Japan chooses 'disaster' to describe 2018

28th December, 2018

The year 2018 is coming to an end. For some people it was a great year, and for other people it wasn't so great. In Japan, an organization conducted a survey to ask people for the word they thought best described 2018. The winner of this survey was the word "disaster". The *kanji* (Chinese character) that Japanese people chose means "disaster or misfortune". The organization said people chose the *kanji* for disaster because of the many natural disasters to hit Japan in 2018. Japan was hit by deadly typhoons, earthquakes, heavy rains that caused widespread destruction, and a killer heatwave. Hundreds of people lost their lives in these disasters and many roads and homes were destroyed.

The organization is called the Japan *Kanji* Aptitude Testing Foundation. It has conducted a "word of the year" survey annually since 1995. This year, it received suggestions from 193,214 people. The second most popular *kanji* was the character for "peace". Last year, "north" was the winner. This was because of increasing tensions over North Korea's nuclear tests. The rest of the world was also hit by devastating natural disasters, including wildfires, hurricanes and tsunami. Wars also raged across the world, especially in Syria and Yemen. There was also a lot of suffering because of immigration - people trying to move to other countries to find a new life. People hope the next *kanji* will be "happiness".

Sources: *japantoday.com / japantimes.co.jp / dailymaul.co.uk*

Writing

The world 2018 was a disaster. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

year / 2018 / great / organization / winner / disaster / natural disasters / typhoons / / survey / annually / suggestion / peace / nuclear test / hurricane / tsunami / happiness

True / False

a) The article said 2018 was a bad year for everyone. T / F

b) An organization asked people what was the best kanji to describe 2018. T / F

c) The character people chose means "disaster and misfortune". T / F

d) The article says there was a killer heatwave in Japan in 2018. T / F

e) The organization is a kanji altitude testing group. T / F

f) The organization has been asking for the kanji of the year since 1995. T / F

g) The winning kanji for 2017 was "south". T / F

h) People hope the winning kanji next year will be "money". T / F

Synonym Match

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

1.	**end**	a.	stress
2.	**conducted**	b.	extensive
3.	**survey**	c.	wish
4.	**widespread**	d.	carried out
5.	**destroyed**	e.	got
6.	**annually**	f.	questionnaire
7.	**received**	g.	hurting
8.	**tensions**	h.	finish
9.	**suffering**	i.	every year
10.	**hope**	j.	demolished

Discussion – Student A

a) What do you think about what you read?

b) What were the biggest world events of 2018?

c) Where are the biggest tensions in the world?

d) What would you like to happen next year?

e) Will there be fewer wars next year?

f) How has your English improved this year?

g) What do you think 2019 will be like?

h) What questions would you like to ask the people who made the survey?

Phrase Match

1. The year 2018 is coming
2. the word they thought best
3. Chinese
4. Japan was hit
5. Hundreds of people lost their
6. annually
7. received suggestions from
8. increasing tensions over North Korea's
9. Wars also raged
10. a lot of suffering because

a. character
b. across the world
c. lives in these disasters
d. 193,214 people
e. nuclear tests
f. by deadly typhoons
g. of immigration
h. to an end
i. since 1995
j. described 2018

Discussion – Student B

a) How was 2018 for you?
b) What was the best thing about 2018?
c) What was the worst thing about 2018?
d) What changed in your life in 2018?
e) What word would you choose to describe 2018?
f) Have there been any disasters to hit your country?
g) How prepared are you if a disaster hit?
h) What would you do if there was a natural disaster?

Spelling

1. neucodctd a survey
2. Chinese ertrhacac
3. disaster or mrtniofseu
4. Japan was hit by deadly nopsothy
5. a killer eveatahw
6. roads and homes were deeydsort
7. lnuaanly since 1995
8. it received etsgongsuis
9. because of increasing sennotsi
10. wildfires, scarnheriu and tsunami
11. yspclieale in Syria
12. a lot of nsefugrif

Role Play

Role A –English Level
You think English level is the most important thing to change for 2019. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these things to change (and why): hairstyle, friends or hobbies.

Role B –Hairstyle
You think hairstyle is the most important thing to change for 2019. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these things to change (and why): English level, friends or hobbies.

Role C – Friends
You think friends are the most important thing to change for 2019. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these things to change (and why): hairstyle, English level or hobbies.

Role D – Hobbies
You think hobbies the most important thing to change for 2019. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these things to change (and why): hairstyle, friends or English level.

Speaking – 2019

Rank these with your partner. Put the things you most want to change in 2019 at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- your weight
- your friends
- your health
- your hobbies
- your English level
- your hairstyle
- money
- your job

Answers – Synonym Match

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

Answers – True False

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

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.