**Warm-up (**choose 3 questions to discuss**)**

1. What is a natural disaster? What are some kinds of natural disasters?
2. What are some examples of non-natural disasters?
3. Have there been any disasters in your area? What do you know of the Chernobyl incident?
4. Do you worry about the safety of the food you eat? What won’t you buy?

**Japanese PM: Situation Improving Despite Rating Increase (**April 13th, 2011)

The Japanese government has **designated** the nuclear accident at level seven – the highest rating on the nuclear incident scale. The nuclear crisis in Japan is now at the same level as the 1986 disaster at Chernobyl.

Despite this announcement, Japanese prime minister Naoto Kan said the situation is **stabilizing**. Workers at the Fukushima-Daiichi say that powerful **aftershocks** are **hampering** efforts to repair the systems. On a positive note, operators have reported no signs of damage from the most recent quakes.

China has voiced concern over Japan’s recent decision to dump nuclear wastewater from their plant into the Pacific Ocean. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao demanded the Japanese government *take into consideration* the **impact** the radioactive water might have on the ocean environment.

Japanese officials have **stressed** the radiation levels in Japan are only one-tenth of those of Chernobyl. Furthermore, unlike the Chernobyl disaster that killed roughly two dozen people within days and thousands more over **ensuing** years, Japanese officials believe there is no direct health **hazard** in Japan. Prime Minister Kan has assured his public that the situation is improving “one step at a time”. He **urged** citizens to support the areas affected by the disaster by purchasing their products instead of **refraining** from buying them. Kan also stated that the crisis is an opportunity for the Japanese to use their **determination** to rebuild the country in a new and improved way, much like how the nation was rebuilt after World War II. [Words: 241]

[Original: http://www.voanews.com/english/news/asia/east-pacific/Japanese-PM-Says-Nuclear-Plant-Stabilizing-Despite-Higher-Crisis-Rating-119680334.html]

**Comprehension Questions**

1. **True or False**: recent aftershocks have further damaged the reactors.
2. According to Japanese officials, how is the situation in Japan different from Chernobyl?
3. What is the Chinese premier concerned about?
4. What has Prime Minister Kan asked people to do for the people affected by the disaster?
5. According to Kan, what opportunity do the Japanese have?

**Match** the words with their meaning as used in the article.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| designate  stabilize (verb)  aftershock  hamper  impact  stress (verb)  ensue (verb)  hazard  urge (verb)  refrain  determination | effect  follow  strongly encourage  danger  will power, spirit  emphasize, underline  classify, label  hold back, stop  small earthquake following a bigger one  hinder, delay  become stable |

**Master the language:**

1) Connect the below ideas to make a sentence.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| determination improve | e.g. Because of his determination to improve, Peter’s grades are now the best in the class. |
| volcano stabilize |  |
| aftershock panic |  |
| hamper progress |  |
| future impact |  |
| stress importance of (something) |  |
| ensue argument |  |
| hazard pollution |  |
| urge calm down |  |

2) Idiom focus: *take into consideration*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Meaning:** | to think about and include a particular thing or fact when you are forming an opinion or making a decision |
| **Example:** | The candidates’ experience was *taken into consideration* before the final decision was made. |

**Read** and **complete** the below sentences where necessary.

You need to take the weather into consideration before you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

When choosing a wife or husband, you should take his or her\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ into consideration.

**Discussion Questions**

1. What do you think about how Japan is handling the crisis?
2. What is your opinion of nuclear energy? What type of energy do you support?
3. What effects could the problems in Japan have on you, if any?
4. If you were Japanese, would you buy food grown in areas near reactors?
5. Where do you draw the line between worrying about safety and living your life?
6. Could you live in an area that could have a natural disaster at any moment?
7. Would you consider donating money to help the Japanese?
8. If you had to rebuild your country, what would you change?

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