



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.



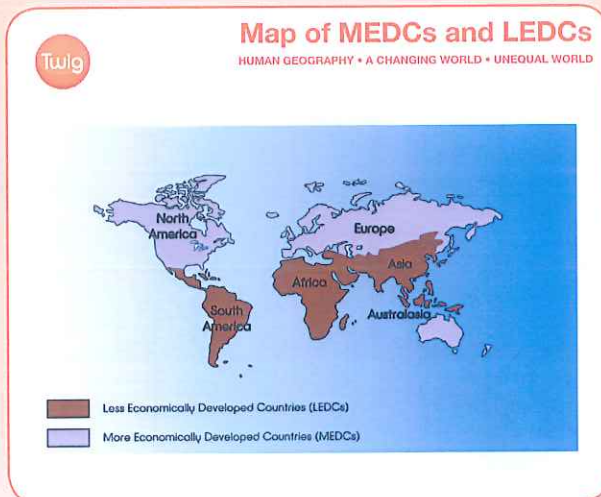
In MEDCs, children have access to free education

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.

• 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

- Less Economically Developed Countries
- More Economically Developed Countries

• 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.

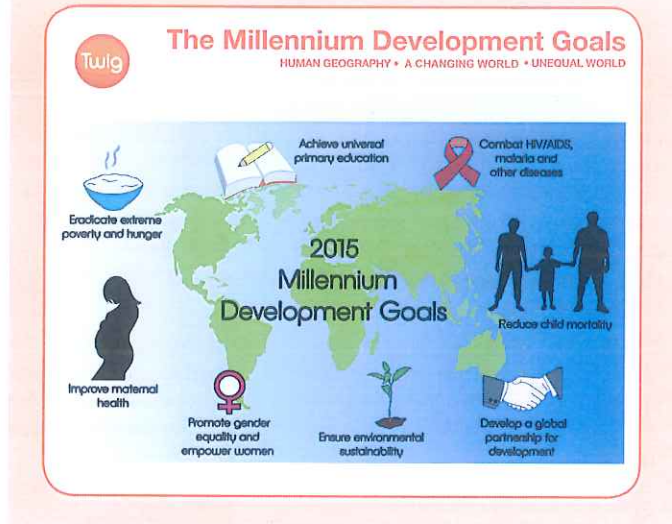
Q6. Is aid the best way of helping people?

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