

Mapping Our World: Understanding Population

Learning objective: To understand the concept of population density and how human settlement patterns vary across the globe.

Read the passage carefully, then answer the questions below. Use full sentences and clear evidence from the text to support your answers.

Finn the dolphin spends his days mapping the world's vast oceans, but he often looks towards the land to observe human settlements. Population refers to the total number of people living in a specific area, such as a town, a country, or even the entire planet. However, people are not spread out evenly. Some regions, known as densely populated areas, are crowded with millions of people living close together, often in large cities with tall buildings and bustling transport networks. Conversely, sparsely populated areas have very few inhabitants per square kilometre. These regions might include harsh deserts, frozen mountain ranges, or dense rainforests where the landscape makes it difficult to build homes or access resources. Factors like climate, available water, and fertile land heavily influence where humans choose to live. As more people move from rural villages to cities—a process called urbanisation—our global population map continues to shift. Understanding these patterns helps geographers like Finn explain why some places are bustling hubs of activity while others remain quiet, wild spaces, ensuring we manage our shared planet's resources sustainably for the future.

Word bank: Population · Density · Urbanisation · Settlement · Geography · Resource

1. According to the text, what is the definition of 'population'? (2 marks)

2. Name two types of environments that are likely to be sparsely populated. (2 marks)

3. Explain why human settlements might be more common in areas with fertile land and water. (3 marks)

4. What might happen to a small village if most of its residents decide to move to a large city? (3 marks)

5. Do you think it is better for a country to have one massive city or many small towns? Justify your answer using geographical reasoning. (4 marks)

Draw: Draw a split-page illustration: on the left, draw a densely populated city with skyscrapers and busy streets; on the right, draw a sparsely populated area with mountains and wide-open nature.



Extension challenge: Research the current population density of your own local area. Write a short paragraph explaining why you think your town or city has its current population size, considering factors like local industry, housing, and natural features.