



# LIFE EXPECTANCY

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## Learning Materials

- [Study guide in a google doc format](#)

This lesson introduces students to life expectancy as a measure of development and asks them to investigate life expectancy in the U.S. and globally using data from the *CDC*, *Gapminder* and *Our World in Data*. It also engages students in watching and debriefing a *TED Talk* called "How humanity doubled life expectancy in a century" and a short video called "The #1 reason people die early, in each country." The lesson features a [powerpoint presentation on life expectancy](#) by Gapminder which illustrates how life expectancy is calculated and compares life expectancies in Burundi and Sweden.





### Time Requirements

- 2-3 hours

### Guiding Questions

- What is life expectancy?
- How does life expectancy differ in countries throughout the world?
- How does life expectancy differ across zip codes in NYC?
- How is life expectancy a useful measure for the development of a country?

### Learning Objectives

After this lesson, students will be able to:

- Define life expectancy and explain how it is measured.
- Explain how life expectancy varies across different countries and zip codes.
- Explain how and why life expectancy doubled in the past century.



# US Learning Standards

## Common Core

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
- CCRA.SL.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

## C3 Framework

- D2.Civ.13.9-12: Evaluate public policies in terms of intended and unintended outcomes, and related consequences.
- D2.Civ.14.9-12: Analyze historical, contemporary, and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights.
- D2.Eco.13.9-12. Explain why advancements in technology and investments in capital goods and human capital increase economic growth and standards of living.

## Learning for Justice

- JU.9-12.14: I am aware of the advantages and disadvantages I have in society because of my membership in different identity groups, and I know how this has affected my life.



# Links to IBDP Global Politics


Unit: Development		
Learning Outcome	Prescribed Content	Examples
Contested meanings of development	Different definitions of development  Measuring development	HDI (based partly on life expectancy)

Unit: Development and Sustainability (First Assessment in 2026)	
Contested meanings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development</li> <li>• Poverty</li> </ul>
Interactions of political stakeholders and actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marginalized, vulnerable and most affected groups and individuals</li> </ul>
Nature, Practice and Study of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dimensions and assessment of development and sustainability</li> <li>• Economic, environmental, political, social and institutional factors</li> </ul>



# Lesson Preview


# Sample Pages from the Study Guide



In this lesson, we will investigate life expectancy across U.S. zip codes and globally, learn how it is measured and watch a video about how it has doubled in the last century.

Study Guide

## LIFE EXPECTANCY



### LEARNING ACTIVITIES

#### 1. Warm Up

**Instructions**  
→ Respond to the following questions and be prepared to share your answers with your classmates.

The CDC defines life expectancy as “the average number of years of life a person who has attained a given age can expect to live.”

1. Based on that definition, what do you think is the greatest predictor of your health and life expectancy?

- weight
- zip code
- cholesterol level

\*Click [here](#) for more information.

2. Which countries do you think have some of the highest life expectancies?

Type your answer here.

3. Which countries do you think have some of the lowest life expectancies?

Type your answer here.

4. If you live in the US, click [here](#) to see the life expectancy in your zip code or [here](#) in your state. What is it?

Type your answer here.

5. What do you think is the current global life expectancy?

- 65
- 71
- 73
- 79

→ Click [here](#) to view “Life Expectancy of the World Population”

→ Click [here](#) to view “Animation: Global Life Expectancy (1950-2021).”

→ You can also take this quiz: [How long will I live?](#) (try out different countries as well)

#### 2. Gapminder Life Expectancy Investigation

**Instructions**  
→ In this activity, we will use Gapminder to investigate life expectancy at birth.

*“If you have never used Gapminder before, click [here](#) to watch a video with simple and quick instructions on how to use it and be sure you can answer these three questions:*

1. What do the bubbles represent?
2. What do the sizes of the bubbles represent?
3. Who do the colors of the bubble represent?

#### A. Life Expectancy of Birth

Life expectancy is the age to which a baby born today can expect to live.

→ Click [here](#) to view the graph.  
→ Set it to the earliest possible date and click play.

1. What does the graph say about the global trend regarding life expectancy? Is life expectancy increasing or decreasing?

- Increasing
- decreasing

2. Select three countries. What were their life expectancies in 1900 and in 2022?

Name of country	Life expectancy in 1922	Life expectancy in 2022?
1. Type your answer here.	Type your answer here.	Type your answer here.
2. Type your answer here.	Type your answer here.	Type your answer here.
3. Type your answer here.	Type your answer here.	Type your answer here.

# Thank you!

If you have any questions, would like more resources on this topic, or have any issues with this lesson, please reach out at [aglobalclass@gmail.com](mailto:aglobalclass@gmail.com)

If you or your students enjoyed this lesson and found it useful, please leave a positive review on [teachers pay teachers](https://www.teacherspayteachers.com).



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