Your notes

GCSE Geography: revision notes

Population change and migration

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Start here: why populations change

- A country's population changes through **natural increase** (the birth rate minus the death rate) and **net migration** (people arriving minus people leaving). Birth and death rates are given per 1,000 people per year.
- The **fertility rate** is the average number of children a woman has. About 2.1 keeps a population the same size.
- The world's population passed 8 billion in 2022. Growth is fastest in parts of Africa and Asia; some countries, such as Japan, are shrinking.

The demographic transition model

- The **demographic transition model** (DTM) shows how birth and death rates change as a country develops. Stage 1: both high, small population. Stage 2: the death rate falls (better health care, food and clean water), so the population grows fast. Stage 3: the birth rate falls (contraception, women's education, fewer children needed for work). Stage 4: both low, steady population. Stage 5: the birth rate falls below the death rate, so the population shrinks.
- Strengths: it is simple and fits many countries' history. Limitations: it is based on European countries, gives no timescale and ignores migration.

Population structure and policies

- A population pyramid shows the population by age and sex. A wide base means a youthful population; a wide top means an ageing one.
- A youthful population, as in Niger, needs schools, health care and jobs, but gives a large future workforce. An ageing population, as in Japan, needs pensions and care, and has fewer workers paying taxes (a high **dependency ratio**).

- Anti-natalist policies try to lower the birth rate. China's one-child policy (1979 to 2015) cut the birth rate but led to an ageing population and more boys than girls. Pro-natalist policies try to raise it, for example France's family allowances, cheap childcare and tax breaks for larger families.

Migration

- An economic migrant moves to find work or a better income. A **refugee** is forced to flee war, persecution or disaster. An asylum seeker has asked another country for protection and is waiting for a decision.
- **Push factors** drive people away (unemployment, conflict, drought, poor services). Pull factors attract them (jobs, higher wages, safety, family already there, better education and health care).
- Example: after Poland joined the EU in 2004, many Poles moved to the UK, pushed by higher unemployment and pulled by jobs and wages. The UK gained workers who filled gaps in building, farming and care, and paid taxes; Poland received money sent home (remittances) but lost young, skilled workers.
- Countries manage migration with visas, points-based systems, border controls and agreements with other countries.

Key terms

Natural increase	The birth rate minus the death rate.
Net migration	The number of people arriving minus the number leaving.
Fertility rate	The average number of children born to each woman.
Demographic transition model	A model of how birth and death rates change as a country develops.
Dependency ratio	The number of dependants (young and old) compared with people of working age.
Refugee	A person forced to leave their country because of war, persecution or disaster.
Push factor	Something that makes people want to leave a place.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. What is natural increase?
2. What fertility rate keeps a population about the same size?
3. In which stage of the DTM does the population grow fastest, because the death rate falls?
4. What does a wide base on a population pyramid show?
5. Which is a problem of an ageing population?
6. What kind of policy was China's one-child policy?

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7. Which is a pull factor?
8. Who is forced to leave their country because of war or persecution?

Answers

1. The birth rate minus the death rate
2. About 2.1
3. Stage 2
4. A youthful population
5. Fewer workers paying tax to support more pensioners
6. Anti-natalist
7. Higher wages in another country
8. A refugee

What to do next

Practise 10 questions on this topic

Try 3 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

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