|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Australian Curriculum Year 9 Geography sample assessment ׀ Assessment resource  Investigating production patterns |

© The State of Queensland (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) and its licensors 2014. All web links correct at time of publication.

## Evaluating geographical data

|  |
| --- |
| ‘Between 1990 and 2005, the number of poor people in the world fell by 400 million’ |

In developing skills of geographical inquiry, data may be used to:

* identify a pattern or distribution, (e.g. the distribution of global internet traffic)
* describe a characteristic (e.g. the number of poor people in the world)
* make comparisons over time (e.g. the number of poor people in 1990 and 2005)
* find relationships between variables (e.g. poverty and GDP per capita).

It is important to consider that data may:

* be incomplete (as it is costly and difficult to collect)
* define concepts differently (e.g. what it means to be a poor person)
* present an incomplete picture (e.g. 400 million people sounds like a lot but how many are still living in poverty? How has the population of the world changed?) Often data is presented for a country as a whole and does not indicate any variation within a country or may be based on a sample or projection.

Questions to ask when evaluating the reliability, bias and usefulness of data in sources:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Reliability | * Who has collected his data? * When was this data collected? * Where was this data collected? * Why was this collection of data created? * Can I trust the author of this source of data? * How accurate is the data compared with other sources? |
| Bias | * Is there any bias presented in this data? * What bias, attitude and values might influence this collection of data? * Is this data similar to or different from other sources? * Can you find evidence to support this data? |
| Usefulness | * What is the data measuring or representing? * What does the data not measure or represent? * What patterns, trends and relationships can be drawn from this data? * How does this data help you respond to your investigation? * Can you describe the data in verbal or written form? * Can you represent the data in a graphical form? |