A Country’s Shape Is More than Its Borders: Population Pyramids

Students learn to read and interpret population pyramids.

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Grade Level: 6-8 and High School
Duration: 1-2 class periods

National Geography Standards
ELEMENT ONE: THE WORLD IN SPATIAL TERMS
1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.

ELMENT SIX: THE USES OF GEOGRAPHY
17. How to apply geography to interpret the past.

18. How to apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future.

Arizona Geography Standards
Grade 6
Strand 4 Geography
Concept 4 Human Systems
PO 1 Interpret the demographic structure of places and regions using a population pyramid

Concept 6 Geographic Applications
PO 2 Use geographic knowledge and skills (e.g., recognizing patterns, mapping, graphing) when discussing current events

Grade 7
Strand 4 Geography
Concept 4 Human Systems
PO 5 Analyze the effects of settlement on places (e.g., quality of life, transportation, population density)

Grade 7 and 8
Strand 4 Geography
Concept 6 Geographic Applications
PO 3 Use geographic knowledge and skills (e.g., recognizing patterns, mapping, graphing) when discussing current events

Grade High School
Concept 1: The World in Spatial Terms
PO 1. Construct maps using appropriate elements

Other Arizona Standards
ELA Common Core Standards
Reading Standards for 6-8 for Literacy in History/Social Studies
Key Ideas and Details
6-8.RH.2 Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; provide an accurate summary of the text distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
6-8.RH.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Reading Standards for 9-10 for Literacy in History/Social Studies
Key Ideas and Details
9-10.RH.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
9-10.RH.7 Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.

Writing Standards for 6-8 for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects
Text Types and Purposes
6-8.WHST.1 Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.
a. Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.
Overview

Demographics is the study of population characteristics. Population pyramids examine the age and gender characteristics of a country’s population. Understanding how to read and interpret a population pyramid will give students the opportunity to examine a country’s past, present, and implications for the future through its population.

Purpose

In this lesson, students will learn how to read and interpret population pyramids and then write a paragraph explaining the implications.

Materials

- Copies of A Country’s Shape is More Than Its Borders reading
A Country's Shape is More than Its Borders: Population Pyramids

- Practice Sheet for A Country’s Shape is More Than Its Borders reading
- Copies of the Population Pyramid Assessment (multiple choice quiz) for Countries of the World and/or States in the U.S.
- Population Pyramid Assessment Key for multiple choice quiz for Countries of the World and/or States in the U.S.
- Writing Prompt for Paragraph for Countries of the World and/or States in the U.S.
- Population Pyramids for Countries and States

Objectives

The student will be able to:
- read population pyramids.
- analyze and interpret population pyramids, including writing a paragraph using this information.

Procedures

1. As a class, read and discuss the A Country’s Shape is More Than Its Borders reading
2. As a class, fill out the Practice Sheet of A Country's Shape is More Than Its Borders reading
3. Have students work individually to complete the Population Pyramid Assessment for either countries of the world or states in the United States which includes a multiple choice quiz and a prompt for writing a paragraph.

Assessment

See Population Pyramid Assessment. This is a multiple-choice test that can be graded with the key. Eight out of ten will be considered mastery of the geography content. The paragraph can be scored using the scoring guide provided (16 out of 20 would be mastery) or use the 6 Trait Rubric for Writing for measuring Ideas/Content (4 out of 6 would be mastery).

Extensions

Students can update the population pyramids using the most current data and compare the changes if any.

Students could make population pyramids using the website http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idbpyr.html.

They could also make population pyramids of their school.

Use the US population pyramids for the different states to do an analysis of the demographics of our country.

Sources

National Geographic Society 1998 Geography Awareness Week packet
Geography: Focus on Economics
National Council on Economic Education
http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idbpyr.html