A Tale of Two Countries: China and U.S. Demographics
Lesson Guide

This is a video by the 1990 Institute in the China in Perspective series that juxtaposes US data with China data. There is another video *If China were a Country with 100 People* in the China in Perspective series that complements well with this video. This video puts the two biggest economies in the world in comparison to each other, both in terms of overall population as well in landmass and other important and interesting facts. It intends to highlight the challenges and "disadvantages" of having a country with the same land mass but with 4.4x the population. What are the impacts of feeding and sustaining such a large population, especially when there are so many retiring people in relation to the working population. Why should you care: It puts things in perspective between a wealthy country like the US and a developing country like China and to show what happens in their respective country can impact each other and the world.

Vocab List

Compulsory Education - Compulsory Education refers to the most crucial period of formal education required by law of all children between certain ages in a given country. The period of compulsory attendance is usually determined by the government as the students' age for beginning and ending obligatory formal education. Generally when the government required a certain level of education, there is little to no cost to its citizens

Labor Force - labor force is the sum of employed and unemployed persons.

Income - People sometimes think of their before-tax salary as their income, even though it's rarely the same as what they actually receive into their hands each month. So, instead, it's useful to think in terms of **disposable income** (or income after taxes and transfers), which gives a much clearer sense of how much money people actually have available to them to spend on rent, food, clothes and so on.

Per Capita Income - it is the measurement of the amount of money earned per person in a nation or geographic region. Per capita income can be used to determine the average per person income for an area and to evaluate the standard of living and quality of life. It is also used by Global entities like the United Nations, World Bank to determine the wealth of a nation.

Land Mass - lands surrounded by an ocean or sea. Generally it refers to political boundary of a country

STEM - is a curriculum based on the idea of educating students in four specific disciplines — science, technology, engineering and mathematics — in an interdisciplinary and applied approach.

Suggested Discussions

- Why is it important to discuss demographics and population of a country? How does it impact social and infrastructural policies?
- When China has over 4x the population than the US but most of the population is densely populated in the coastal regions what does that mean? Are there more jobs along the coastal cities that attract more people to live there?
- What information from the video can you cite to support the statement that China is not a wealthy country?
- Compare the personal spending of China and the US, what does it tell you about the population? Why does China place a higher priority on food, housing and beauty vs US which emphasize on well being, housing and fun?
- The video tells you that many Chinese people own a smartphone and that they conduct more ecommerce than Americans. In today's digitally connected society, information and news can easily be obtained if you have a smartphone. Help students think through why is that important?
- The US has also 2x the farm land than China, but she has only about 25% of the population, what does that mean?
- When there are 8X more Stem graduates and 4x as many engineers in China than in the US. What has the US been doing to encourage "skilled laborers" and students in these areas to come to the US to foster further innovations in our technology industry?

Suggested Activities

- Find out if China consumes the same amount of water and electricity as China, what impact would that have on the world?
- How does comparisons of data on an aggregate country basis mean compared to data on a per capita?
- Potential social implications of China's 1.4 billion people?
- Make a list of different country's compulsory education requirements and see what the countries with higher compulsory education requirements have in common.