Student Resource 4.2

Graphs: Socioeconomic Development and
Causes of Death

Student Names: Date:

Directions: Read the explanation of Years of Life Lost provided below. Then use the graphs in this resource to respond to questions your teacher gives you about the connection between socioeconomic status and causes of disease, injury, and death.

In developed countries such as the United States, you are considered to have lived a full life if you reach the age of 75. If you live longer than that, it’s a bonus. If you die before the age of 75, your death is considered premature.

If you look at the whole population of a country, you can see what proportion dies prematurely (before the age of 75), and you can assign a cause for each of these premature deaths. The calculation is weighted, however. The younger that people are when they die, the more heavily weighted their deaths are, because they have lost the most years of life prematurely.

If you assign causes of death according to the categories of communicable disease, noncommunicable disease, and injuries, you can see patterns that correspond to how developed a country is. That’s why Years of Life Lost is a useful measurement: the more developed a country is, the smaller the proportion of deaths from communicable disease and injury.