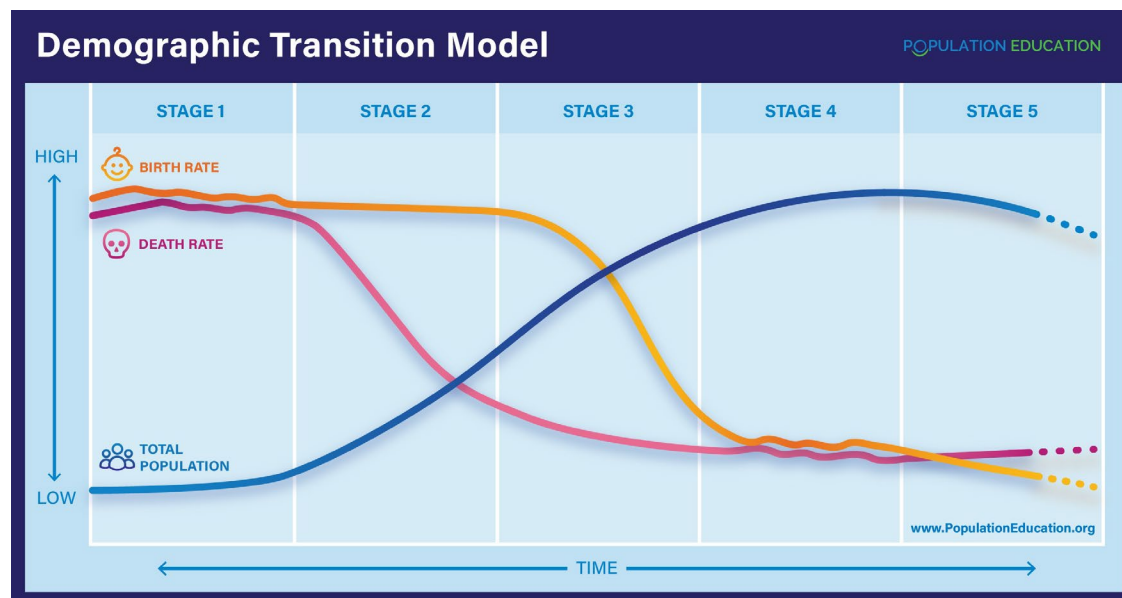


The Demographic Transition Model

The **Demographic Transition Model (DTM)**, based on a study of demographic history, suggests that a country's population growth rates cycle through five stages as the country develops economically.



In **Stage 1**, which applied to most of the world before the Industrial Revolution, both birth rates and death rates are high. As a result, population size remains fairly constant but can have major swings with events such as wars or pandemics.

In **Stage 2**, access to medicine, nutrition, education, and technology lowers death rates, especially among children, while birth rates remain high; the result is rapid population growth. For much of the 20th century, many countries were in stage 2 of the DTM. That number has dramatically declined, and today, only some least developed countries remain in DTM stage 2.

In **Stage 3**, birth rates gradually decrease, usually because of improved economic conditions, an increase in women's status, and access to contraception. Population growth continues, but at a lower rate. Stage 3 is the most dynamic of all stages in the DTM, as a stage 3 country's birth rate may be relatively high or low. Identifying where a country's birth rate fits into its overall historical trend is key to determining if it is currently in stage 3.

In **Stage 4**, birth and death rates are both low, stabilizing the population. These countries tend to have stronger economies, higher levels of education, better healthcare, a higher proportion of working women, and a fertility rate hovering around two children per woman. Most developed countries, including the United States, Canada, Brazil, China, and France, are in Stage 4.

In recent years, some countries have reached **Stage 5**, in which fertility rates have fallen below replacement level (2 children/female) and the elderly population is greater than the youth population. This is leading to a future population decline in Japan and several European countries, including Germany and Bulgaria.

For a more detailed explanation of each stage, and example countries with descriptions, visit [PopEd's DTM series](#).