

# Human populations through time

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Focus question</b> | How can we meet the demands for food of a growing human population?<br>How have humans impacted the Earth's carrying capacity? How might they impact it in the future? |
| <b>Vocabulary</b>     | Carrying capacity  |

**Carrying capacity** is defined as the maximum population that an ecosystem can support indefinitely, based on the needs of the population for food, water, shelter and other requirements. Carrying capacity fluctuates due to seasonal changes, natural variability in the numbers of predators and prey, and human impacts. This unit will focus on the growth of populations and how humans have been able to overcome some of the challenges of environmental obstacles or limits to carrying capacity.

1. What are the demands of a growing human population?
2. After watching the video at [worldpopulationhistory.org/map/2050/mercator/1/0/25/](https://worldpopulationhistory.org/map/2050/mercator/1/0/25/), list the questions you have about the growth of human populations. What do you want to know more about? Share your list of questions with others in your group.

**Essential questions: What causes a population to grow in nature?  
Are the same factors at work in human populations?**

1. List the factors that cause populations in nature to grow.
2. What factors from above also apply to human populations?
3. What additional factors impact human population growth?
4. What are the factors that affect both populations in humans and populations in nature?  
Create a Venn diagram or other infographic to illustrate this.
5. Choose one of the above factors to research. What effect does it have on the growth of human populations (increases or decreases)? Provide specific evidence to back up your claim.  
Be prepared to explain your reasoning to others.