

Historical Demography: Verified Events and Facts

Demography · Answer Key · 14 Questions

1. The 'Great Dying' of the Americas, initiated by European contact in the late 15th century, is estimated to have reduced indigenous populations by what approximate percentage due to introduced diseases?

- A) 10-20%
- B) 30-50%
- C) 70-90%**
- D) 90-95%

2. Which of the following historical periods is most strongly associated with the initial phase of the Demographic Transition in Western Europe, characterized by declining death rates and rising birth rates?

- A) The Medieval Period (c. 500-1500)
- B) The Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution (c. 1750-1850)**
- C) The Renaissance (c. 1300-1600)
- D) The Post-World War II Baby Boom (c. 1946-1964)

3. The Irish Potato Famine (1845-1849) resulted in a significant demographic shift. What was the primary demographic consequence for Ireland?

- A) A sustained period of rapid population growth.
- B) A dramatic decline in population due to death and emigration.**
- C) A significant increase in birth rates to compensate for losses.
- D) A net migration gain from other European countries.

4. The Black Death (mid-14th century) is a pivotal event in European demographic history. What was its estimated impact on Europe's population?

- A) A slight decrease of around 5-10%.
- B) A moderate decrease of around 15-25%.
- C) A catastrophic decrease of around 30-60%.**
- D) No significant long-term demographic impact.

5. The establishment of the Malthusian trap theory, which posits that population grows geometrically while food supply grows arithmetically, is primarily attributed to:

- A) Thomas Hobbes
- B) Adam Smith
- C) Thomas Robert Malthus**
- D) David Ricardo

6. Which historical event significantly contributed to a decrease in the fertility rate in many developed countries during the late 20th century, often referred to as the 'Second Demographic Transition'?

- A) The widespread availability of antibiotics.
- B) Increased access to secondary and tertiary education for women.**
- C) The development of agricultural innovations.
- D) The end of the Cold War.

7. The Tokugawa Shogunate in Japan (1603-1868) implemented policies that, while varying in their direct demographic intent, are associated with a period of relative population stability and stagnation after initial growth. Which of the following was a contributing factor?

- A) Aggressive pro-natalist policies.
- B) Widespread access to advanced Western medicine.
- C) A policy of isolation (Sakoku) and limited technological adoption, alongside agricultural intensification and possibly infanticide and later widespread contraception.**
- D) A prolonged period of large-scale warfare and expansion.

8. The demographic impact of the Transatlantic Slave Trade on the African continent was characterized by:

- A) A significant net population gain due to forced migration.
- B) A substantial loss of young, able-bodied individuals, particularly men, leading to skewed sex ratios and hindered development.**
- C) An overall increase in birth rates across affected regions.
- D) Minimal impact due to the relatively small numbers involved compared to the continent's total population.

9. The demographic consequences of the Russian Revolution and subsequent Civil War (1917-1922) included:

- A) A sharp decline in mortality rates due to improved public health initiatives.
- B) A significant increase in birth rates as a result of government incentives.
- C) Massive population loss due to conflict, famine, and disease, followed by subsequent demographic recovery and shifts.**
- D) A negligible impact on the overall population size.

10. The period of the 'Baby Boom' in the United States (roughly 1946-1964) is most directly linked to which of the following factors following World War II?

- A) A severe decline in marriage rates.
- B) Widespread economic depression and uncertainty.
- C) Returning soldiers, economic prosperity, and a societal emphasis on family formation.**
- D) Increased urbanization and smaller family norms.

11. The demographic impact of the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918-1919 was notable for its unusually high mortality among which age group?

A) Infants and the very elderly.

B) Young adults (20-40 years old).

C) Middle-aged adults (40-60 years old).

D) Adolescents (10-19 years old).

12. The demographic transition model, as first conceptualized by Warren Thompson, describes the shift from high birth and death rates to low birth and death rates. What was the primary driver for the initial decline in death rates in the first stage of this transition in Europe?

A) Widespread adoption of advanced birth control methods.

B) Significant improvements in public health, sanitation, and agricultural productivity.

C) A dramatic decrease in infant mortality due to widespread vaccination.

D) Mass emigration to new continents.

13. The Qin Dynasty (221-206 BCE) in China undertook significant state-building efforts, including the standardization of weights, measures, and currency, and the construction of large infrastructure projects. While direct demographic data is scarce, such unified state efforts often correlate with:

A) A significant decrease in population due to conscription and forced labor.

B) Increased economic activity and potential for population growth, alongside more robust data collection capabilities.

C) Widespread famine and demographic collapse.

D) A decline in agricultural output.

14. The demographic implications of the Columbian Exchange involved not only disease but also the transfer of crops and livestock. Which of the following agricultural transfers from the Americas to Europe is considered to have had a profound impact on population growth by increasing food supply?

A) Wheat and barley

B) Potatoes and maize (corn)

C) Rice and sugar cane

D) Livestock such as cattle and pigs