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Level 5

Japan attempts to ease working hours

5th March, 2017

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours-5.html>

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Please try Levels 4 and 6. They are (a little) harder.

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THE READING

From <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours-5.html>

Japan is backing an initiative to ease the pressure on workers and at the same time boost consumer spending. The measure is called "Premium Friday". Japan's government said workers would be encouraged to leave work earlier on the last Friday of each month to relax and/or go shopping. Around 130 companies across Japan are participating, including many major employers. Doubters are unsure whether the scheme will succeed or not because of the legendary workaholic nature of Japanese workers. A spokesman told reporters: "It will take time for Premium Friday to take root."

Premium Friday was partly prompted by the suicide of a man who was continually told to work excessive overtime at an ad agency. A court said the suicide was "death by overwork". It stressed the need to address the problem of overworking. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe promoted the campaign by leaving the office early for a meditation session at 3:30 p.m. The government said it was essential for both the government and the private sector to make workers feel comfortable in leaving early. However, many workers said they would just have to work on Saturdays to finish their work.

Sources: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/02/24/national/premium-friday-drive-kicks-off-energize-weary-workers-feeble-economy/>
<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-overwork-reforms-idUSKBN16300C>
<https://www.japantoday.com/category/business/view/japans-first-premium-friday-shows-mixed-results>

PHRASE MATCHING

From <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours-5.html>

PARAGRAPH ONE:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. backing | a. pressure on workers |
| 2. ease the | b. unsure |
| 3. boost consumer | c. root |
| 4. on the last Friday | d. of Japanese workers |
| 5. Doubters are | e. of each month |
| 6. whether the scheme will succeed | f. an initiative |
| 7. the legendary workaholic nature | g. or not |
| 8. time for Premium Friday to take | h. spending |

PARAGRAPH TWO:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. partly prompted by the | a. the problem |
| 2. continually told to work | b. "death by overwork" |
| 3. the suicide was | c. in leaving early |
| 4. It stressed the need to address | d. sector |
| 5. a meditation | e. suicide of a man |
| 6. the private | f. work on Saturdays |
| 7. make workers feel comfortable | g. excessive overtime |
| 8. they would just have to | h. session |

LISTEN AND FILL IN THE GAPS

From <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours-5.html>

Japan is backing (1) _____ the pressure on workers and at the same time boost (2) _____. The measure is called "Premium Friday". Japan's government said workers would be encouraged to leave (3) _____ the last Friday of each month to relax and/or go shopping. Around 130 (4) _____ Japan are participating, including many major employers. Doubters are unsure whether the scheme will (5) _____ because of the legendary workaholic nature of Japanese workers. A spokesman told reporters: "It will take time for Premium Friday (6) _____."

Premium Friday was (7) _____ by the suicide of a man who was continually told to work excessive (8) _____ ad agency. A court said the suicide was "death by overwork". It stressed the (9) _____ the problem of overworking. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe promoted the campaign by leaving (10) _____ for a meditation session at 3:30 p.m. The government said it was essential for both the government and (11) _____ to make workers feel comfortable in leaving early. However, many workers said they would just (12) _____ Saturdays to finish their work.

PUT A SLASH (/) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

From <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours-5.html>

Japan is backing an initiative to ease the pressure on workers and at the same time boost consumers spending. The measure is called "Premium Friday". Japan's government said workers would be encouraged to leave work earlier on the last Friday of each month to relax and go shopping. Around 130 companies across Japan are participating, including many major employers. Doubters are unsure whether the scheme will succeed or not because of the legendary workaholic nature of Japanese workers. A spokesman told reporters: "It will take time for Premium Friday to take root." Premium Friday was partly prompted by the suicide of a man who was continually told to work excessive overtime at an agency. A court said the suicide was "death by overwork". It stressed the need to address the problem of overworking. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe promoted the campaign by leaving the office early for a meditation session at 3:30 p.m. The government said it was essential for both the government and the private sector to make workers feel comfortable in leaving early. However, many workers said they would just have to work on Saturday to finish their work.

WORKING HOURS SURVEY

From <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1703/170305-working-hours-4.html>

Write five GOOD questions about working hours in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student A: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

d) _____

e) _____

f) _____

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WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student B: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

d) _____

e) _____

f) _____

