



Unequal World

HUMAN GEOGRAPHY • A CHANGING WORLD • UNEQUAL WORLD

Section 1: Development

• What do we mean by development?

Development is usually connected with the idea of change and growth. A country that is 'developed' generally offers a higher standard of living to the majority of its population, and people can therefore expect to live longer. The quality of education in a developed country means that people are literate and have more opportunities to obtain employment.

A development index uses statistics and data to evaluate a country's development, and is based on a number of different indicators. As with any statistic that is applied across a whole country, the development index uses the average of an entire population, therefore the results may be misleading. Even in the USA, which is one of the most developed countries in the world, there are millions of people who don't enjoy the same quality of life as others. It is important to remember that a high average income doesn't always mean that a country is 'developed'. Therefore development is always a geographically uneven process wherever it takes place.



In Japan, life expectancy is above 70 years due to good standards of living

• Suggested Film
- Global Inequalities

Extension Questions

Q1. Which are the most developed countries?

There are several ways to measure development, and one of the most widely used methods is the Human Development Index (HDI), which is used by the United Nations. These figures can be compared over time to show the 'best' performing countries, and in 2013, Norway, Australia and Sweden hold the top three places.

Q2. Which are the least developed countries?

If development means 'growth', then one would expect countries with troubled economies and those affected by conflict to score poorly. In 2013, the bottom three countries on the HDI index are Mozambique, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Niger. Afghanistan and Zimbabwe have both been in the bottom three in recent years too.

Q3. Which are the fastest developing countries?

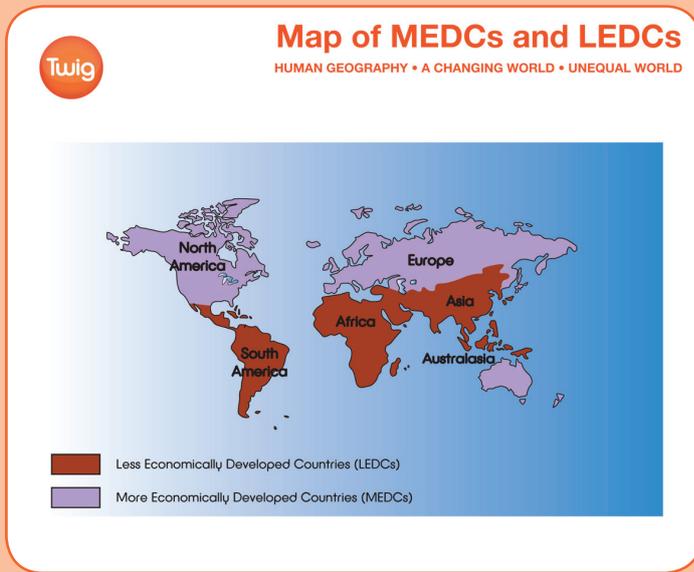
Sometimes foreign intervention can lead to dramatic improvements in the level of development, although it is usually a more gradual process. The countries that have seen some of the most dramatic increases in recent years are China and India. These are part of a group of countries called the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), which are said to be in a newly advanced stage of development.



In MEDCs, children have access to free education

• Do we still have developed and developing countries?

DIAGRAM 01:



There are certainly different levels of development, as measured using the Human Development Index (HDI) published by the United Nations. There are many different indicators of development which could be used to suggest that countries are still performing poorly. One could say that all countries are 'developing' or that all countries are 'developed', as every country is likely to have billionaires as well as people living in extreme poverty. The term Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) may unfairly 'label' some countries where the majority enjoys a comfortable quality of life; that is not to deny the tremendous poverty that many millions endure. These relative positions on an index are useful, and the HDI is split into four groups: Very High, High, Medium and Low.

Extension Question

Q4. Who is Hans Rosling?

Hans Rosling is a Swedish doctor and statistician who has worked for many years on visualising data about development to make them easier to understand. He has produced a range of tools which do this, including a web tool called Gapminder. The aim is to show the best ways to improve people's quality of life. He talks about a 'continuum' of development along which all countries move: sometimes up, sometimes down.



Many people in LEDCs have no running water

• Suggested Films

- LEDCs
- MEDCs

• What are the barriers to development?

There have always been richer and poorer countries throughout history. These have been the result of different stages of technological, military and, latterly, industrial developments. Some nations benefited from natural resources, and others from greater military strength due to their larger population. Historically, the rise of the British Empire and the colonisation of much of Africa and South America left a legacy which favoured the former colonial powers. This has been perpetuated by trade agreements and other connections. In some countries there may have been a leader in place for many years who has prevented the fair election of a successor. In these cases, large amounts of money that would normally have reached the population may have been misused. Finally, there may be natural and environmental barriers related to climate and the prevalence of natural hazards in some parts of the world, as well as the incidence of disease such as HIV/AIDS.

The provision of aid can affect local markets. For example, if food aid is provided there may be a reduced demand for locally produced food. There can also be a certain level of dependency on the arrival of aid, rather than looking for longer-term solutions to reduce the need for it. There are also opportunities for corruption when large sums of money are involved, as local officials may seek to benefit personally, therefore creating a challenging situation for the country receiving aid.

Extension Questions

Q5. What is the role of the UN in reducing barriers to development?

The United Nations is an organisation which has been in existence since 1945 to enable discussion between countries. Since conflict has a major impact on development, it is important to enable peaceful solutions where possible. The UN makes an effort to intervene when an individual country might be behaving in a way which negatively affects its own population or threatens neighbouring ones. When this happens, a UN 'resolution' is passed, which allows countries to use force if necessary. The UN was responsible for creating the Millennium Development Goals: a series of targets for improvement in specific areas which focus on inequality.

Q6. Is aid the best way of helping people?

Whenever there is inequality it would make sense for those who have more to give something to those who have less. There are many types of aid, but this can sometimes fail to reach the 'neediest' people. Aid requires infrastructure to enable it to be distributed, and this is often poorly developed in the areas that require it the most. Aid has also been criticised as a method for the developed world to maintain control over developing countries.

• Suggested Activity

- Ask the students to explore the different types of aid that exist: bilateral, multilateral and tied. Which countries give the most aid?

DIAGRAM 02:



• Suggested Film

- LEDCs: Barriers to Development

Section 2: Population and Trade

• What is demography?



Western countries became industrialised towards the end of the 18th century

Demography is the study of populations and the way that they change over time, particularly the statistics of population. Demography studies the balance of males and females, and the proportions of people of different ages. Put simply, population is a straightforward matter of births and deaths, but factors such as the movements of people in and out of countries, which have increased dramatically over recent decades, also need to be considered. The changing trends in population affect everyone, and changes in birth and death rates and overall fertility can have major economic implications.

• Suggested Film

- Demographic Transition Model

Extension Questions

Q7. Why are demographics important?

One of the major issues facing the world is the number of people alive today. The increased level of development in many countries means that life expectancy is rising, although the number of children that each woman has is decreasing on average. With the birth of the 7 billionth person in October 2011, there was a renewed focus on the sustainability of the current levels of growth. With a world population potentially peaking at around 10 billion around 2050, there is a chance that many of the world's problems will worsen further before they get better.

Demographic trends are used to target investment in infrastructure, healthcare and educational development. A growing number of young people will trigger a need for extra teachers, but as these will take some years to train, it is important to identify this need early enough to anticipate this trend. Equally, there is likely to be a need for significantly more care homes and health support for the elderly in many more developed countries in the coming decades, due to increasing life expectancy.

Q8. What are the current major trends in demographics?

Perhaps the most important trend that may affect everyone in the short term is the fact that the world's population is getting older. The proportion of people who are now over the age of 65 is higher than those aged 15 or under in many parts of the world. The people at either end of the typical age range are classed as the 'dependent' population, because they are (in the main) not classed as being 'economically active'.

A globalised workforce has started to move across the world. There are over 9 million Filipinos (citizens of the Philippines) working abroad, in countries including Japan, Singapore, the USA and some European countries. The money they send back to their families forms an important part of their 'home' economy. Migration trends can alter the 'natural' changes in a population that result from births and deaths.

Q9. How does an ageing population affect a country's development?

Ultimately, people will get to an age where they are no longer be able to work in the way that they did when they were younger. At that point, they will hopefully be supported by pensions and savings, and the help of the children they may have had. Different countries have different levels of welfare support, and older people cannot necessarily rely on the pensions and welfare support that are available in some of the more developed countries.

The changing economic fortunes of countries have a particular impact on older people with a low income, as they cannot respond as easily and are generally less mobile. Many European countries, such as the UK, are being forced to rethink the age at which people can retire from work and claim a state pension. This is due to a variety of reasons, such as reduced numbers of people who are working and paying tax to enable pensions and welfare to continue at the same level. However, these issues are politicised and are affected by global/national economic trends, not just trends in population.

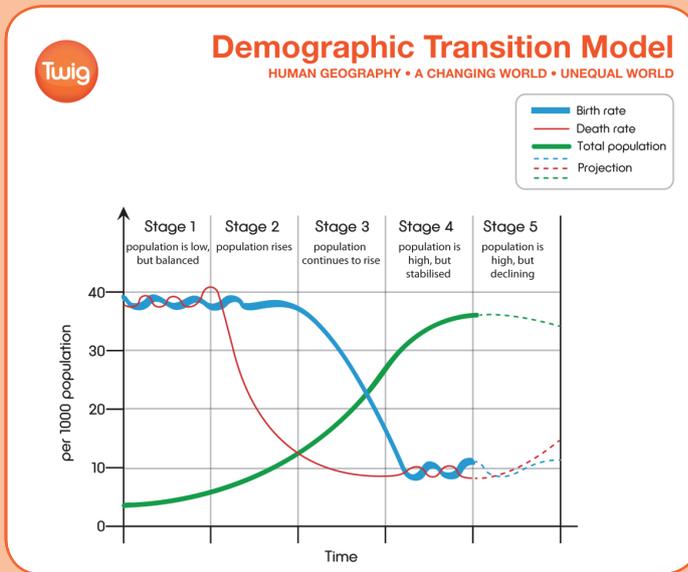
The rapid growth of population in countries such as Haiti means they may double in size in just 20 years, triggering large-scale migration. Rapid population growth results in increased unemployment and strain on existing resources, infrastructures and the environment. Rapid growth also results in land shortages and insufficient crop production. All these factors result in increased migration, as people search for a better standard of living and employment prospects.



India has the second largest population in the world

• What are the links between population, development and trade?

DIAGRAM 03:



Generally speaking, LEDCs export raw materials such as oil, sugar and coffee, and MEDCs export manufactured goods such as cars and computers. Raw materials have a much lower value than manufactured goods and they also fluctuate in price, meaning that developing countries make less money than developed countries.

As population rises there is an increased demand for goods and services. As the standard of living improves in many newly industrialised countries, the demand for similar lifestyles to the USA and many European countries also grows. For example, there has been an increased demand for cars in China, which require fuel or energy to operate. The balance of imports and exports can begin to shift as a result of this situation.

There have also been changes in the way that food is traded because of the growing demand for biofuels. Inevitably, not everyone shares the same benefits from these changes, meaning inequality increases and the gap between the rich and poor widens.

Extension Question

Q10. What are the future trends in world trade likely to be?

As countries move through the Demographic Transition Model (DTM) and reach the second (industrialising) stage, there will be an increasing demand for goods and services in their population. There are still some areas where this is yet to happen, notably many African nations. The growth and development of India and China in recent decades has seen tremendous pressure on natural resources and a relentless rise in car ownership. It is unlikely that trade can continue to grow in this way in the longer term. In some countries where access to this new way of life is uneven, there may be a backlash against government policies as a result. Growing uncertainty in global markets will continue to put pressure on society.

• Suggested Films

- Demographic Transition Model
- Brazil: The Wealth Divide



More economically developed countries tend to focus on secondary industries such as manufacturing

• How did trade develop and what are its main features?

Trade has always taken place, ever since two people first decided that they would like what someone else had and arranged a swap. Bartering was then formalised, and 'currency' and coinage were developed for early trade, which involved spices, livestock and farm produce. The relative values of currency still affect trade today.

There is generally an expectation that the buyer gets what they want at a fair price. But problems arise when that fair price is decided by one side rather than both, resulting in the terms of trade become unfair. There are many goods today which have their price decided far from their place of origin. There are also groupings of countries, such as the G8 nations, who have a great deal of power in determining trade prices, along with multi-national corporations who have the ability to demand lower prices from producers. As a result, trade can be a cause of dispute and friendship between nations.



Coffee beans are an important export for many developing countries

• Suggested Films

- Fair Trade
- International Trade: An Unequal Relationship

Extension Questions

Q11. Which are the world's biggest trading countries?

China has steadily moved up the list of countries that have the highest values of imports and exports, and it has contracts to supply a large proportion of the manufactured goods being sold in the developed world. Computer parts, toys, printed materials, textiles and various other products are now mostly manufactured in China, although they may be designed elsewhere. The European Union remains a powerful trading bloc, as well as individual members such as Germany and France. The USA is still an important trading power in the world economy, as are Japan and South Korea. Brazil and India are also both experiencing rising economies.

Q12. What do we mean by a trading bloc?

Sometimes it makes sense for countries to sign agreements to ensure that there is free trade, and that they benefit from being in a group. There are several trading blocs: many European countries belong to the European Union (EU), in Latin America it is the Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA), in Asia it is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, (ASEAN), and in North America it is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). One part of being in a group can be that trade between members is free of taxes, but that trade into the area has taxes added. This has the benefit of supporting companies who trade within the bloc, and making their products more competitive when compared with exports from outside.

Q13. How has globalisation affected the pattern of trade?

Trade is not always fair, particularly when this is linked to the use of power. Some geographers suggest that power (who has it, and how they use it) is one of the most important factors. In a globalised world the largest countries hold the power, but it is also the large transnational corporations whose wealth can be greater than some of the less-developed nations. It may be that they negotiate terms of trade which benefit them rather than the country in which they are operating. Globalisation has, however, enabled larger markets, and given smaller producers more opportunities.

Section 3: Fair Trade

• What is meant by Fair Trade?

Although people are generally looking to save money when shopping, they are also keen to purchase products that are of good quality. Fairtrade International grants the International Fairtrade Certification Mark to the labelling of goods that meets its standards: a fair price to the supplier and a “social premium” to support improvements in the communities where the supplier operates. These could be linked to water supply, healthcare or education, for example. From the original projects, which included cocoa and bananas, there is now a wide range of Fairtrade goods that are sold by many different retailers. Fairtrade is not without criticism, however, and questions have been raised about how effective it is in helping farmers in developing countries.



Extension Questions

Q14. How do you know that an item is Fairtrade?

The Fairtrade logo is used on products which have been checked and confirmed as conforming to Fairtrade International's standards. The logo was introduced in 2002, and within it there are different things to be seen and interpreted: a road leading to a brighter future, a green leaf, and a person with their arm raised (perhaps representing both the producers who benefit from Fairtrade and the shoppers taking products off the shelves). The certification has recently been extended to include gold that has been mined fairly.



Business in MEDCs often dictates unfair trading prices to farmers in poorer countries

Q15. What are the criticisms of Fairtrade?

One of the biggest criticisms of Fairtrade is that it is preventing farmers from advancing to a stage of industrialisation, which would modernise agricultural methods and improve the quality of life for farmers who carry out backbreaking work. Some people also suggest that despite the extra 'social premium' that is paid to producers, there is still a profit being made, and the benefits are not as great as some would claim. Some suggest that people who buy Fairtrade goods are easing their conscience, and that the project is a token gesture towards helping the world's poor.

Q16. How successful has Fairtrade been?

The amount of Fairtrade food being sold has grown dramatically over the last decade, with sales rising each year. Although this still only represents a small percentage of total sales in these products, the trend shows a growth in the importance of corporate social responsibility. The introduction of Fairtrade and 'Fairmined' gold is an interesting extension of the scheme, which will take it into new areas.

• Suggested Film

- Fair Trade

• Is the trading of gemstones fair?

The conditions under which gemstones are created are extremely rare. Diamonds, for example, are found in a rock called kimberlite, which is linked to volcanic vents, making it geographically very uncommon. They can also be found in riverbeds, where they have been washed out from the kimberlite. Diamonds do not emerge from the ground in the state that you might be familiar with; they need to be cut and polished.

The countries in which gemstones are mined are not usually the same countries that benefit from their high trading value. Instead, it is overseas dealers who reap the rewards, as mined gemstones are bought cheaply, before being cut and polished and sold at an inflated price.

Gemstones are often mined in unsafe working conditions, the wage for workers is very low, and child labour is common. Africa is home to the world's largest reserves of minerals, including diamonds, gold and platinum, yet this potential wealth does not benefit African populations, and many African countries rank at the bottom of the United Nations' HDI.

It is their rarity and difficulty in extraction that makes gemstones incredibly valuable, but it is also what leads them to be unfairly traded.

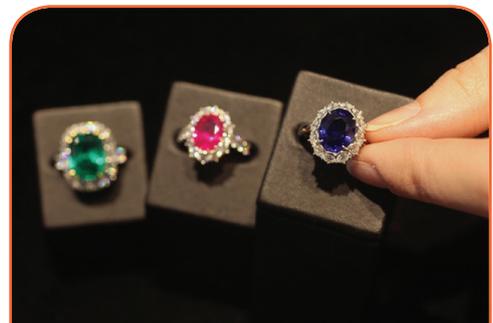
Extension Question

Q17. What does the term 'blood diamonds' mean?

Blood diamonds, also known as conflict diamonds, are diamonds that have been mined in a war zone and are used to fund military operations. There are also concerns that the people who mine the stones are not treated fairly, are working in dangerous conditions, and are not paid a fair wage. In the early part of the 21st century there was a move towards more transparency over the origins of diamonds and the extent to which their sale was funding conflict in Africa (where two thirds of the world's diamonds are mined).

• Suggested Film

- Sapphires: A Fair Trade?



Gemstones are often bought for a pittance and then sold internationally at massively inflated prices

• Is the world becoming more or less equal?

We need to be cautious when assessing this question as there is unlikely to be an easy answer, and the scale is also too large to come to a definitive answer. Some people would argue that the gap between rich and poor was/is widening, particularly at a time of great economic uncertainty in Europe, combined with ongoing conflicts in many parts of the world. The extent to which people may be affected by climate change is another issue that is unequal. Some also argue that globalisation is reducing inequality.

In the end, the answer probably depends on an individual's circumstances, so for the majority of the world's population the answer may be 'less equal'.

Extension Question

Q18. Is the world a fairer place than it was 10 years ago?

The answer to this question may depend on who you are and what your circumstances are as you read this. Some countries have developed and improved the overall 'quality of life' for many people, and standards of education have generally improved. Just 1.6% of the income of the richest 10% would lift a billion people who live on a dollar a day out of poverty.

• Suggested Films

- International Trade: An Unequal Relationship
- Different Types of Aid
- The Issues With Aid

• Quizzes

Global Inequalities

Basic

• How many countries are there in the world?

- A – 100 – 150
- B – less than 100
- C – over 200
- D – 150

• The development of a country is determined by...

- A – population and size
- B – size, climate and natural resources
- C – a range of economic and social indicators
- D – material wealth

• What is the most commonly used indicator of development?

- A – the Human Development Index
- B – the Population Development Index
- C – the World Development Index
- D – the Wealth Development Index

Advanced

• The development level of a country does not simply refer to material wealth...

- A – because different countries use different currencies
- B – because it is impossible to determine the gross national income per capita
- C – because wealth can be distributed unevenly
- D – because a country may be wealthy as a result of oil reserves

• The Human Development Index examines which three dimensions of development?

- A – health, education and standard of living
- B – health, education and literacy rates
- C – education, life expectancy and wealth
- D – health, standard of living and wealth

• The Human Development Index is collated by...

- A – the European Union
- B – the G8
- C – the United Nations Development Programme
- D – the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

Global Inequalities**Basic**

• What is the average life expectancy in Zimbabwe?

A – 67 years

B – 57 years

C – 47 years

D – 37 years

Advanced

• What is the average life expectancy in Norway?

A – 77 years

B – 81 years

C – 85 years

D – 71 years

Less Economically Developed Countries

Basic

• What does LEDC stand for?

- A – Lowest Economically Developed Country
- B – Less Economically Developed Country
- C – Less Economically Developed City
- D – Less Economically Developing Country

• A LEDC refers to...

- A – a nation with a low level of material wellbeing
- B – a nation with a moderate level of material wellbeing
- C – a nation with a low population
- D – a nation with a moderate population

• LEDCs are mostly found in...

- A – the northern hemisphere
- B – Asia and South America
- C – the southern hemisphere
- D – Africa and Europe

Advanced

• Approximately how many people die each day because of hunger, malnutrition or related causes?

- A – 25,000 people
- B – 200,000 people
- C – 15,000 people
- D – 50,000 people

• Describe birth and death rates in LEDCs.

- A – birth rates are high and death rates are low
- B – birth rates are low and death rates are low
- C – birth rates are high and death rates are high
- D – birth rates are low and death rates are high

• Subsistence farmers...

- A – only produce to sell on to others
- B – only produce enough to support themselves and their family
- C – produce enough to support their family and sell on any surplus
- D – only produce livestock

Less Economically Developed Countries**Basic****• What are common characteristics of LEDCs?**

- A – high standards of living
- B – high average life expectancy and high income
- C – high literacy rates and safe water supplies
- D – high birth rates, high death rates and high infant mortality

Advanced**• Why are levels of technology low in LEDCs?**

- A – because there is high unemployment
- B – because people are not trained to use equipment
- C – because equipment is limited and expensive
- D – because subsistence farming is common

More Economically Developed Countries

Basic

• What does MEDC stand for?

- A – Most Economically Developed Country
- B – More Economically Developed City
- C – More Economically Developed Country
- D – More Economically Developing Country

• Which of the following is an example of an economic indicator?

- A – health
- B – literacy
- C – housing
- D – wealth

• Life expectancy is above 70 years in which of the following countries?

- A – Japan
- B – Norway
- C – USA
- D – all the above

• What are common characteristics of MEDCs?

- A – primary industries and farming
- B – high standards of living and secondary industries
- C – a growing population and high infant mortality
- D – high literacy and high death rates

Advanced

• In the year 2000, what percentage of people were living in MEDCs?

- A – 30%
- B – 15%
- C – 25%
- D – 20%

• By 2050, what percentage of people are expected to inhabit MEDCs?

- A – as many as 40%
- B – as little as 10%
- C – between 20 and 30%
- D – well over 45%

• Health, literacy and housing are examples of...

- A – economic indicators
- B – wealth indicators
- C – social indicators
- D – growth indicators

• What is disposable income?

- A – the money spent on essential items
- B – the money left over after buying essential items
- C – the money left over after buying consumer goods
- D – the money received as wages

• Answers

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