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Japan's Koizumi reelected in landslide win

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THE ARTICLE

Japan's Koizumi reelected in landslide win

BNE: Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has won Japan's election. He was reelected in a surprising landslide victory after calling a sudden and risky election last month. His election gamble was so he could push through his reforms and privatize the post office. Members of his own party and opposition members in the Japanese Lower House blocked privatization. Japan's post office is the world's richest financial institution. It also helps greedy politicians stay in power. They use post office money to finance unnecessary construction projects.

Mr. Koizumi's victory gives his party its first total majority for the first time in 15 years. Opposition leader Katsuya Okada quit after his party's huge defeat. He was expected to be strong competition for Mr. Koizumi but failed to interest the Japanese public. He had a difficult job because Mr. Koizumi used many popular and high profile figures to help his campaign. These "assassin" candidates targeted those who opposed the prime minister. They included a former beauty queen and a pastry chef.

WARM-UPS

1. VOTE FOR ME: You are a politician in an election. Spend one minute writing down a few things you would do if you became prime minister or president. Walk around the class and talk to the other "politicians" Tell them why you are the best person for the job.

2. POLITICIANS: Write down the names of four politicians from your country. In pairs / groups, talk about these politicians. Have they done good things? Are they good politicians? Do you like them?

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Japan / Junichiro Koizumi / elections / gambles / reforms / post offices / greedy politicians / quitting / beauty queens / pastry chefs

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. CANDIDATES: What makes a good election candidate? In pairs / groups, rank these points in order of most important:

____ Nice smile
____ Skillful speaker
____ Lots of experience
____ Has many ideas
____ Kisses many babies
____ Promises lots of changes
____ Is good friends with George W. Bush
____ Promises taxes will be lowered
____ Wears stylish clothes

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

6. MR. KOIZUMI: Look at the international politicians below. Do you know which countries they lead? With your partner(s), find five similarities and five differences between them. Change partners. Share and talk about your similarities and differences.

Junichiro Koizumi / George W. Bush / Fidel Castro / Robert Mugabe / Tony Blair / Pervez Musharraf / Jacques Chirac / Hugo Chavez / Hosni Mubarak / Hu Jintao / Manmohan Singh / Vladimir Putin / Thabo Mbeki / Other

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

a. Japan's prime minister will spend more money to prevent landslides.   T / F

b. The size of Mr. Koizumi's win was not a surprise.   T / F

c. The main issue in the election was privatization of the post office.   T / F

d. Greedy Japanese politicians use post office money on useless projects.   T / F

e. Mr. Koizumi missed getting a majority in government.   T / F

f. The main opposition leader promised to fight the next election.   T / F

g. Opposition candidates tried to assassinate Mr. Koizumi.   T / F

h. A former beauty queen helped Mr. Koizumi in his election campaign.   T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

a.	calling	celebrities
b.	gamble	remain
c.	push through	people
d.	stay	risk
e.	construction	win
f.	victory	pass
g.	quit	building
h.	public	ex
i.	figures	announcing
j.	former	resigned

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

a.	a surprising landslide	in 15 years
b.	calling a sudden and	financial institution
c.	push	opposed the prime minister
d.	the world's richest	victory
e.	helps greedy politicians	competition
f.	for the first time	through his reforms
g.	opposition	stay in power
h.	He was expected to be strong	profile figures
i.	high	risky election
j.	candidates targeted those who	leader

WHILE READING / LISTENING

ODD WORD OUT: Strike through the incorrect choice in each group of three *italicized* words.

Japan's Koizumi reelected in landslide win

BNE: Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has won Japan's election. He was reelected in a surprising landslide *victory / win / defeat* after calling a sudden and risky election last month. His election *gamble / risk / poker* was so he could push through his reforms and privatize the post office. Members of his own party and opposition *members / politicians / comrades* in the Japanese Lower House blocked privatization. Japan's post office is the world's *richest / wealthiest / poorest* financial institution. It also helps greedy politicians stay in power. They use post office money to finance unnecessary *destruction / building / construction* projects.

Mr. Koizumi's victory gives his party its first total majority for the first time *in / for / of* 15 years. Opposition leader Katsuya Okada *resigned / signed / quit* after his party's huge defeat. He was expected to be strong competition for Mr. Koizumi but failed to *excite / interest / abuse* the Japanese public. He had a difficult job because Mr. Koizumi used many popular and high profile *celebrities / dolls / figures* to help his campaign. These "assassin" candidates targeted those who opposed the prime minister. They included a *former / ex / farmer* beauty queen and a pastry chef.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms … for the words **'post'** and **'office'**.

- 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. ODD WORD OUT: 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. STUDENT "ELECTION" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about elections, Japan and Mr. Koizumi's victory.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- won
- risky
- privatize
- blocked
- greedy
- unnecessary

- majority
- quit
- competition
- public
- figures
- former

DISCUSSION

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

a. What did you think when you first read this headline?
b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
c. What do you think of Junichiro Koizumi?
d. What do you think of Japanese politics and politicians?
e. Do lots of things change after elections in your country?
f. Do you like the politicians in your country?
g. Who is your favorite world leader and why?
h. What's your opinion of Japan?
i. What are the main issues in elections in your country?
j. Are there many greedy politicians in your country?

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

a. Did you like reading this article?
b. What do you think about what you read?
c. If a snap election was called in your country, who would win and why?
d. What kind of reforms would you like to see pushed through in your country?
e. Do you think post office privatization is a strange issue in an election?
f. What do you think of the idea of celebrity candidates?
g. Who do you think is the best leader in the world?
h. Do politicians interest you?
i. Have you ever quit?
j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
c. Was there a question you didn't like?
d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
e. What did you like talking about?
f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

WORLD PRESIDENT: You must decide who should be world president. In pairs / groups, decide which world leader should get this position (the person could be from politics, business, entertainment, etc.). Think of all the reasons why you think your choice would be good at the job. The following words might help you:

- Popularity

- Experience

- Trust

- Qualifications

- Global appeal

- Leadership

- Chances of success

- Past mistakes

- Ideas

- Controversial / Non-controversial

- Caring

After you have decided on your world leader, change partners often and try to convince the class that your idea is best.

The teacher will write the "candidates" on the board. In pairs / groups, decide on the best person.

Take a class vote to see who is the new world leader. In pairs / groups, talk about the winner.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Japan's Koizumi reelected in landslide win

BNE: Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi _____ _____ Japan's election. He was reelected in a surprising landslide victory after calling a _____ and risky election last month. His election gamble was so he could push _____ his reforms and privatize the post office. Members of _____ _____ party and opposition members in the Japanese Lower House blocked privatization. Japan's post office is the world's richest _____ institution. It also helps _____ politicians stay in power. They use post office money to finance unnecessary construction _____.

Mr. Koizumi's victory gives his party its first total _____ for the first time in 15 years. Opposition leader Katsuya Okada _____ after his party's huge defeat. He was expected to be _____ competition for Mr. Koizumi but failed to _____ the Japanese public. He had a difficult job because Mr. Koizumi used many popular and high profile figures to help his _____. These "assassin" candidates _____ those who opposed the prime minister. They included a _____ beauty queen and a pastry chef.

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 more information on Junichiro Koizumi. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. REFORM: Make a poster showing some of the things that need to be reformed in your country. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all include similar things? Talk about why these things need to be reformed.

4. CELEBRITY CANDIDATE: Choose a celebrity candidate who you think would do well in an election. Write a profile for them and why you think they would do well. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. F   b. F   c. T   d. T   e. F   f. F   g. F   h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

a.	calling	announcing
b.	gamble	risk
c.	push through	pass
d.	stay	remain
e.	construction	building
f.	victory	win
g.	quit	resigned
h.	public	people
i.	figures	celebrities
j.	former	ex

PHRASE MATCH:

a.	a surprising landslide	victory
b.	calling a sudden and	risky election
c.	push	through his reforms
d.	the world's richest	financial institution
e.	helps greedy politicians	stay in power
f.	for the first time	in 15 years
g.	opposition	leader
h.	He was expected to be strong	competition
i.	high	profile figures
j.	candidates targeted those who	opposed the prime minister

ODD WORD OUT:

Japan's Koizumi reelected in landslide win

BNE: Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has won Japan's election. He was reelected in a surprising landslide *victory / win / ~~defeat~~* after calling a sudden and risky election last month. His election *gamble / risk / ~~poker~~* was so he could push through his reforms and privatize the post office. Members of his own party and opposition *members / politicians / ~~comrades~~* in the Japanese Lower House blocked privatization. Japan's post office is the world's *richest / wealthiest / ~~poorest~~* financial institution. It also helps greedy politicians stay in power. They use post office money to finance unnecessary *~~destruction~~ / building / construction* projects.

Mr. Koizumi's victory gives his party its first total majority for the first time *in / for / ~~of~~* 15 years. Opposition leader Katsuya Okada *resigned / ~~signed~~ / quit* after his party's huge defeat. He was expected to be strong competition for Mr. Koizumi but failed to *excite / interest / ~~abuse~~* the Japanese public. He had a difficult job because Mr. Koizumi used many popular and high profile *celebrities / ~~dolls~~ / figures* to help his campaign. These "assassin" candidates targeted those who opposed the prime minister. They included a *former / ex / ~~farmer~~* beauty queen and a pastry chef.