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Activity

How population pyramids can change over time

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Read the Geographical Skills column in **WIDELAND** Vol. 32, No. 3. This activity sheet will consolidate your understanding of analysing population pyramids and how they can change over time.

Task

Pyramid 1: 1980

Use Figure 1, which shows China's population structure in 1980, to answer the questions below:

- 1 Which age category has the most of China's population?
- 2 Are males or females more likely to have a longer life expectancy?
- 3 Approximately, how many 0–4-year-olds were there in 1980?

Pyramid 2: 2010

- 1 Which age category contains the most of China's population?
- 2 What is the difference in 0–4 years olds between 1980 and 2010?
- 3 Approximately, how many 20–24-year-olds were there in 2010?

Pyramid 3: Predicted, 2050

- 1 Are males or females more likely to have a longer life expectancy?
- 2 What is the difference in 0–4-year-olds between 2010 and 2050?
- 3 Which age category has the most of China's population?

Now use this information to describe how China's population structure is predicted to change between 1980 and 2050.

Teacher notes

This sheet could be given as homework or used as a class activity. It aims to encourage students to practise reading and comparing population structure as it changes over time.

Answers

Pyramid 1: 1980

- 1 10–14 years old
- 2 Males
- 3 Approximately 95 million

Pyramid 2: 2010

- 1 40–44 years old
- 2 2010 = approximately 79 million, so difference is approximately 6 million less 0–4-year-olds in 2010.
- 3 Approximately 125 million people.

Pyramid 3: Predicted, 2050

- 1 Females
- 2 2050 = approximately 30 million, so difference is approximately 95 million less 0–4-year-olds in 2050.
- 3 6–64 years old

Over time the number of 0–4-year-olds in China has significantly decreased from approximately 95 million in 1980 to approximately 30 million predicted in 2050 (65 million less). In 1980 the population pyramid was pyramidal in shape, with most people in China being youthful. However, in 2050 it is predicted to flip, with most people being between 40 and 65. It is also predicted in 2050 that more people will live beyond 90, and females will have a longer life expectancy, compared to males generally living longer in 1980.

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