

In Focus 2 - Speed Reading Unit 3

Understanding Population Pyramids

Population pyramids are a way to see the number of people in different age groups in a country. They are called pyramids because they often look like a triangle or pyramid shape. However, not all population pyramids are shaped like a pyramid.

Let's talk about the shape of a population pyramid. When a country has many young people, the pyramid is wide at the base. This means there are lots of children and young people. As the age groups get older, there are fewer people. This makes the pyramid narrow at the top where the oldest people are. This kind of pyramid is common in countries where families have many children and people do not live to be very old. In some countries, the pyramid is not wide at the base. This happens when there are fewer children being born and people live longer. The pyramid does not get narrow very fast because there are more older people.

Population pyramids can tell us a lot about a country. They show us if a country might have a problem in the future. For example, if there are too many older people and not enough young people, who will work and take care of the older people? They also tell us about the past. If there was a war or a big sickness in the past, it can make a gap in the pyramid. This is because many people might have died during that time.

Let's think about schools and jobs. If there are many young people, a country needs to have lots of schools. They also need to create jobs for these young people when they grow up and leave school. If there are many older people, the country needs to make sure there are enough hospitals and places for older people to live comfortably.

Sometimes, the shape of the pyramid changes. If more people come to live in the country from other places, it can make the base of the pyramid wider. This is because people who move to a new country are often young. They might also have more children. What if many people leave a country to live in another place? This can make the pyramid narrower. This is because it is often the young people who leave a country to find work or a better life.

Population pyramids can also show us about men and women. Sometimes there are more men than women or more women than men in certain age groups. This can be because of many reasons, like work, health, or how long people live.

In the future, population pyramids might change a lot. As the world changes, the way families look and how long people live will change at the same time. This will change the shape of the pyramids. Understanding population pyramids helps us plan for the future. It shows us what a country needs to do to take care of the people. It is a very powerful tool for making big decisions.

When you have finished, write your time in the box.

Now, go to the next page and answer the questions. **Do NOT look back at the text.**

Now, let's test your understanding of the text with some questions.

1. What shape is a population pyramid when there are many young people?
 - A) Wide at the bottom
 - B) Upside-down triangle
 - C) Wide at the top
 - D) Narrow at the top
2. What might a population pyramid look like in a country with good healthcare and fewer young people?
 - A) A perfect pyramid
 - B) More of a straight shape
 - C) Very narrow at the base
 - D) Upside down
3. An upside-down pyramid shape might indicate what about a country's population?
 - A) A high birth rate
 - B) Many middle-aged people
 - C) Few children and many old people
 - D) A large number of immigrants
4. What can cause a gap in a population pyramid?
 - A) A lot of people moving to the country
 - B) A war or big sickness in the past
 - C) Too many schools
 - D) A stable job market
5. A country with many young people needs to have lots of what?
 - A) Hospitals
 - B) Retirement homes
 - C) Schools
 - D) Jobs for older people
6. What does a wider bottom in a population pyramid indicate if caused by immigration?
 - A) Older people are moving to the country.
 - B) The country is losing its young people.
 - C) There is a good healthcare system.
 - D) More young people are coming into the country.
7. What happens to the population pyramid if many young people leave a country?
 - A) It gets wider at the top.
 - B) It looks the same all over.
 - C) It shrinks in all parts.
 - D) It gets narrow at the base.
8. If the middle of the population pyramid is wide, what does it mean?
 - A) Lots of people were born a while ago.
 - B) There are many old people.
 - C) More babies are being born now.
 - D) Not many old people are left.
9. How might population pyramids change in the future?
 - A) They will become more uniform.
 - B) They will not change.
 - C) They might change a lot due to family structures and life expectancy.
 - D) They will all become upside down.
10. What does a population pyramid help a country plan for?
 - A) Future needs and care of its people
 - B) Only healthcare needs
 - C) Only education needs
 - D) The past events and wars