Quality of Life

Is Growth Always Good?

Do population characteristics change with quality of life? Is life pleasant in countries where the population is growing rapidly? Is life difficult in countries with a shrinking population? The United Nations is interested in questions such as these. Let's imagine that you have been assigned to a United Nations committee formed to examine whether population characteristics can be related to a country's quality of life.

For the UN study, you will focus on the five highest-ranked and five lowest-ranked countries on the Human Development Index (HDI). Being the professional you are, you will research data and conduct a thorough and complete analysis before you write your report. Your research will provide the statistical and factual data that will form the basis of your report.

Part 1: Researching the HDI (Think PQLI!)

Review the Human Development Index, 2005 map on page 139 in your Atlas.

1. List below the five highest- and lowest-ranked countries and their locations in the world.

Five Highest-Ranked Countries	Their Locations	Five Lowest-Ranked Countries	Their Locations

2. What three criteria are used to evaluate a country's HDI? On a separate sheet, explain each one, using the following Internet site for your research: <www.undp.org/en/statistics/faq/question,63,en.html>.

Part 2: Investigating Quality of Life

Now gather information from your Atlas about the human development in the countries in Question 1. Complete the table below to compare the following population and quality-of-life statistics for the 10 countries involved in the research. Put the countries in the far left column, from highest HDI to lowest. In the same column, write the country's HDI score. All information can be found in your Atlas.

Country/ HDI Score	Population Change, 1997–2007 (%)	Infant Mortality per 1000 Live Births, 2007	Life Expectancy at Birth, 2007	Health Care (doctors per 100 000 people)	Food Consumption (number of daily calories)	Higher Education (students per 100 000 people), 2005

Part 3: Graphing Birth and Death Rates

Birth and death rates together give a clear indication of whether a population is growing or shrinking (discounting the effect of immigration)—an important population characteristic. On a separate piece of paper, create a double line graph reflecting the birth and death rates of the 10 countries from Part 2 for 2007. You can find these rates in the World Datasets in your Atlas.

- The vertical axis will show the change in birth or death rate. It should be 25 cm in height, and each centimetre can reflect an increase of 2 per 1000 for the birth and death rates.

- The horizontal axis will represent the 10 countries involved in the research. It should be 20 cm in length, and be divided into 2-cm intervals. List the countries from left to right from highest- to lowest-ranked countries.

- Plot the data for each country with small dots. Connect the birth rates with a continuous blue line, and the death rates with a continuous red line.

- Shade in green those areas in which the birth rate is greater than the death rate. Shade in yellow those areas in which the death rate is greater.

- Include a legend explaining your graph.

Part 4: Analyzing Your Data

To aid in analyzing your statistics, answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

3. Is the Human Development Index a useful tool for examining human development? Why or why not? (You may wish to refer to your answer to Question 2 in Part 1.)

4. What trends can you identify between the various indicators in the chart and the two groupings of countries?

5. What trends can you identify between the birth and death rates of the two groupings? Describe the natural growth rate for each of the groupings.

6. Are there any gaps in your data? Identify these. What might cause these gaps? How might gaps like this affect the results of a study?

7. Do population growth trends affect quality of life, or does quality of life affect population growth trends? Explain your opinion.