, harmony, respect, deference to authority, and social hierarchy**. These principles shape everyday life, the workplace, and interpersonal relationships.

■ Family and Social Relationships

The traditional Japanese family was patriarchal, multigenerational, and based on a clear hierarchy. Today, however, there is a significant increase in **single-person households** and people living alone for long periods. **Loneliness in old age** and a growing number of individuals without partners or children have become common social phenomena.

■ Work, Stress, and Social Issues

A major social issue is **high work intensity and stress**. Long working hours, frequent overtime, and a strong emphasis on loyalty to one's employer are typical. An extreme manifestation of these pressures is the phenomenon of **karōshi**, meaning death from overwork. Another serious problem is **suicide**, which is among the most common causes of death in younger age groups.

■ Education, Transport, and Lifestyle

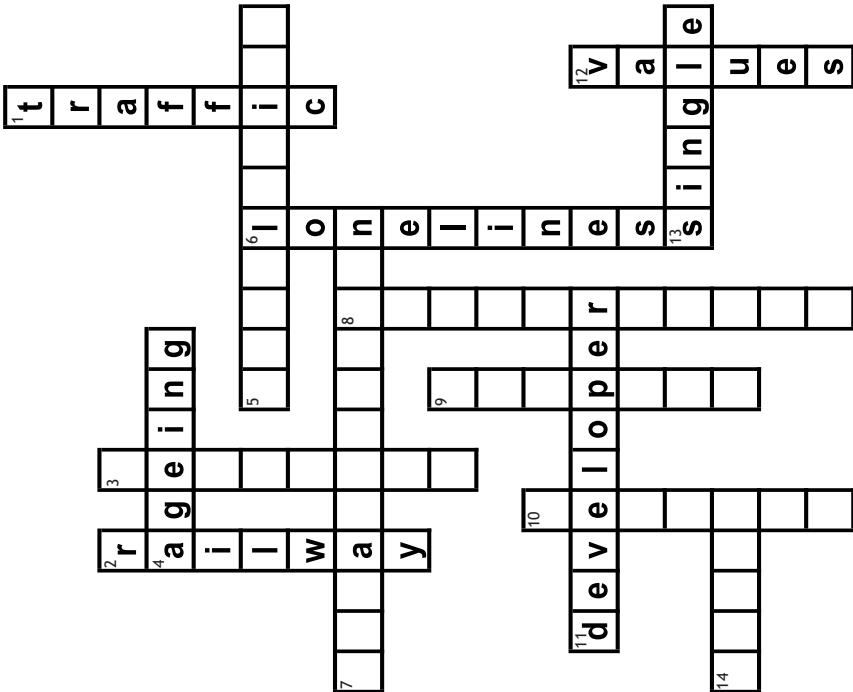
The Japanese education system is highly effective, strongly competitive, and based on testing and memorisation. This results in high literacy rates and excellent performance in mathematics and technical subjects; however, the system often leads to high stress levels and limited support for creativity.

Japan has **left-hand traffic** and a very dense road network, which nevertheless cannot fully accommodate the large number of cars. Therefore, the state has long supported the development of **railway transport**, which is among the most precise and heavily used in the world.

A characteristic feature of the Japanese lifestyle is also **traditional cuisine**, which often uses ingredients without heat treatment, especially fish. Among the best-known dishes are **sushi and sashimi**.

STUDENT B:

You and your partner have different parts of the same crossword puzzle. Fill in the missing words by asking your partner for clues. Take turns asking questions like: What's 3 across? or What's 5 down? You and your partner should answer by describing in what context the missing word occurs in the source text.



STUDENT A:

You and your partner have different parts of the same crossword puzzle. Fill in the missing words by asking your partner for clues. Take turns asking questions like: What's 3 across? or What's 5 down? You and your partner should answer by describing in what context the missing word occurs in the source text.

