**Japan's Ageing Population**

Japan's population is becoming older and older. Last year alone, Japanese population **dropped** by almost 300,000 to 127 million. Almost a quarter of the population is over 65, while the number of children under 14 has **decreased** to 13%. The new **figures** show that Japan has one of the fastest **ageing** populations in the world. By 2050 the population is **projected** to drop to 95 million.

Many **causes** are leading to Japan's decline in population. For one, birth rates are **staggeringly** low, 1.3 %, among the lowest of all **developed countries**. On the other side the [baby boom generation of the 50s and 60s](http://www.english-online.at/geography/baby-boomers/baby-boomers-golden-generation.htm) is reaching the **retirement age**. **Strict** **immigration** **laws** have also had an effect on Japan’s population as well as the **decline** of **foreigners** living in the country after the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster. Only 2% of Japan’s people are foreigners, compared to well over 5% in many other western countries.

Japan’s government is trying to **deal** with the problem of an ageing society.  **Welfare costs** have gone up and medical costs are increasing. While more hospitals and doctors are needed there are fewer people in the **work force** who pay **taxes**. **In addition** [**life expectancy** is among the highest in the world](http://www.english-online.at/geography/life-expectancy/life-expectancy-where-people-live-longer.htm).

The population decline has hit **rural** areas most. In the countryside the **elderly** are left behind while the younger generation **tends** to move to the [cities](http://www.english-online.at/geography/cities/cities-and-metropolitan-areas.htm).

Japan’s couples have fewer babies because it means **financial burdens** they are not prepared to take on them. There are not enough **day care centers** to look after children as more and more women enter the workforce.

Population **researchers** claim the Japanese **government** is not doing enough for families. Having a child costs a lot and most Japanese **couples** can only **make ends meet** if husband and wife work. Many couples are not marrying until they are well over thirty, thus **reducing** the chances of having a baby. There are even those who favor a **ban** of **abortion** as a final **measure**.

# The Meaning of Colors in Food Packaging

When you walk through the **aisles** of supermarket you can see **various** products in different kinds of packages and in different colors. But why do **manufacturers** use **certain** colors and **avoid** others?

Everybody knows that colors are **connected** with **certain** feelings. For example, why do some people paint the walls of their rooms yellow and others pink? The same is true in stores. Producers want us to feel something when we look at their products.

Green, for example, tries to show the quality of a product, how good it is for us or for our **environment**. It also **signalizes** that the product is healthier, has less fat and maybe fewer calories. Red, on the other hand is an aggressive color that is often used for **packaging** food. Red wants to us to become hungry or thirsty. Purple is color that is very **rare**. It **indicates** that it is something special. Producers use purple to show that something is of good quality. Blue is not very often found in food packaging because there are not very many foods that have a blue color.

Colors are often **associated** with **flavors**. An orange flavored product uses an orange packaging; any other color would be unnatural. [Chocolate](http://www.english-online.at/health_medicine/chocolate/history-and-production-of-chocolate-and-cocoa.htm) and other foods with [**cacao**](http://www.english-online.at/health_medicine/chocolate/history-and-production-of-chocolate-and-cocoa.htm) in them often use brown packaging.

Colors can also have different meanings in different cultures and countries. Green for example is not **widely** used in Egypt, maybe because the country’s national color is green.

Consumers are **aware** that certain foods or **beverages** must have certain colors. When Pepsi brought out a crystal clear cola in 1992 it thought that **consumers** would buy it because clear meant **pure** and healthy. After a few months Pepsi found out that a cola had to be dark-colored. Crystal Pepsi **failed** and the company **pulled it out** of the market.

[**Advertising**](http://www.english-online.at/media/advertising/advertising-techniques.htm) **professionals** often need to look at a product through the **consumer’s** eyes when choosing a color. The right packaging colors can truly **improve** the **sales** of a product but choosing a wrong color could end in **failure**.

# Babies Develop Better When They Are Cared For

Some time ago **scientists** and doctors believed that babies started learning at a later **age**. But today’s **research** shows that this is not true. Experts say that babies start learning from their **birth**, and even before that.

Babies are **influenced** by the world around them. The first **method** of communicating with the outside world is smiling and crying. They smile when their mother does something that a baby likes. They cry when they feel **unpleasant** or want something.

Babies learn even before they are born. They **recognize** new sounds when they are still in their mother’s **womb**. **Researchers** from **the Netherlands** found out that unborn babies can remember sounds. They played sounds to babies and watched their **movements**. They **realized** that the older unborn babies got the longer they were able to remember sounds.

**Above all** , mothers can **influence** how a baby **develops** in the first year after birth. American **researchers** studied about 1000 babies and mothers for three years. They found out that a mother’s health **influenced** the intelligence of children a lot. Children of women who **suffered** from **depression** did worse in intelligence tests than those children of happy mothers. Such children also showed more problems when communicating with people.

# American Teenagers Are Driving Less

American teenagers are driving less than ever before. **Surveys** of American **youngsters** show that young people in America prefer to spend their time online, chatting with their friends or playing games on the [Internet](http://www.english-online.at/media/internet/the-internet-and-its-use.htm) rather than **cruising** around in their cars. The [car](http://www.english-online.at/travel/cars/cars-and-how-they-work.htm) as a **status symbol** is not as important for them as it used to be.

For generations cars have been a symbol of **freedom** and America’s most important **pastime**. You had to have a car at an early age if you wanted to be cool. Today, many teenagers have to choose between getting a car or buying the latest **smartphone** or **tablet**. As **gas** prices are **increasing** car driving is becoming more expensive. For almost half of the generation between 18 and 26 having good Internet **access** is more important than **owning** a car. Young adults of today don’t meet their friends in person but **via** [Facebook](http://www.english-online.at/media/facebook/facebook-celebrates-fifth-birthday.htm). There they can chat, exchange photos and play games together.

The golden age of the 50s and 60s, in which teenagers drove around just for the fun of it, are gone. In those days a **shiny** new car was something to **boast** about, it showed who you were. Among the [**baby boomers**](http://www.english-online.at/geography/baby-boomers/baby-boomers-golden-generation.htm) of the post-[World War II](http://www.english-online.at/history/world-war-2/world-war-2-introduction.htm) era 85% wanted their own car. In 1978 about half of all 16 year olds got their **driving license** as soon as they had **reached** that age. In 2010 the **figure dropped** to only 30%.

Today driving is not as much fun as it was in the 50s and 60s when there was not so much **traffic** and you didn't have to **pay** so much **attention** on the roads. In the golden age cars were everything young people had so they just got into them and drove off as soon as they got home from school.
Another reason for the **decrease** in teenage driving may be **stricter** driving tests and the fact that 16 year olds must be **accompanied** by **licensed drivers** over 21.

But not only teenagers have been driving less. A **study** shows that Americans of all ages have **cut down** car use, mostly because gas prices have been going up since 2007. America, **however**, **remains** a country of automobiles. It has more cars **per capita** than any other country in the world . And because it is such a **vast** country cars are often the only way to get to **remote** areas.

# Internet Gives us More Ways to Watch Television

Some time ago most of us watched [television](http://www.english-online.at/media/television/television-introduction.htm) in an  **old-fashioned** way. The whole family got together, sat on a couch, **flipped** through the channels and watched a   **prime time**  TV show or a football game. Today the **media** , **especially** television, is changing.

The [internet](http://www.english-online.at/media/internet/the-internet-and-its-use.htm) has **caused**   a **fundamental** change in the world of television. People watch TV on their   **mobile phones** , laptops or  **iPads** . They watch different things at the same time on different kinds of   **devices** . We watch TV in the same way that we used to listen to the radio. We turn it on but really don’t  **concentrate** on it because we are doing many things at the same time.

TV, **however** , is not really in danger.  The number of people with TV sets is still **increasing** . Big TV events like the  **[Super Bowl](http://www.english-online.at/news-articles/sports/super-bowl-final-football-game-of-the-season.htm)** still  **draw** millions of viewers in front of the TV set.

Today we have more than one way of watching television.  **Not only**   can we **follow** our favorite programs on different  **mobile**  **devices**   but we can also  **choose** what we watch and when.   Hulu , for example, is a  **platform**   that  **offers**  **episodes**   of TV shows and movies  **on demand** . We can   **record**   them and watch them whenever we want.

Traditional television meant that you could only watch one program at a time. And you had to be there, or else you’d miss it. In the days of  **digital** content, many of us have a  **digital video recorder**   or a   **smart phone**   with which we can watch TV.

A company in California has already invented a  **media device** with which you can   **record** TV content and watch it on  **smart phones**, laptops, iPads and other  **devices** . **Especially**  **youngsters**   are watching TV and  **surfing** the web at the same time. The internet has not **destroyed**   television but is giving us more ways to watch it.

# Child-Free Flights in the Future?

Many people go mad when they sit next to a child who is  **screaming** in an airplane. Some travelers get nervous, not only because planes are **packed**  and **foot space** is  **limited** , but also because crying babies get on their nerves. In some cases parents don’t do anything to stop   **screaming** , in others nothing helps to   **calm**   a child down.

Now more and more travelers are   **demanding**   **child-free**   flights or sections reserved for families on planes. Some passengers would even pay extra money if they could   **avoid**   the crying and screaming of   **toddlers**   in the cabin.

Many parents are   **in favor of**   the suggestion as well because crying children are a [stress](http://www.english-online.at/health_medicine/stress/coping-with-stress.htm) for them too. A section for parents and their children would give families a chance to laugh, cry and talk to their children.

The airlines themselves, however, do not like this idea.  They say that flying is a  **tough** industry and they are not going to tell passengers to take another flight if they want a **certain**   one.

There are many difficulties in family  **sections**   on planes too. How would you   **arrange**   the seating? What if parents want to sit in the back   **row**   and children up in the front? What would happen if a large family   **suddenly**   **cancelled**   a flight? If you   **provide**   an area for families some people might then want a section for  [**obese**](http://www.english-online.at/health_medicine/childhood-obesity/causes-and-risks-of-childhood-obesity.htm)   people, or ones only for   **seniors** . Airlines simply can’t let that happen.

One airline official   **especially**   trained to handle children says there are things parents can do to make flying with children more stress-free. You could   **supply**   an   **infant**   with something to do during a flight or   **request**   a seat in the last   **row**   of the plane where you wouldn’t   **bother**   anyone else. In any case, it’s important to stay   **calm** .

# Where Young People Are Better At Work Than Older Ones

Many younger people are better when it comes to getting the job done than older ones. At least that is what  **management** expert Stephen Denning says in his book “ The Leader’s Guide to Radical Management ”.

The role of   **managers**   has changed in today’s world. While the manager of the 20 th century had to   **supervise**   people and teach them how to do things today’s managers have to **motivate** their workers and get them to like their job.

Denning points out that there are some areas where younger people **fulfill**   these **requirements**   better. For one, they are able to find information faster than older workers, who are not that familiar with how the [internet](http://www.english-online.at/media/internet/the-internet-and-its-use.htm) works. They can download  **data** faster and install software quicker than older   **colleagues** .

A Stanford study has shown that younger people can write and communicate better than older ones, simply because they have been doing it since they were children. The  **study** says that **texting**   messages and staying online most of the time **improves** your **communication skills** .

The younger generation is more **mobile** and  **flexible** when it comes to changing jobs.  They can **adapt**   more easily to the changing world and   **take on**   jobs that do not   **depend** on   **experience**   alone. Many young people start their own **businesses** if they find out that they can’t find a job. They often do this with little or no money at all. They often choose **part-time**   jobs, just for the  **sake**   of being   **employed** . Younger people have found out that there is no such thing as a  **secure**   job. And being older and more  **experienced**   is no longer the  **key**   to success.

Many young people don’t care so much about how much money they earn and how fast they can climb up the   **ladder of success** . They care about where the live and their quality of life.

# Is Marriage Becoming Old-Fashioned?

More and more Americans think that **marriage** is **out-of date**.  **According to** a **survey** 40% of over 2,500 people asked said that marriage was a thing of the past and does not work in our **society** any more. When the same survey was **conducted** thirty years ago, only 11% of Americans thought that marriage was old-fashioned. Marriage is still important but not as important as it once was.

Of the people asked most of marriage’s **supporters** were **seniors**, 65 and older. Groups that thought marriage was **obsolete included** blacks and high-school **graduates**, as well as people from **lower income** groups.

**Data** collected in America has shown that people marry less, and when they do, they marry at a higher age. **On average**, women are 26 years old and men 28. For the first time in over fifty years there are more unmarried people than married ones in the age group between 25 and 34.

Many Americans think that having children is one of the reasons for marriage. But people get married for other reasons too. For the past centuries people married because they could **survive** better **economically**. They **shared** their money and had children who looked after them when they got old.  Men went to work while women **cared for** the children and did the cooking.

Today more and more **couples** get married simply because they love each other. Financial stability no longer seems important any more. Young people are more **serious** about marriage because they often **witness** their parents **separating**.

More and more couples are living together without getting married. 29 percent of children under 18 live with parents who are **divorced** or have never married at all.

Americans today are becoming more **liberal** in **defining** what a family is. Most of them think that an **unmarried couple** living together with a child is a family and over 60% said that homosexual **couples** that have **adopted** a child are also a family.

# Generation Y - Their Attitudes Towards Work and Life

Generation Y is known as the generation that was born in the 1980s and 1990s, **although** experts do not **agree** on when this era started. The people who **make up** Generation Y are often the children of [**baby boomers**](http://www.english-online.at/geography/baby-boomers/baby-boomers-golden-generation.htm) and are therefore called echo boomers. Most of them are in their late **teens** or twenties and totally different from other generations.

While baby boomers were **influenced** by the **aftermath** of [World War II](http://www.english-online.at/history/world-war-2/world-war-2-introduction.htm), [television](http://www.english-online.at/media/television/television-introduction.htm), rock and roll, the [Vietnam War](http://www.english-online.at/history/vietnam-war/vietnam-war-background.htm) and the **hippie** movement, Generation Y has grown up with the [internet](http://www.english-online.at/media/internet/the-internet-and-its-use.htm), [**globalization**](http://www.english-online.at/economy/globalization/advantages-and-disadvantages-of-globalization.htm), mobile phones and [Facebook](http://www.english-online.at/media/facebook/facebook-celebrates-fifth-birthday.htm).

The **millennium** generation, as it is often called, has grown up with new **technology** and can use it in their jobs much better than the older generation can. **Blackberrys**, cell phones, iPods are normal to this generation. They like to communicate via **text messaging**, Facebook and other online technology.

The new generation can be **described** as **ambitious** and **self-confident**. Some older people think this even goes as far as being **arrogant**. They have high **expectations** and **seek** new **challenges** and are not afraid to **raise questions** if something is unclear.

Generation Y youths have a different **attitude** towards work. It means something different to them than it did to their parents or grandparents. They do not want to work as hard as their parents but spend their life in a meaningful way. They do not live to work, they work to live.

Young people expect a different type of workplace than their parents had. They want jobs that are **flexible**, not always having to work from 9 to 5. They **prefer** working from their homes and taking a **day** or two **off** to spend with their family when the weather is fine. A **study** has found out Generation Y wants to spend 30% to 70% of their time at home.

# Australians Change Drinking Habits

[Australia](http://www.english-online.at/geography/australia/australia-introduction.htm) is a country known for its free lifestyle and its [**easy-going** population](http://www.english-online.at/geography/australia/australian-way-of-life.htm). Lately, **however**, people’s drinking **habits** have been changing. More and more Australians are **switching** their **pint** of beer for a glass of lemonade or mineral water. A growing number of Australians are leaving alcohol behind, at least for a while.

20 years ago only 6% of Australian **adults** have never had a drink. Today the number has **doubled** to 12%. The number for teenagers is **similar**. The **percentage** of drinking youngsters has gone down from half in 1990 to a third today. **Although** Australia still reports a **massive** drinking problem people have begun to **consider** that **binge drinking** and getting drunk just for fun is not the healthiest thing to do.

Other Australians have started **campaigning** against alcohol.  [Hello Sunday Morning](http://hellosundaymorning.org/) is a website that wants to **persuade** people to change their drinking habits and **comment** about it. Since its **launch** in 2009 almost 10,000 people have **registered** and blog about their **relationship** with alcohol. **Overall consumption** of users is **currently** at about 70% of its **original level**.

Other organizations are  *[Febfast](http://febfast.org.au/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)* , where you give up drinking alcohol for a month , or [*DryJuly*](http://www.dryjuly.com/), a **non-profit** organization , that campaigns for a healthy lifestyle.

Australians have not only become **aware** of the harm that alcohol can do, but also of the costs. **Cutting down** alcohol can save you a lot of money that you could use elsewhere. **State health costs** could also be **significantly** **reduced**. Such campaigns can have an **effect** on people’s lifestyles, but it will take some time.

# Facebook Reaches One Billion Active Users

Facebook, the world’s biggest **social media network**, has **announced** that it now has over 1 **billion** active users. The social media site **reaches** one in seven people on our planet. Over 600 million of them **connect** through mobile phones. Laun**c**hed in 2004, Facebook is responsible for 1.13 **trillion** “Likes” and over 17 billion uploaded photos.

On his personal Facebook page, **founder** [Mark Zuckerberg](http://www.english-online.at/news-articles/people/mark-zuckerberg-person-of-the-year.htm) said he is **proud** of what the company has **achieved** in such a short time and feels good about giving so many people a new form of getting together.

Zuckerberg plans to **expand** Facebook to those areas of the world where the social media site is **currently** not yet **dominant**, like China or Russia, where **local** social media sites have a higher **ranking**. Only **recently**, Zuckerberg travelled to Russia where Facebook has only about seven million users.

In many African countries, Facebook has a **simplified** version which can be **displayed** on [**basic** mobile phones](http://www.english-online.at/technology/mobile-phones/developing-countries-use-more-mobile-phones.htm) that have no **internet access**. Many people, especially in **rural** areas, ask for such phones “with Facebook on them”.

**In contrast**, Facebook **growth** has been slowing down in Europe and North America. Here, Zuckerberg wants to **expand** advertising on by using the personal **data** of each of its members. This could cause protests as **especially** European users are skeptical of Facebook’s **privacy** **guidelines**.

The company’s main **income** **sources** are advertising and other **non-standard** **features** like social games. Users in the United States and Canada make up over 50% of the company’s **income**. The **California-based** company worries that, as more and more people connect **via** mobile phone, [**ads**](http://www.english-online.at/media/advertising/advertising-techniques.htm) will not be clicked on as often as on desktop computers or laptops. Facebook is looking for more ways to make [money](http://www.english-online.at/economy/money/money-value-history-functions.htm). It is becoming a platform for other **apps**.

Zuckerberg also wants to help Facebook get a better image after the [**stock market**](http://www.english-online.at/economy/stocks-and-bonds/stocks-and-stock-exchange.htm) **disaster** last May. The company **suffered** a financial **loss** when its **share** prices started out at $38 and then **dropped** to almost half.

# Weibo – China’s Version of Twitter

Weibo is a Chinese **social-media platform** that works like [Twitter](http://www.english-online.at/society/twitter/how-twitter-works.htm). It was **launched** in 2009 and now has over 350 million registered users. Weibo lets its users discuss **issues**, criticize the **government**, post photos and comments. **However**, the **microblogging** platform has become a **battlefield** between China’s **citizens** and the **authorities**. On the one side the [Communist](http://www.english-online.at/history/communism/communism.htm) government is happy to hear what people think about **various** issues, but on the other side they do not want to **loosen** control over their citizens.

Many Chinese get most of their information from Weibo. There are many hot issues that are not **published** in state-owned [newspapers](http://www.english-online.at/media/newspapers/newspapers.htm) or on Chinese [television](http://www.english-online.at/media/television/television-introduction.htm).  For example, a Chinese student started a discussion when he found out that restaurants were using chemicals on meat. In another discussion on Weibo, Chinese citizens criticized **authorities** when 40 people died in a high-speed train crash only a few days after its **service** started. Not all of the comments were published. Those that made fun of the government were quickly **deleted**.

Weibo is changing the way citizens are communicating with the government. The Communist **regime** is not sure how to deal with the social media platform. The government thinks that **shutting down** Weibo may cause rebellion and  a **massive** protest among its citizens.

Even if Weibo lets people communicate more or less freely there are **restrictions**. Comments are carefully looked at and deleted if they are too **embarrassing** to the authorities. Some Weibo **accounts** have even been deleted, like the one of a **popular** blogger with 30,000 followers who criticized China’s **space program**.

Unlike Twitter, Weibo cannot be used to organize **social gatherings** or protests. It has a special word filter that **raises a red flag** when words like "meeting", "gathering" or others come up. You must also register with your real name and are not allowed to use **fake** names like in Twitter and [Facebook](http://www.english-online.at/media/facebook/facebook-celebrates-fifth-birthday.htm).

The internet services that control Weibo are **confronted** with a big problem. On the one side they want to keep their users **satisfied** and grow further, on the other they fear that a **misstep** can lead to the government’s shutting down of the service.

Some government **agencies**, like a **Bejing-based** **environmental** department welcomes Weibo.  It informs the public about **various** projects and **in return** gets information about companies that do not follow the **rules** or cause damage to the environment.

All in all the government has **realized** that it cannot ignore the voices from the people, even if it sometimes means taking in **harsh** criticism.

# Georgia to Build New City on the Black Sea Coast

Georgia’s **government** is planning to build a large city for the future. Lazika is **intended** not only to be a city for half a million people on **marshy** land near the **Black Sea** coast, but also a **trade**, industrial and tourist centre. The Black Sea coastal region is **constantly** losing **population** and many people are living in **poverty** . The project is based on the Chinese idea of building so-called **instant** cities.

**Despite** discussion about the project going on in **public**, **construction** of the first building in Lazika is already underway. It is a public **service hall** for the new city. In ten years, according to the Georgian President Saakashvili, Lazika will be Georgia’s second largest city, after Tbilisi. Georgian **authorities claim** that the country wants to **implement** great ideas quickly. There is no time to **hesitate**.

In China, many cities like this have been built in the past, mainly to **house** the **influx** of the **rural** population coming to the cities in search of a better life. **In addition**, such a constructed city could **attract foreign investors** to Georgia. **However**, experts are **doubtful** whether so many people will want to come to the new area, **especially** because Georgia only has a population of 4.5 million and getting half a million people to move would be a difficult **task**.

The financing the project **remains** unclear. The Georgian government only wants to **contribute** about 300 million dollars out of a total of 600 to 900 million, which the project is **likely** to cost. Talks with European and Asian **investors** have already begun. While most Georgians **support** the project , most of them think that it should be more **thoroughly** discussed.

There is no **schedule** on how fast construction of the new city will be and **authorities** have **admitted** that there are no **concrete** plans yet. **Controversy** has also come up from **environmentalists**. In earlier times the government has promised to **preserve** nature and the **wetlands** that the new city is to be built on.