Counting Community Change

Population trends and migration in U.S. towns

WG.4.5 "Assess the changes and consequences of population growth or decline in various parts of the United States based on global migration patterns and determine whether the local community is shrinking or growing."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each town's two population counts and circle its net arrivals from abroad. Number the towns 1 to 3, from the greatest population gain to the greatest loss, to compare population change with migration.

More Than One Reason

1 Across the United States, migration from other countries can reshape local populations. New residents may join relatives or follow jobs, and some later move elsewhere. At the same time, people move between states, and births and deaths change population totals. A town's growth does not prove that immigration alone caused it.

2 The table shows invented U.S. towns, not official census results. Each town's total includes all residents, regardless of birthplace. "Net arrivals from abroad" means arrivals from other countries minus departures to other countries during the period. Compare the two population counts before deciding whether a town grew or shrank.

POPULATION CHANGE IN THREE INVENTED U.S. TOWNS

Town	Residents, 2015	Residents, 2025	Net arrivals from abroad, 2015-2025
Harbor Point	18,000	20,500	+1,500
Orchard Bend	12,000	11,400	+400
Quarry Ridge	9,000	9,700	+100

3 Growing towns may need more housing, classrooms, and bus service. Shrinking towns may lose customers and have trouble paying for public services. Yet the same population change can create different pressures in different places. To assess immigration's role, compare net arrivals from abroad with domestic moves and births minus deaths, rather than assuming one cause.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which town lost residents despite positive net arrivals from abroad? What does that tell you about other causes of population change?

2. Compare Harbor Point's and Quarry Ridge's population changes. Which gained more residents, and by how many more?

3. For Quarry Ridge, how much of its population gain is not explained by net arrivals from abroad alone? Name two other processes in the passage that could account for it.

4. How might Orchard Bend's population trend affect a local business or service? Why should leaders avoid blaming international migration alone?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four sentences about your own community. State whether its population is growing, shrinking, or not yet known from the evidence you have; identify two dated population counts and a source you would use to check; explain how you would calculate the trend; and name one way international migration could affect a local need without assuming it is the only cause.

Counting Community Change

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each town's two population counts and circle its net arrivals from abroad. Number the towns 1 to 3, from the greatest population gain to the greatest loss, to compare population change with migration. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which town lost residents despite positive net arrivals from abroad? What does that tell you about other causes of population change?	**Orchard Bend lost 600 residents despite 400 net arrivals from abroad. Domestic moves and births minus deaths must have had a combined negative effect.**
2	Compare Harbor Point's and Quarry Ridge's population changes. Which gained more residents, and by how many more?	**Harbor Point gained 2,500 residents, while Quarry Ridge gained 700. Harbor Point gained 1,800 more.**
3	For Quarry Ridge, how much of its population gain is not explained by net arrivals from abroad alone? Name two other processes in the passage that could account for it.	**Its gain was 700, and net arrivals from abroad were 100, leaving 600. Domestic moves and births minus deaths could account for the difference.**
4	How might Orchard Bend's population trend affect a local business or service? Why should leaders avoid blaming international migration alone?	**With fewer residents, businesses may have fewer customers or public services may be harder to fund. Net arrivals from abroad were positive, so they do not explain the decline alone.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

My community, Houston, grew from 2,099,451 residents in 2010 to 2,304,580 in 2020. I would verify both counts with U.S. Census Bureau records. Subtracting the 2010 count from the 2020 count shows a gain of 205,129 residents. International migration may have increased housing demand, but domestic moves and births and deaths also affect population.

Accept a supported local trend or an honest statement that the trend is not yet known, provided the student identifies comparable population counts to check. Migration should be treated as one possible contributor, not the sole cause of population change.