

The third age

1 Talk about the statistics with your partner. Is there anything you find surprising?

GETTING OLDER IN NUMBERS

- Today nearly one in ten people worldwide is over 60 years old.
- By 2050 one in five people in the world will be over 60.
- There will be more people over 60 than children aged 0–14 by 2050.



2a Read the texts about the elderly around the world. How do people in Papua New Guinea, Japan and the UK treat their older people?

With living standards getting better, people are living longer and soon there will be more old people on the planet than ever before. So how do societies across the world treat their elderly? Tell us your experiences!

ROWENG, (13) PAPUA NEW GUINEA Posted 21st October 19:10 ◀ Reply ♥ Like

My grandfather is the oldest and most important person in our village. He doesn't know anything about the modern world – he can't use a computer or drive a car, and I know he can hardly read and write – but he's very wise and intelligent. He lives in our family home and my mum takes care of him, which is the tradition here. In my society, we treat our elderly with a lot of respect because they have the knowledge and experience of so many years of living. We call them *lapun*, which means 'old man' in a highly regarded way. Generally, we consider people over the age of 50 to be senior citizens in Papua New Guinea, and the younger people really look up to the older ones. In our village, when people have a problem they come to my grandfather for advice.

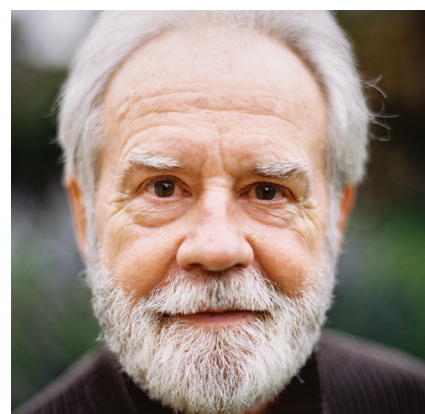


YUKI, (12) JAPAN Posted 21st October 19:21 ◀ Reply ♥ Like

Three quarters of elderly people live with their families in Japan. My grandmother Sayuri lives with us. In my country, we see the older generation as a link to the past. They've lived through many experiences and we youngsters can learn from them. When we address senior citizens, we use *san* at the end of their name as a sign of deep respect. To show our esteem for our older population, we also have a special celebration called Respect for the Aged Day. Birthdays are important occasions in Japan too, and a person's 60th birthday is very special. We have a big party called *kanreki* because we believe it's the time when the third age begins.

PENNY, (14) UK Posted 21st October 20:03 ◀ Reply ♥ Like

Generally, I think people in the UK respect older people. But life is very busy here and perhaps we don't always have a lot of time for the elderly. There are about 11 million people over the age of 65 in this country and an average of 3.5 million older people live alone. It isn't really the tradition for our grandparents to live with us when they grow old, and my grandfather lives in a residential home. It's quite common here for the elderly to move to a place which can help them when they start finding it difficult to cope on their own. We visit my grandfather often, and he's enjoying his twilight years reading, playing cards with his friends and doing some gardening. But I also think that in the UK a lot of older people feel they no longer have a role to play in society.



2b Read the texts again and decide if the sentences are True (T) or False (F).

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1 People in Papua New Guinea don't think a lot of their older generation. | T/F |
| 2 The elderly in Papua New Guinea know a lot about life. | T/F |
| 3 Roweng's grandfather helps people with difficulties. | T/F |
| 4 65% of the older population of Japan live with their families. | T/F |
| 5 Sayuri-san is a polite way for Yuki to address her grandmother. | T/F |
| 6 Kanreki is the Japanese word for Respect for the Aged Day. | T/F |
| 7 More than half of senior citizens in the UK live alone. | T/F |
| 8 Penny thinks the older generation in the UK sometimes feel unimportant. | T/F |

2c Read the statements. Which of the young people might say these things? Write Roweng, Yuki or Penny. Sometimes there may be more than one answer.

- 1 The elderly are really important to the people of my country.
.....
- 2 Senior citizens aren't very well-respected.
.....
- 3 My grandfather knows a lot about our history.
.....
- 4 We have special days to celebrate our older generation.
.....
- 5 Lots of older people don't live with their families.
.....
- 6 Our grandparents are our connection to life before we were born.
.....

Speaking

3a Work with a partner and answer the questions about the elderly.

- 1 Who is the oldest person you know? How do you know them?
- 2 How are old people treated in your country?
- 3 Do you think old people should live with their families?

PROJECT

3b DEBATE Read the questions and prepare for a classroom debate.

- 1 Work with a partner. Look at the statement on the debate card. Do you agree or disagree?
- 2 Look at the points for and against the statement and add two more of your own with your partner in each column.

“ It is the responsibility of the family to care for old people. They should live at home with their family. ”

FOR

- We have a duty to care for our family.
- The elderly provide valuable knowledge and wisdom.
-
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-

AGAINST

- People have busy lives and jobs, and don't have time to take care of older family members.
- Old people may prefer their freedom.
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3c Have a debate. Use your preparation from 3b to help you.

- 1 Work with another pair. Decide which pair will argue for and which against the debate card statement.
- 2 Have your debate. When you have argued your points, swap roles and debate again.