

Population Issues

Overview: Students research issues related to population using the Compass to categorize and focus their research questions and build a case study.

Grade: 11, DP Geography

Estimated duration: 80 minutes

Topic: Population Issues

Purpose: Create a case study for use on external assessments

Essential skills: Choosing the right information to report

Background required: None

Resources/ Materials: Online research

Outline:

1. Each student is assigned a country he/she is familiar with.
2. As a class, brainstorm potential issues related to population, categorized using the Compass, e.g.:
 - N** – water, food
 - E** – employment issues, GDP per capita
 - S** – gender ratios, fertility rate, marriage age, diseases due to crowding
 - W** – life expectancy, diseases particular to that area
3. Students individually add their own ideas to the four categories (based on group brainstorming results, teacher may specify the number of additional ideas required per category).
4. Students then apply that template to their assigned country and research to collect the relevant data.
5. Each student prepares a case study describing basic trends with supporting detail.

Teacher perspective:

I use the Compass in two important ways:

- A foundation to help students build up an example.

Students really struggle with what to include in a case study. It has to be detailed enough to be useful but short enough to be remembered. The Compass is very helpful to help scaffold them into applicable case studies: they have to address all four points of the Compass to have a full enough understanding; and they have to be clear enough in their thinking to justify which Compass point is most appropriate for a given issue.

- An analytical tool to break down an existing scenario.

The Compass is equally valuable to help simplify an overly complex situation (like geopolitical conflicts, such as the Spratly Islands).



What the compass does:

- Helps students organize their thinking
- Helps students categorize their thinking
- Requires clarity and focus as students choose which angle of an issue to explore and justify that decision (e.g., student must decide whether to consider marriage age as a societal issue or an economic issue)