GRACE Social Studies Lesson 4: Age Pyramids across the US

Driving Question
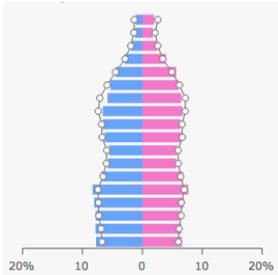What can an age pyramid tell you about people in a community, their lifestyle, and their priorities?

Map Link
http://bit.ly/1yAg5ux
http://la.arcgis.com/insights/#
(Login with username: "graceuser1" and password: "gracepassword1")

Age Pyramids

An age pyramid is a color-coded graph, which shows how a particular population is distributed within various age groups. The oldest ages are at the top of the graph and the youngest ages are at the bottom. Blue represents the population of men and pink the population of women. Look at the example age pyramid at right. In this particular case, the pyramid indicates a relatively small percentage of the population in the oldest age group (85 years old and beyond), there is a large group of individuals in their middles ages (from around 40 to 60) and a relatively even distribution of still younger people.

Learning Assessment Activity
On a piece of scratch paper, make a rough sketch of what you think an age pyramid would look like for the following places. Compare your results with your classmates.

- a university campus
- a retirement community
- a suburban neighborhood with many young families

The ESRI Insights Map
The map link above provides access to the ESRI Insights Map. This map provides a wealth of demographics information that could be explored in great detail, but for the purpose of this lesson, we will focus on the fact that this map provides age pyramids for any location in the entire United States. Use the search toolbar to look up the following locations. For each location, tap the map to bring up an age pyramid.

- "The Villages, Florida"
- "The University of Michigan"
- "Smith College"
- "Hamtramck, Michigan"

Using the age pyramids, compose a concise description of the people who live near these locations. What does the age pyramid suggest to you about their community, their priorities, and their lifestyle?

Age Pyramids Around the World

Age pyramids can tell us a great deal about whole nations and how they change over time. Within an age pyramid we can see evidence of wars, wealth/poverty, and shifting cultural priorities. The website http://populationpyramid.net is a rich resource of age pyramids throughout history and from around the world. Examine the age pyramids below first as individuals and then discuss as a class to see if you can determine what the age pyramids are telling you about the past, present, and future of each nation.

- United States (http://populationpyramid.net/united-states-of-america/2015/)
- Chad (Africa) (http://populationpyramid.net/chad/2015/)
- Russia (http://populationpyramid.net/russian-federation/2015/)
- Kuwait (http://populationpyramid.net/kuwait/2015/)
  (if time permits, ask students to quickly sketch the predicted outline of the pyramid before viewing)

Learning Assessment Activity , Part 2

Create a population pyramid illustrating what you would consider to be the ideal population distribution.
 Include a 3 – 5 sentence caption that explains the rationale behind your design.