**TREND OF WORLD POPULATION GROWTH**

Global human **population growth** is around 75 million annually, or 1.1% per year. The global population has grown from 1 billion in 1800 to 7 billion in 2012. It is expected to keep growing to reach 10 billion by the end of the century.

World population milestone

**Antiquity and Middle Ages**

The world population in 35,000 BCE is estimated to have been around 3 million people who subsisted as [hunter-gatherers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hunter-gatherer).[[23]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-24) The population had increased to around 15 million by the time agriculture was invented around 12,000 years ago.[[24]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-25) By contrast, it is estimated that around 50–60 million people lived in the combined eastern and western [Roman Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Empire) in the 4th century AD.[[25]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-26)

The [plague](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plague_of_Justinian) which first emerged during the reign of Emperor [Justinian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justinian) caused Europe's population to drop by around 50% between the 6th and 8th centuries AD.[[26]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-27) The population of Europe was more than 70 million in 1340.[[27]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-28) The [Black Death](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Death) [pandemic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pandemic) of the 14th century may have reduced the world's population from an estimated 450 million in 1340 to between 350 and 375 million in 1400;[[28]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-29) it took 200 years for population figures to recover.[[29]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-30) The population of China decreased from 123 million in 1200 to 65 million in 1393,[[30]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population" \l "cite_note-31) which was presumably due to a combination of [Mongol](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mongol_Empire) invasions, famine and plague.[[31]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-32)

New crops that were brought to Asia and Europe from the Americas by Spanish colonists in the 16th century are believed to have contributed to population growth.[[34]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-35)[[35]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-36) Since their introduction by Portuguese traders from Brazil to Africa in the 16th century,[[36]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-37) maize and [cassava](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cassava) have replaced traditional African crops as the most important staple food crops grown on the continent.[[37]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-38)

Around 300 BC, the population of India was between 100 million and 140 million.[[38]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-39) The population of India in 1600 was around 100 million. Hence, from 300 BC to 1600, India's population was more or less stable.[[39]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-40)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The [pre-Columbian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pre-Columbian_era) North American population probably numbered somewhere between 2 million and 18 million.[[40]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-41) Encounters between European explorers and populations in the rest of the world often introduced local [epidemics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_epidemics) of extraordinary virulence.[[41]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-42) The most extreme claims are that 90% of the [Native American population](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Population_history_of_American_indigenous_peoples) of the [New World](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_World) died due to [Old World](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_World) diseases such as [smallpox](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smallpox), [measles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Measles) and [influenza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Influenza).[[42]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-43) Over the centuries, the Europeans had developed high degrees of immunity to these diseases, while the indigenous peoples had no such immunity. | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Population (in billions)** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **9** | | **Year** | 1804 | 1927 | 1959 | 1974 | 1987 | 1999 | 2012 | *2026* | *2042* | | **Years elapsed between milestones** | – | 123 | 32 | 15 | 13 | 12 | 13 | *14* |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Modern era**

Only 3% of the world's population lived in cities in 1800; this proportion had risen to 47% by 2000, and reached 50.5% by 2010.[[44]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-45) By 2050, the proportion may reach 70%.[[45]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-46)

During the European [Agricultural](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Agricultural_Revolution) and [Industrial Revolutions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Industrial_Revolution), the [life expectancy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life_expectancy) of children increased dramatically.[[46]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-47) The percentage of the children born in London who [died before the age of five](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infant_mortality) decreased from 74.5% in 1730–1749 to 31.8% in 1810–1829.[[47]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-Buer-48)[[48]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-49) Between 1700 and 1900, Europe’s population increased from about 100 million to over 400 million.[[49]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-50) Altogether, the areas populated by people of European descent comprised 36% of the world's population in 1900.[[50]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-51)

Population growth in the West became more rapid after the introduction of [vaccination](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vaccination) and improvements in medicine and [sanitation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanitation).[[51]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-52) Improved conditions led to the population of Britain increasing from 10 million to 40 million in the 1800s.[[52]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-53) The population of the United Kingdom reached 60 million in 2006.[[53]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-54)

The first half of the 20th century in [Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Empire) and the [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) was marked by a succession of wars, famines and other disasters, each accompanied by large-scale population losses.[[55]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-56) In recent decades, Russia's population has declined significantly – from 150 million in 1991 to 143 million in 2012[[56]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-57) – but as of 2013 this decline appears to have halted.[[57]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-58)

Many countries in the [developing world](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Developing_world) have experienced rapid population growth over the past century. China's population rose from approximately 430 million in 1850 to 580 million in 1953,[[58]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population" \l "cite_note-59) and now stands at over 1.3 billion. The population of the [Indian subcontinent](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_subcontinent), which was about 125 million in 1750, increased to 389 million in 1941;[[59]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-60) today, India, [Pakistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan) and [Bangladesh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh) are collectively home to about 1.5 billion people.[[60]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-61) [Java](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Java) had about five million inhabitants in 1815, and now has over 140 million people.[[61]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-62) Mexico's population grew from 13.6 million in 1900 to about 112 million in 2010.[[62]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-63)[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-64) Between the 1920s and 2000s, Kenya's population grew from 2.9 million to 37 million.[[64]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_population#cite_note-65)

**Geographic Factors affecting of Population Distribution and density**

Physical conditions, such as climate (temperature and rainfall), landforms in terms of altitudes, the quality of the soil and the availability of energy and mine resources are the important geographical determinants of population distribution. Another important factor is the relationship between the location of one place and other places of importance.

Climate is one of the most important natural conditions which have historically played a vital role in the development of hum life, for it is the main factor determining the formation of botany environment and of vegetable and animal associations.

Geography therefore, usually considers the main climatic belts of the earth as the framework within which human activity takes place.

With technological progress and increasing control over nature, man has been able to affect many of the influences of climatic conditions. The importance of the role of climatic conditions with respect to population distribution is, therefore, inversely related to the stage of technological advancement reached by any country.

Temperature is an important factor to be considered in climate conditions. It is obvious that wherever there are extremes of temperature, human life is difficult to sustain, and consequently such areas are sparsely inhabited.

The most appropriate example of temperature affecting population distribution is the one provided by the Arctic and Subtract Regions where, because of long and very cold winter nights and low intensity of solar radiation even during the summer, living conditions are extremely difficult and the energy of human beings is spent mainly on struggling against the difficult conditions created by nature.

As water is essential for human survival, population distribution is largely determined by rainfall and other sources of water supply like rivers, wells, etc.

The extreme case is that of large expanses of deserts, where there is no population at all because of the absence of any source of water supply. On the other hand, several ancient civilisations flourished on the banks of rivers.

The nature of the terrain is also an important geographic feature determining population distribution. Wherever the terrain is difficult, the area is sparsely populated.

For instance, in a mountainous region, population density is low because the area of arable land is limited, and it is difficult to maintain even the existing arable land.

It has been estimated that high mountains, which generally tend to discourage human settlements, occupy more than one million square miles of the earth's land surface.

Low-lying plains are the most favourable to population settlements. For instance, the plains of North America and Europe are densely populated areas, so is the Ganges Valley in India.

The quality of the soil is yet another geographic determinant of population distribution. There are two kinds of soil, the superficial matter which covers the solid rock below.

"In Europe, it is 50 per cent of the land surface, in South America 25 per cent, in Asia 25 per cent, in the North America and Africa each 20 per and in Australia 10 per cent."

Though the quality of the soil was an important determinant of population distribution in the past, modern times, and its role may become less important because mod scientific agricultural technology has devised ways to modify that physiochemical structure of the soil and to make it more fertile, it is sterile or exhausted following over-use and/or wrong use.

The role of energy sources and raw material resources in determining population distribution is less evident in recent times than it was in the past, when the presence of these factors was a fundamental condition for the location of an industry and the consequent demand for labour to man that industry.

Today, beater: of cheap means of transport, it may be possible for industries to be set up in places that are naturally deficient in raw materials.

Among the many kinds of minerals, coal was the first to be used as a source of both heat and motive power, and soon became a symbol of man's control over nature.

The location of a certain place in relation to other areas is another geographic factor which determines how far it will be able to attract population and support it.

For instance, one of the main reasons for the development of industries in and around Pune is the proximity of that area to Mumbai and the excellent modes of transportation that are available.

It has also been observed that "two-third of the inhabitants of the temperate zones live in less than 500 kilometres from the sea, and almost one-half of the remainder live in less than 1,000 kilometres inland."

This review of the geographical factors affecting population distribution clearly indicates that, generally, no factor by itself is responsible for the concentration of population or lack of it.

All these factors are usually inter-related. It is only in some exceptional areas like those with extremely cold climate that the factor of climate itself determines population growth. On the other hand, in some areas all the factors appear to be favourable to high population concentration.

**Social and Economic Factors of Population Distribution**

Geographers are not unanimous in their opinion that the distribution of population is determined mainly by physical factors. Some are of the view that social and economic factors are more important than physical factors, and that, as society becomes more complex, these physical factors become less important in determining population distribution.

The main reason for this is the fact that, as man gains increasing control over natural phenomena, he is less inclined to accept the natural conditions in which he finds himself, but tends to modify these to suit his own requirements, if other conditions of habitation social and economic conditions are attractive.

The social and economic factors affecting population distribution are: (1) the type of economic activity; (2) the type of technology employed; and (3) social policy.

**MAJOR POPULATION DENSITY ZONES OF THE WORLD**

The range of population density has been classified into certain intervals and shown through respective colors. With the help of **population map**, students and researchers can understand the overall distributing of population density in the world.  
  
The range of population density starts with white polygon, depicting 0 to 5 person per sq km. and ends with deep red polygon which shows 1000 and above person per sq. km. Canada, Australia, Mongolia, Russia and few countries of north, north west, and central Africa have very low population density.  
  
The medium population density countries are USA, Central America, South America, countries of eastern and southern Africa, north Europe, Saudi Arabia (Asia) etc. Remaining part of the world like Western Europe, rest of Asia etc. are the countries having the highest population density regions of the world.

## Most densely populated countries/regions

### By inhabited region

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Region** | | | | | **Population** | | **Area (km2)** | **Density (Pop. per km2)** |
| [Indo-Gangetic Plain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indo-Gangetic_Plain) (Pakistani [Punjab](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punjab) to [Bangladesh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh) and [Assam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assam)) | | | | | 1 billion | | 1,000,000 | 1000 |
| Greater [North China Plain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_China_Plain) | | | | | 600 million | | 700,000 | 857 |
| [Sichuan Basin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sichuan_Basin) | | | | | 110 million | | 250,000 | 440 |
| [Java](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Java) Island | | | | | 145 million | | 130,000 | 1115 |
| [Taiheiyo Belt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiheiyo_Belt) (Japan) | | | | | 85 million | | 60,000 | 1417 |
| SE China coast ([Guangdong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guangdong), [Hong Kong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong), [Fujian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fujian)) | | | | | 140 million | | 100,000 | 1400 |
| [Nile Delta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nile_Delta) | | | | | 50 million | | 50,000 | 1000 |
| Southern India ([Tamil Nadu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamil_Nadu), [Pondicherry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pondicherry), [Bengaluru](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengaluru), and [Kerala](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kerala)) | | | | | 120 million | | 170,000 | 706 |
| West Indian Coast ([Maharashtra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maharashtra) and [Gujarat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gujarat) Coast) | | | | | 70 million | | 100,000 | 700 |
| Northern Europe ([Benelux](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benelux), [North Rhine-Westphalia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Rhine-Westphalia)) | | | | | 44 million | | 110,000 | 400 |
| NE US Coast | | | | | 45 million | | 100,000 | 450 |
|  | | | | |  | |  |  |
|  | | | | |  | |  |  |
|  | | | | |  | |  |  |
|  | | | | |  | |  |  |
|  | | | | |  | |  |  |
| With population above 10 million | | | | | |
| **Rank** | **Country/Region** | **Population** | **Area (km2)** | **Density (Pop. per km2)** | |
| 1 | http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/f/f9/Flag_of_Bangladesh.svg/23px-Flag_of_Bangladesh.svg.png [Bangladesh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh) | 152,518,015 | 147,570 | 1034 | |
| 2 | http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/7/72/Flag_of_the_Republic_of_China.svg/23px-Flag_of_the_Republic_of_China.svg.png [Taiwan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiwan) (R.O.C) | 23,361,147 | 36,190 | 646 | |
| 3 | http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/0/09/Flag_of_South_Korea.svg/23px-Flag_of_South_Korea.svg.png [South Korea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Korea) | 50,219,669 | 99,538 | 505 | |
| 4 | http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/1/17/Flag_of_Rwanda.svg/23px-Flag_of_Rwanda.svg.png [Rwanda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rwanda) | 10,718,379 | 26,338 | 407 | |
| 5 | http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/2/20/Flag_of_the_Netherlands.svg/23px-Flag_of_the_Netherlands.svg.png [Netherlands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netherlands) | 16,760,000 | 41,526 | 404 | |