

Japan relaxes haircut rules to attract army recruits

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The "short back and sides" haircut is ubiquitous among soldiers, sailors, and airmen and women in armies, navies and air forces worldwide. The Japanese Defence Ministry has just announced it will relax rules for new recruits to

have this crewcut style. This is in a bid to attract more young people to its ranks. Many companies in Japan are experiencing staff shortages; and the military is no exception. From April this year, new enlistees to Japan's Self Defence Forces (SDF) will be allowed to have longer hair. Men will be able to sport longer hair on top, while female personnel can have long hair, provided it does not interfere with the wearing of a helmet or does not fall below the shoulders.

According to the Kyodo news agency, recruitment experts met last month to discuss how troop numbers could be boosted. Japan's defence forces are up against an ever-dwindling number of young people to recruit from. In addition, they have to compete with businesses who are more aggressively trying to lure new employees. Japan's Defence Minister said: "As our nation faces a serious workforce shortage, we recognize competition with others, including the private sector, to secure talent has been intensifying." He added that easing of haircut rules would "change or eliminate regulations that lack rationality". In a related move, the ministry is considering allowing people with tattoos to join the SDF.

Sources: japantimes.co.jp / bbc.com / asahi.com

Writing

All of us should have very short hair to help save the planet. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

haircut / ubiquitous / soldiers / sailors / air force / staff shortages / helmet / shoulders recruitment / troop numbers / new employees / private sector / talent / tattoos

True / False

- 1) All soldiers around the world must have a very short hair style. T / F
- 2) Companies in Japan are also introducing new rules about hairstyles. T / F
- 3) The new rules on hair length will come into effect from April. T / F
- 4) Women in Japan's military will not need to wear a helmet. T / F
- 5) Experts hope the relaxed hair rules will increase the number of soldiers. T / F
- 6) Businesses are being aggressive to employees with long hair. T / F
- 7) A shortage of workers is one reason behind the relaxed rules. T / F
- 8) Japan's military will also allow people with tattoos to join the forces. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. ubiquitous | a. remove |
| 2. shortage | b. have on show |
| 3. exception | c. specialists |
| 4. sport | d. omnipresent |
| 5. interfere | e. entice |
| 6. experts | f. lack |
| 7. boosted | g. increased |
| 8. dwindling | h. get in the way |
| 9. lure | i. decreasing |
| 10. eliminate | j. special case |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) How can countries boost the number of people in their military?
- c) Why do we need armies?
- d) What are the benefits of joining the military?
- e) Does requiring short hair 'lack rationality'?
- f) Should people with tattoos be allowed to join the army?
- g) What hair style would you really like to have?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the recruiters?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. ubiquitous | a. staff shortages |
| 2. This is in a bid | b. shortage |
| 3. companies in Japan are experiencing | c. the shoulders |
| 4. Men will be able to sport | d. new employees |
| 5. fall below | e. could be boosted |
| 6. discuss how troop numbers | f. to attract more young people |
| 7. an ever- | g. with tattoos |
| 8. trying to lure | h. among soldiers |
| 9. our nation faces a serious workforce | i. dwindling number |
| 10. allowing people | j. longer hair |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of your hair style?
- Do you like getting your hair cut?
- What different hair styles have you had?
- Should soldiers have short hair?
- Why do those in the military have such short hair?
- Do you think people will join the army if they can have long hair?
- Would you like to join the military?
- What are the good things about long and short hair?

Spelling

- oqubiutsiu among soldiers
- armies, eaivsn and air forces
- staff orgetassh
- the military is no entxpcioe
- female leonenspr
- eirenfret with the wearing of a helmet
- cererimtntu experts
- an ever-dindinglw number
- iegylaevssqr trying to lure new employees
- including the private cstreo
- change or etnmeiail regulations
- lack itriaotnyla

Answers – Synonym Match

1. d	2. f	3. j	4. b	5. h
6. c	7. g	8. i	9. e	10. a

Role Play

Role A – Soldier

You think a soldier is the best job. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their jobs. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): sailor, fighter pilot or a marine.

Role B – Sailor

You think a sailor is the best job. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their jobs. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): soldier, fighter pilot or a marine.

Role C – Fighter Pilot

You think a fighter pilot is the best job. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their jobs. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): sailor, soldier or a marine.

Role D – Marine

You think a marine is the best job. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their jobs. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): sailor, fighter pilot or soldier.

Speaking – Service Jobs

Rank these with your partner. Put the best service jobs at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| • Soldier | • Marine |
| • Sailor | • Police officer |
| • Fighter pilot | • Prison officer |
| • Coast guard | • Bomb disposal |

Answers – True False

1	F	2	F	3	T	4	F	5	T	6	F	7	T	8	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.