

The Geography of Japan

Lesson 4: Population

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Learning Objectives:

- Describe the population change and distribution in Japan.
- Demonstrate the population distribution of Japan.
- Suggest reasons for the population distribution of Japan.

Curriculum Links:

This unit covers aspects of KS3 National Curriculum in England for Geography relating to:

- Location knowledge
- Place knowledge
- Human and physical geography
- Geographical skills and fieldwork

See the Scheme of Work or National Curriculum for further details:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/239087/SECONDARY_national_curriculum_-_Geography.pdf Department for Education (2013).

Keywords:

Population, distribution, density, rural, urban, tourism, economy, choropleth map.

Resources:

Presentation: Population

Worksheets: Map of Japanese Prefectures, Population Density Data, Choropleth Map Template

Additional Resources:

Video: *Contemporary Art Inspires Islands* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-epEmfCwDF0>
(external resource, *Japan Video Topics – English*, '4:23)

Warm up & Starter

- Display the first slide of the presentation showing an image of Yoyoi Kusama's sculpture Yellow Pumpkin on the island of Naoshima. The island was struggling economically due to a falling population, but has benefitted from art tourism. Ask students to come up with suggestions of how the sculpture helped to save the island. You may like to play the first '1:30 of the video (see additional resources), showing art on Naoshima.
- Move on to the starter activity, matching key terms needed for population studies to their definitions. There is an opportunity for self/peer assessment after completion.

Estimated Time: 15 minutes

Task 1

- Students study a population graph and produce a written description of the changes in Japan. They are encouraged to use TEA to structure their work (trend, evidence, and anomaly).
- The challenge task for this activity is for students to compare Japan's population change with the other countries on the graph (UK, South Korea and Taiwan).

Estimated Time: 5 minutes

Task 2

- Give students a population density data, a map of Japanese prefectures and a blank map template with outlines of each prefecture. Students should use these to colour code the blank map on their worksheet to make a choropleth map showing population distribution.

Estimated Time: 25 minutes

Task 3

- Practice the exam style question 'Describe the population distribution of Japan'. The question is broken down and students are given tips on how to approach it.

Estimated Time: 10 minutes

Plenary

- Ask students to make connections between the areas with high population density and the climate. Show students the completed population distribution map on the presentation, but they can use their own maps to help them too.
- Encourage them to realise that the south and central areas have denser populations, which is where the climate is warmer and less extreme. They may also notice the areas with sparse populations are generally further north where the weather is cooler and winters are more extreme. You could also ask them to make links between population density and economic opportunities.

Estimated Time: 5 minutes
