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| **Name** | **Shape** | **Description** | **What does it mean?** |
| **Expanding** | Classic pyramid/triangle | Wide base(high birth rate) and narrow top (high death rate) | An expanding pyramid represents a lower standard of living; High birth rate is due to lack of access to birth control/lack of education. High death rate is due to poor health care and nutrition. |
| **Stable/Stationary** | 1/2 Elipse | Base width is equal to the width of reproductive years' width | Low birth rate because of good family planning and education; low death rate because of good healthcare and nutrition. |
| **Contracting** | Pyramid contracts at the base. Sometimes called a beehive. | The base is narrower than the reproductive ages. | Low birthrate represents a well-developed country. |

Below are some items to look for when reading a population pyramid:

* **Width of the base**- birth rate varies with the width of the base.
* **Symmetry**- pyramids should be symmetrical. Any asymmetry indicates a difference in the male and female population.
* **Shape of sides**- Concave sides (curving inward) indicate a high death rate and convex sides (bulging outward) indicate a low death rate.
* **Bumps in the sides**- irregularities in the sides indicate a demographic anomaly.