

Exploring Human Populations: A Geography Challenge

Learning objective: To understand the distribution of human population and identify the factors that influence where people choose to settle.

Read each question carefully. Use your geographical knowledge about human settlements and the environment to provide detailed, reasoned answers.

Finn the dolphin has travelled across the globe mapping the world's oceans and coastlines. He has noticed that humans often build their largest cities near rivers, flat land, and temperate climates. Meanwhile, Max the monkey has been busy calculating the population density of different regions, noting that some areas are crowded with skyscrapers while others have vast, open spaces with very few houses.

Word bank: settlement · population density · urbanisation · resources · infrastructure · climate · migration · landscape

1. Define the term 'population density'. Why might a city have a higher population density than a remote mountain village? (2 marks)

2. Finn the dolphin observes that many major historical settlements were built near large rivers. Explain why access to a river would be an advantage for early settlers. (2 marks)

3. Compare and contrast the challenges of living in a very sparsely populated area compared to a densely populated city centre. (3 marks)

4. Justify your answer: If you were tasked with building a brand new town, would you choose to build it in a valley, on a steep hillside, or on a flat coastal plain? Explain your reasoning using geographical factors. (3 marks)

5. What might happen to the local environment and resources if a small village suddenly experienced a rapid increase in population? Explain your thinking. (2 marks)

6. Max the monkey has £500,000 to invest in local infrastructure. If he is building in a crowded city, suggest two specific projects he could fund to improve the quality of life for the residents. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a 'before and after' map of a small forest clearing. In the first box, show the area as a natural habitat. In the second box, show how a small human settlement has changed the landscape, including roads, houses, and a water source.



Extension challenge: Imagine a world where humans could live anywhere, including the deepest oceans or the highest mountain peaks. Write a persuasive paragraph explaining which extreme environment you would choose to settle in and how you would adapt the infrastructure to survive there.