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

Students learn to read and interpret population pyramids.

Author
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Grade Level
6-8
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.
4. The physical and human characteristics of places.

ELEMENT 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 Social Studies Standard
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

Arizona Language Arts Standards
READING STANDARD:
Grade 6, 7 and 8
Strand 1 Reading Process
Concept 6 Comprehension Strategies
PO 7. Use reading strategies (e.g., drawing conclusions, determining cause and effect, making inferences, sequencing) to comprehend text.

Strand 3 Comprehending Informational Text
Concept 1 Expository Text
PO 9. Draw valid conclusions about expository text, supported by text evidence.
PO 10. Make relevant inferences about expository text, supported by text evidence.

Concept 2 Functional Text
PO 3. Interpret details from a variety of functional text (e.g., warranties, product information, technical manuals, instructional manuals, consumer safety publications) for a specific purpose (e.g., to follow directions, to solve problems, to perform procedures, to answer questions

WRITING STANDARD:
Grade 6, 7 and 8
Strand 2 Writing Components
Concept 1 Ideas and Content
PO 3. Develop a sufficient explanation or exploration of the topic.

Strand 3 Writing Applications
Concept 5 Literary Response
PO 1. Write a response to literature that:
   a. presents several clear ideas
   b. supports inferences and conclusions with examples from the text, personal experience, references to other works, or reference to non-print media
   c. relates own ideas to supporting details in a clear and logical manner

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.
A Country's Shape is More than Its Borders: Population Pyramids

Purpose

In this lesson, students will learn how to read and interpret population pyramids as an example of functional print. As a result, they will write a paragraph explaining the implications a population pyramid presents.

Materials

- Copies of A Country’s Shape is More Than Its Borders reading
- 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 which 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

State population pyramids can be found at:

http://www.census.gov/population/www/projections/statepyramid.html

They could also make population pyramids of their school.

Sources

National Geographic Society 1998 Geography Awareness Week packet

Geography: Focus on Economics National Council on Economic Education

http://www.census.gov

http://www.census.gov/dmd/www/teachers.html