• Where do most of the world’s people live?

• How is the world’s population changing?
Chapter 3, Section 1

What Is Population Distribution?

• The world’s population, or total number of people, is spread unevenly over the Earth’s surface.

• Population distribution describes the way the population is spread out.

• Demographers study the populations of the world to figure out why population is distributed the way it is. They examine such things as rates of birth, death, and marriage, and why people choose to live in certain areas.
People are choosy. What affects where they will want to live?

**Desirable Factors**
- Areas along bodies of water form natural travel routes and provide fresh water for drinking and farming.
- Plains and valleys with flat, fertile soil are good for growing food.
- Flat coastal areas are good for trading by ship.
- Areas with moderate climates and adequate rainfall
- Places rich in natural resources to build houses and make products

**Undesirable Factors**
- Areas with rugged mountains, hot deserts, and dry land with little vegetation or water.
Populous

- About 81 percent of the Earth’s people live in Asia, Europe, and North America. Yet, these continents account for only 53 percent of the world’s land. Why? These continents have fertile soil, plains, valleys, fresh water, rich natural resources, and good climates.

Not Populous

- Australia’s environment is mostly desert or dry grassland, with few rivers and little rainfall.
- Africa is home to two of the world’s largest deserts, broad bands of land that get little rain, and a vast rain forest along the Equator.
- South America is also limited by landforms and climates, where many regions have soaring mountains, vast dry plains, and thick rain forests.
What Is Population Density?

• The average number of people who live in a square mile is called population density.

• In a country or city with a high population density, people are crowded together. Japan has one of the highest population densities in the world: Almost all of its people live on only 16 percent of the land.

• In a country or city with a low population density, people are more spread apart. Canada is bigger than the United States, but has a much smaller population.
How do demographers measure population density?

- Divide the number of people living in a place by the number of square miles of that place. Remember, though, that the population density of an area is an average, and that people are not spread evenly over the land.
- Population density will usually be the highest on level areas near bodies of water.
- Some people, however, do live in harsh areas and over many generations have adapted ways of life to suit these environments.
Population distribution is uneven around the world.

Areas with rugged landforms such as mountains are harder places to live than fertile plains.

Areas with rivers and lakes are easier for people to trade, travel, and farm.

Farming is easier in places with a mild climate and good rainfall.

People settle where they can build homes and products using available natural resources.

81% of the world’s population lives in Asia, Europe, and North America, where they find fertile soil, favorable landforms, natural resources, fresh water, and good climates.
How do the physical characteristics of a country tend to affect its population?

Possible answers: people tend to live in places with good climates, landforms, vegetation, and adequate fresh water supplies.

Why is it important to understand that population density is an average?

The actual population density may vary greatly within an area or region. For example, the heavy density of the Nile Valley population contrasts with the sparse population in Egypt’s vast desert.