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**Actuele lesbrief Engels – Reiwa**

**Voor de docent**

In Japan is de naam van de nieuwe keizerlijke periode bekendgemaakt: Reiwa (uitgesproken als: Re-i-wa). Het nieuwe tijdperk gaat in op 30 april als de huidige keizer Akihito aftreedt. Zijn zoon Naruhito neemt dan het stokje over.

**ERK-niveau**

Lezen A2 - *Lezen om informatie op te doen – Kan de hoofdlijn begrijpen van eenvoudige teksten in een tijdschrift, krant of op een website. (LEA2-3b)*

Leesstrategieën - *Kan zijn of haar begrip van de algemene betekenis van korte teksten over alledaagse onderwerpen van concrete aard gebruiken om de vermoedelijke betekenis van onbekende woorden af te leiden uit de context.*

*Kan gebruikmaken van tweetalige (online) woordenboeken om woordbegrip te controleren, indien toegestaan.*

**Intro**

A big change lies ahead for Japan. Soon, the old emperor will step down and his son will take over his tasks.

Assignment 1

For this assignment you may use a dictionary or English-language Internet sources to help you.

a An emperor (*keizer*) is a kind of leader. List other words for leaders. For each word, name an example of a country or organization that has this kind of leader.

b Japan is a country in Asia. Asia is a continent. Write down the names of all continents of earth.

**Reiwa**

On 1 May, Japan’s Emperor Akihito, will step down. His era – his time as emperor – will end, and the era of the next emperor, his son, Crown Prince Naruhito, will begin.

In Japan, every emperor’s era has its own name. This name appears in places such as coins, official paperwork and newspapers. On 1 April, Japan announced the name of the new era: Reiwa. This news has created much excitement in Japan. People have been waiting eagerly to find out the name of the new era.

Emperor Akihito is now 85. In 2016 he said that he would want to step down as emperor if he was not up to the job. It was an unusual decision. It is the first time in over 200 years that a Japanese emperor will step down. The era of Emperor Akihito is called Heisei, which means “achieving peace”.

The Japanese emperor doesn’t have much power, but his position is important for the Japanese people. Naruhito will be the 126th emperor of Japan. The country has been naming eras for more than 1,300 years.

Japan uses two calendars. For most computer work and for its international connections, it uses the calendar used by most of the rest of the world. But Japan also has its own special calendar. This calendar dates back many hundreds of years. It is based on the Japanese eras. The Japanese date, including the era, is used in official government work and on official business papers.

The naming of the era was kept top secret. A small group of people chose the name from about six different final choices. Since the end of World War II, the names of eras are chosen by the government. Even the new emperor had no idea what the new era would be called.

The Japanese and Chinese share a system of writing. For the last 1,300 years, the names of eras have been chosen from famous old Chinese stories. This time the name was chosen from ancient Japanese poetry for the first time ever. Many people believe that the fact that the new name has no Chinese connection at all is meant to send a message about Japanese independence.

The name of an era is important. It is supposed to set the tone for the era. The era’s name must be new, and it must be easy to read and write, though it can’t be common. Reiwa has several meanings, including “order and peace” and “joyful harmony”.

The news of the new name was a big deal in Japan. It put many kinds of businesses to work. These businesses have just one month to make changes to everything before the new era begins on 1 May. These businesses include government printing houses, websites, companies that make calendars, and many others.

The name change is even affecting some big decisions people are making, like getting married. Some people want to get married quickly, so their marriage license will have the Heisei date on it. Others are waiting on purpose to get the Reiwa date on their paperwork.

Based on: theguardian.com, bbc.com

Assignment 2

Read the text. Connect the words and expressions that have the same meaning in the text.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. era | 1. a feeling of enthusiasm and interest |
| 1. to step down | 1. a period of time that is associated with a particular person, quality, event, etc. |
| 1. excitement | 1. in a very excited and interested way |
| 1. eagerly | 1. of a very long time ago, very old |
| 1. to achieve | 1. poems (pieces of writing in special language and with lines that may rhyme) in general |
| 1. to name | 1. something that is very important |
| 1. ancient | 1. to become the legal husband or wife of someone |
| 1. poetry | 1. to believe |
| 1. to suppose | 1. to give something or someone a name |
| 1. a big deal | 1. to give up your job or position |
| 1. to get married | 1. to reach an aim or finishing something |

Assignment 3

a What happens first? What happens next? Put the five events in the correct order.

- Akihito’s son Naruhito becomes the new emperor.

- Emperor Akihito announces that he will step down.

- Emperor Akihito steps down.

- Japan announces the name of the new era.

- People are waiting to find out the name of the new era.

b Choose the statements that are true.

1 One of the meanings of Reiwa is “achieving peace”.

2 One of the meanings of Reiwa is “order and peace”.

3 People in Japan were very excited to learn the name of the new era.

4 The new era name comes from a famous old Chinese story.

5 The new era name was chosen by the government.

6 The new era name was taken from a collection of Japanese poetry.

c What is one reason why the news of the new name is a big deal in Japan?

1 Chinese people living in Japan are loudly protesting against the new name.

2 It is the first time in 1,300 years that Japan has chosen a new era name.

3 Some people hate the new name and have started a petition to keep the old name.

4 The name has to be changed in time on all sorts of official paperwork and more.