



1. CONTEXT



Mindmap anything you know about the topic, including vocabulary. Do some research online to help.

Employment Trends in Japan (Part 1)

2. QUESTIONS

Read the listening questions to check your understanding. Look up any new vocabulary.

Listening Questions 1

1. What were common employment trends for men and women in the latter half of last century?
_____.
2. What did companies provide employees in return for their loyalty?
_____.
3. What occurrence set off changes in employment in the early 1990s?
_____.
4. What were some of the impacts of the event from Question 3?
_____.
5. How did Japanese companies change their operations after the bubble?
_____.

3. LISTEN

Listen and answer the questions using full sentences. Circle the number of times and % you understood.

Listening Questions 2

1. What has been declining since the bubble burst?
_____.
2. What percentage of the population earn less than the national average?
_____.
3. What has been the biggest change in the company-worker relationship?
_____.
4. What concerns do people have that push them to 'hop' jobs?
_____.
5. What has been the impact on mothers' participation in the workforce?
_____.

Listening 1				
1	2	3	4	5
%	%	%	%	%

Listening 2				
1	2	3	4	5
%	%	%	%	%

Discussion Questions

1. What differences in employment trends have you noticed over the course of your career?
2. How will employment trends continue or change in Japan in the near future? Will full-time employment make a comeback?

TRANSCRIPT 1

4. CHECK ANSWERS

Read through the transcript and underline the answers. Check them against your own answers.

During the rapid economic expansion in the latter half of last century, Japanese workers experienced an increase in wealth and a common path was established for the working middle class. For women, a common scenario was to work until marriage or the birth of their first child, while men often worked in the same company until retirement. Loyalty and commitment to the company were expected of employees. Their work life **consisted of** long hours at the office and submission to corporate policy and managers' instruction. In return, the company provided job security for life, and structured promotion and salary increases systematically until retirement.

However, with the decline in economic growth **triggered by** the bursting of the asset price bubble in the early 1990s, this system of lifetime employment could not be maintained by many companies. The economic slowdown caused a series of bankruptcies for large firms, and coupled with the dawn of the IT age, forced Japanese companies to change the way they operate. Cost cutting and downsizing was a common strategy to maintain and re-build their business, with many companies beginning to outsource some of their services and production overseas for the first time. The average Japanese employee could no longer depend on, or expect, such things as lifetime job security.

5. CHECK VOCABULARY

Read the transcript and circle any new vocabulary you find. Look them up and add them to your list.

Account for	Triggered by	Frailty	Consist of	Make ends meet
Fill-in the blanks with the appropriate word / phrase above:				
1. The cause of our suspicion is the _____ of the stock market since its rapid drop in price over the past few weeks.				
2. The presentation _____ ideas on how to expand the business overseas in the coming years.				
3. The argument was _____ a difference of opinion on CSR policy.				
4. Exports _____ 65% of our total revenue in the past fiscal year.				
5. He was worried about how to _____ after his company laid him off.				

6. READ ALOUD

Read the transcript aloud at least 5 times, focusing on intonation and pronunciation.

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

TRANSCRIPT 2

There have been numerous changes in employment trends since the bursting of the bubble. Salaries and bonus payouts have experienced a year on year decline and now stand at 12% less than in the period before the bubble. During the same time, poverty rates rose sharply with almost 16% of the population earning less than half of the average national salary. Many people who could once depend on one source of income now had to take on two, or sometimes three jobs to **make ends meet**.

These factors have led companies to re-invent the traditional company-worker relationship. Contract and part-time employees now **account for** more than one-third of the workforce compared to less than 20% when the bubble burst. Labor shortages have given employees more power than before, and this combined with concerns about affording education for children, the increase in consumption tax and the **frailty** of the current pension system, mean people are willing to change jobs mid-career looking for better working conditions and higher income.

Over 3 million people 'hopped' jobs in 2016, accounting for roughly 5% of the Japanese workforce. This has also had an impact on female participation in the workforce, with just under 70% of mothers with children under 18 going back to work, 37% of which have nonregular positions.

7. SHADOWING

Say the transcript aloud at the same time as the audio without reading it. Circle how many times below.

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5