

THE GUARDIAN

Parental leave, subsidised childcare, and financial incentives fail to curb falling birthrates in wealthy nations unable to sustain themselves without migration. Building families is rendered difficult by economic insecurity and emotional instability. The world, however, is not running out of people. The UN expects today's 8.2 billion people to become 10.3 billion by the mid-2080s. What is emerging is a demographic divide between ageing, shrinking rich societies and population growth in poorer ones.

CBS NEWS TECH WATCH:
Anthropic researcher raises
alarm after quitting job: AI
"could kill us all".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nNtAKglFxbk>



NEWS IN BRIEF 1

September 1st – 11th 2026

pa'rental leave : le congé parental

'subsidised /'sʌbsɪdaɪzd/ **'childcare**: places en crèches subventionnées

in'centive : prime / incitation

to curb [ɜ:] : réduire, limiter, ralentir

'falling 'birthrates : la baisse de la natalité / des taux de natalité

su'stain oneself : se maintenir, se renouveler, survivre

eco'nomie /i:kə'nɒmɪk/: économique, à ne pas confondre avec economical (= inexpensive, cheap)

to run (ran, run) **out of** : manquer de, être à court de, venir à manquer de

8.2 'billion : 8.2 milliards. ▲ *jamais de -s final à 'hundred, 'thousand, 'million, 'billion s'ils sont précédés d'un chiffre*

to age /eɪdʒ/ : vieillir

to shrink (shrank, shrunk) : rétrécir, se réduire

'ageing, 'shrinking, rich so'cieties : les sociétés aisées, vieillissantes et en recul / déclin démographique

popu'lation growth: la croissance démographique

0:08 **to quit** /kwɪt/ (**quit, quit**) over concerns that... démissionner à cause d'inquiétudes

0:09 : **AI is on track to 'spiral** [aɪ] **out of human control** : l'IA est en passe d'échapper au contrôle humain

An'thropic /ən'θrɒpɪk/ **researcher** /rɪsɜ:tʃə/ : chercheur chez Anthropic

0:42 **to gamble with lives**: jouer avec la vie de...

0:49 **'former employ'ee** /ɪmˈplɔɪi:/ **'Jacob 'Coxon** /'kɒksən/: l'ex-employé Jacob Coxon

0:50 **'Neither 'company is 'acting re'sponsibly**: aucune des deux compagnies n'agit de façon responsable.

0:53 **to be 'racing straight to 'self-im'proving ,superin'telligence**: se livrer à une course / foncer droit vers une superintelligence capable de s'auto-améliorer

1 :02 **to 'earnestly** /'ɜ:nəstli/ **be'lieve**: croire sérieusement

1 :04 **by the end of the 'decade**: d'ici la fin de la décennie

1:11 **do pre-'training re'search**: mener des recherches préliminaires aux essais

1 :26 **to go rogue**: se dévoyer, s'affranchir de tout contrôle, devenir incontrôlable

1 :30 **to hack into ... wi'thout authori'sation**: pirater sans y être autorisé...

1 :36 Ø **CEO** (Chief Executive Officer) **Sam 'Altman** /'ɔ:ltmən/: le PDG (d'OpenAI) Sam Altman ▲ *Pas d'article devant les noms précédés de leur titre*

1:37 **to pace the rate of**: ralentir le rythme du...

1:42 **to 'harden a'round some of these new capa'bility 'levels**: s'endurcir / se protéger contre quelques un de ces nouveaux niveaux de capacités

1:48 **'CEO of An'thropic 'Dario 'Amodei** /'æmədeɪ/

1:55 **the e'xtent to which AI- can make indi'vidualized propa'ganda**: l'étendue de la capacité de l'IA à générer de la propagande personnalisée

2:03 **break 'into 'any 'system** : s'introduire frauduleusement dans n'importe quel...

2 :05 **to sur'veil** /sə'veɪl/ or /sɜ:'veɪl/ surveiller, garder sous surveillance

Plunging test scores are a slow-moving catastrophe *The Economist*. Sep 10th 2026

Schools in RICH countries are failing. The latest scores on PISA tests of reading, maths and science, released on September 8th, are the worst since the tests, administered by the OECD, began in 2000. Educators can no longer blame it all on covid-19 lockdowns. In 35 rich countries, a typical 15-year-old now reads no better than a 14-year-old did a decade ago. A slow-motion disaster is under way.

Test scores are not the full measure of a child. But they are a good predictor of desirable outcomes and a bulwark against many of the worst ones. Kids who do well on tests tend to earn more, live longer and healthier lives, and commit fewer crimes. By one estimate, pushing up PISA scores by a mere quarter of a standard deviation might increase annual growth in rich countries by half a percentage point.

AI will not make it pointless to train human brains, any more than the invention of cars eliminated the need for physical exercise. On the contrary, adapting to a world of rapid, AI-driven change will require more mental agility, not less. And precisely because AI will increase the temptation for people to outsource difficult cognitive tasks, schools have an extra duty to help pupils exercise their brains and acquire the hard habits of thinking. Failure to furnish them with well-developed building blocks like literacy and numeracy is inexcusable.

PISA scores began drifting downwards around 2012. The evidence is growing that tablets, mobile phones and other such screens are distracting youngsters from their studies and diverting them from hobbies, like reading books, that instil the ability to focus. So limits on screens seem prudent. Used carefully, technology can benefit classrooms. More usually, snazzy new tools and devices just get in the way.

An even bigger problem, though, is muddle-headed thinking among educators. Some have fallen for the leftist canard that tests are harmful and grades are racist. Some have allowed reasonable worries about children's mental health to warp into an excuse for low expectations. Many teachers who relaxed their grading standards have failed to tighten up again.

Rigour warning. What to do? There is little evidence that shovelling more cash into schools will make much difference: Japan spends 30% less per pupil than America and gets much better results. But research needs a big boost. Education departments in universities contain some of the weakest and most radical staff, often keener on abstract ideas of social justice than evidence about which techniques work best.

Places that have avoided declines deserve more attention. Britain is one. In 2009 its pupils scraped into the world's top 30 in maths and reading. Now they sit in the top ten. Some of this stems from a return in England, under a previous Conservative government, to old-fashioned things such as rigorous exams, tough inspections and fact-filled curriculums.

Falling scores will not be fixed in a jiffy. Governments that make schools better will seldom see benefits they can boast about before the next election. But they should care anyway. Today's leaders seem to have cooled on schools, except as culture-war battlegrounds. That lack of serious attention invites calamity. As machines grow brighter, don't let teenagers grow any dimmer.

'PISA /'pi:zə/ (Programme for International Student Assessment) **tests:** worldwide **OECD** (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) study repeated every 3 years to measure the scholastic performances of 15-year-old school pupils in mathematics, science, and reading, so as to provide comparable data to enable countries to improve their education policies.

a 'bulwark /'bʊlwək/ or /'bʊlwɜ:k/ **against:** rempart contre **to 'outsource** /'aʊtsɔ:s/: sous-traiter
'snazzy /'snæzi/: cool, branché **to get in the way:** s'avérer un obstacle, nuire

'muddle /'mʌdəl/- **'headed 'thinking:** raisonnement incohérent, confus

a 'canard /'kænɑ:d/ or /kə'nɑ:d/: (informel) un bobard, un mensonge

to warp [ɔ:] **into:** se transformer en / être perverti en

'little 'evidence (Unc.): peu de preuves. ▲ Ø *'evidence est invariable et a un sens pluriel.*

Dénombrable particulier : a piece of evidence

to stem from: provenir / découler de

a cu'riculum /kə'ɹɪkjələm/: programme scolaire (pluriel : cu'rriculums ou cu'rricula)

fixed in a 'jiffy: corrigés en un clin d'œil / en deux temps trois mouvements **'seldom** = rarely--