In 2012, we reached a population of 7 billion humans on the earth’s surface. The rapidity with which this happened demonstrated an exponential increase from the time it took to grow from 5 billion to 6 billion people. How quickly will we go from 7 billion to 8 billion? How will that population be distributed? Where is population the highest? Where is it slowing down? Where will people live? To explore these questions, we turn to demography, or the study of populations.

Section Quiz

The population of the planet doubled in fifty years to reach _______ in 1999?

1. 6 billion
2. 7 billion
3. 5 billion
4. 10 billion

Answer

A

A functionalist would address which issue?

1. The way inner-city areas become ghettoized and limit availability to jobs
2. The way immigration and emigration trends strengthen global relationships
3. The way racism and sexism impact the population composition of rural communities
4. The way humans interact with environmental resources on a daily basis

Answer

B

What does carrying capacity refer to?

1. The ability of a community to welcome new immigrants
2. The capacity for globalism within a given ethnic group
3. The amount of life that can be supported sustainably in a particular environment
4. The amount of weight that urban centers can bear if vertical growth is mandated

Answer

C

What three factors did Malthus believe would limit human population?

1. Self-preservation, old age, and illness
2. Natural cycles, illness, and immigration
3. Violence, new diseases, and old age
4. War, famine, and disease

Answer

D

What does cornucopian theory believe?

1. That human ingenuity will solve any issues that overpopulation creates
2. That new diseases will always keep populations stable
3. That the earth will naturally provide enough for whatever number of humans exist
4. That the greatest risk is population reduction, not population growth

Answer
Short Answer

Given what we know about population growth, what do you think of China’s policy that limits the number of children a family can have? Do you agree with it? Why, or why not? What other ways might a country of over 1.3 billion people manage its population?

Describe the effect of immigration or emigration on your life or in a community you have seen. What are the positive effects? What are the negative effects?

What responsibility does the United States have toward underage asylum-seekers?

Further Research

To learn more about population concerns, from the new-era ZPG advocates to the United Nations reports, check out these links: http://openstaxcollege.org/l/population_connection and openstaxcollege.org/l/un-population

20.2: Urbanization

Urbanization is the study of the social, political, and economic relationships in cities, and someone specializing in urban sociology studies those relationships. In some ways, cities can be microcosms of universal human behavior, while in others they provide a unique environment that yields its own brand of human behavior. There is no strict dividing line between rural and urban; rather, there is a continuum where one bleeds into the other.

Section Quiz

In the concentric zone model, Zone B is likely to house what?

1. The city’s industrial center
2. Wealthy commuter homes
3. Formerly wealthy homes split into cheap apartments
4. Rural outposts

Answer

C

What are the prerequisites for the existence of a city?

1. Good environment with water and a favorable climate
2. Advanced agricultural technology
3. Strong social organization
4. All of the above

Answer

D

In 2014, what was the largest city in the world?

1. Delhi
2. New York
3. Shanghai
4. Tokyo

Answer

D

What led to the creation of the exurbs?

1. Urban sprawl and crowds moving into the city
2. The high cost of suburban living
3. The housing boom of the 1980s
4. Gentrification

Answer

A

How are the suburbs of Paris different from those of most U.S. cities?

1. They are connected by public transportation.
2. There are more industrial and business opportunities there.
3. They are synonymous with housing projects and urban poor.
4. They are less populated.

Answer
How does gentrification affect cities?

1. They become more crowded.
2. Less affluent residents are pushed into less desirable areas.
3. Traffic issues, including pollution, become worse.
4. All of the above

Answer

B

What does human ecology theory address?

1. The relationship between humans and their environments
2. The way humans affect technology
3. The way the human population reduces the variety of nonhuman species
4. The relationship between humans and other species

Answer

A

Urbanization includes the sociological study of what?

1. Urban economics
2. Urban politics
3. Urban environments
4. All of the above

Answer

D

Short Answer

What are the differences between the suburbs and the exurbs, and who is most likely to live in each?

How will the growth in urban populations affect the world over the next ten years?
Considering the concentric zone model, what type of zone were you raised in? Is this the same or different as that of earlier generations in your family? What type of zone do you reside in now? Do you find that people from one zone stereotype those from another? If so, how?

Further Research

Interested in learning more about the latest research in the field of human ecology? Visit the Society for Human Ecology web site to discover what’s emerging in this field: http://openstaxcollege.org/l/human_ecology

Getting from place to place in urban areas might be more complicated than you think. Read the latest on pedestrian-traffic concerns at the Urban Blog web site: http://openstaxcollege.org/l/pedestrian_traffic

20.3: The Environment and Society

The subfield of environmental sociology studies the way humans interact with their environments. This field is closely related to human ecology, which focuses on the relationship between people and their built and natural environment. This is an area that is garnering more attention as extreme weather patterns and policy battles over climate change dominate the news. A key factor of environmental sociology is the concept of carrying capacity.

Section Quiz

The “tragedy of the commons” is a reference to what?

1. Global warming
2. African landowners
3. The common grazing lands in Oxford
4. The misuse of private space

Answer

C

What are ways that human activity impacts the water supply?

1. Creating sewage
2. Spreading chemicals
3. Increasing radioactivity
4. All of the above

Answer
D

Which is an example of environmental racism?

1. The fact that a disproportionate percentage of people of color live in environmentally hazardous areas
2. Greenpeace protests
3. The prevalence of asbestos in formerly “whites only” schools
4. Prejudice similar to racism against people with different environmental views than one’s own

Answer

A

What is not a negative outcome of shoreline dredging?

1. Damaged coral reefs
2. Death of marine life
3. Ruined sea grass beds
4. Reduction of human population

Answer

D

What are the two primary methods of waste disposal?

1. Landfill and incineration
2. Incineration and compost
3. Decomposition and incineration
4. Marine dumping and landfills

Answer

A

Where does a large percentage of e-waste wind up?

1. Incinerators
2. Recycled in peripheral nations
3. Repurposed into new electronics
4. Dumped into ocean repositories

Answer

B

What types of municipal projects often result in environmental racism?

1. Toxic dumps or other objectionable projects
2. The location of schools, libraries, and other cultural institutions
3. Hospitals and other health and safety sites
4. Public transportation options

Answer

A

Short Answer

After reading this section, will you change the way you treat your household waste? Explain.

How do you think the issue of e-waste should be dealt with? Should the responsibility fall to the companies that make the products or the consumer who buys them? Would your buying habits be different if you had to pay to recycle old electronics?

Can you think of a modern example of the tragedy of the commons, where public use without accountability has created a negative outcome?

NIMBY protests occur when concerned citizens band together to speak up against something that will impact them negatively. Is this a positive or negative trend? Give an example of a NIMBY protest and whether you support it or not.

Further Research

Visit the Cleanups in My Community web site: openstaxcollege.org/l/community_cleanup to see where environmental hazards have been identified in your backyard, and what is being done about them.

What is your carbon footprint? Find out using the carbon footprint calculator at http://openstaxcollege.org/l/carbo...int_calculator

Find out more about greening the electronics process by looking at Greenpeace’s guide: http://openstaxcollege.org/l/greenpeace_electronics