NO PREP

Urbanization

Why Cities Grow and What It Means

Includes: Student reading, case study, differentiated questions, teacher key

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Name: Period: Date:

Urbanization: Why Cities Grow and What It Means

Definition & Historical Timeline

Urbanization refers to the long-term increase in the proportion of people living in towns and cities rather than in rural areas. This process is both demographic and structural: it changes who does what work, how families live, and how space is used. Historically, urban growth followed a sequence that can be read as broad phases. For centuries most people lived in rural, agriculture-based communities. With the Industrial Revolution, early cities began to concentrate factory production—textiles, steel, and manufacturing—drawing labor from the countryside. In the twentieth century, electrification, mass transit, and public services supported larger urban populations and the emergence of suburbs. In recent decades, modern urban growth has been driven not only by manufacturing but by services, information industries, migration networks, and

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Push & Pull Factors

Movements from rural areas to cities are shaped by push factors and pull factors that change over time and across places. Push factors are conditions that push people away from their homes: declining farm incomes, land fragmentation, drought or crop failure, limited access to education and health, or the mechanization of agriculture that reduces local labor needs. For example, a single large combine harvester can replace many seasonal workers; that mechanization makes it harder

for young people to remain in farming households. Pull factors attract people to cities: perceived higher wages, a diversity of job types (manufacturing, services, trade), better schools and medical facilities, cultural and social attractions, and established migrant networks that ease the transition. The role of social networks cannot be overstated: once a relative or friend secures steady work in a city and sends back remittances or practical advice, migration becomes less risky and more likely to continue. At the same time, cities can create their own pull factors through economic growth strategies, industrial policy, or targeted investments (new factories, special economic zones, or university expansion) that promise jobs and training. Both push and pull interact: mechanization and land limits at home plus greater opportunity and social ties in the city make migration a rational choice for many households.

Consequences: Employment, Housing, Services, Informal Economies

Urbanization rearranges livelihoods and the urban landscape. Employment patterns shift away from agriculture into manufacturing, construction, trade, and services—everything from factory work to retail, healthcare, and finance. That occupational transformation can raise incomes for some but also create underemployment or precarious work for others. Housing demand rises quickly as people arrive, often outstripping supply. When the formal housing market cannot meet demand, informal settlement growth is common: neighborhoods developed without formal planning, often lacking secure tenure, sanitation, or piped water. These settlements are mixed places of vibrant local businesses and deep vulnerability. Erosion of infrastructure capacity — overloaded water systems, insufficient sewage, unprepared clinics and schools — can create public-health challenges. Cities also experience spatial segregation as housing affordability and location shape who lives where. Newcomers frequently find work in informal sectors — street vending, small repair shops, domestic work — which provide livelihoods while remaining outside formal regulation. Political pressure mounts for better services, but governments face trade-offs: extending water or formal housing quickly is costly; regulation without provision risks large-scale evictions. Urbanization therefore raises questions about equity, governance, and the capacity of public institutions to plan and finance necessary investments.

Key Information: Table: Urbanization — Drivers and Typical Urban Effects

Driver / Factor	Typical Urban Effect
Mechanized agriculture	Labor surplus → rural out-migration
Industrial & service job growth	Pulls workforce into cities
Education & migrant networks	Sustains migration over generations
Rapid in-migration	Housing shortages; informal settlements
Weak urban planning capacity	Strained utilities, public health stress

Short Case Snapshot (hypothetical / representative)

In a fertile river valley, many households ran small farms for generations. Over a decade, local agricultural practices shifted: collective investment introduced mechanized harvesters and small-scale irrigation modernization. The new equipment increased per-hectare yields but required fewer workers during harvest. Young adults, who previously found seasonal income, saw fewer opportunities. At the same time, a coastal city forty miles away expanded food-processing plants and logistics centers, publicly advertising jobs and hiring through local radio and word of mouth. The first wave of migrants included single young adults who rented shared rooms near factories; their monthly wages let them send remittances home, easing strain on the rural households. As family members followed, entrepreneurs set up small kiosks, informal markets, and motorcycle taxis near the new settlement clusters on the city's edge. The city's clinic and water network — designed for an earlier, smaller population — began to show wear: longer wait times, intermittent water pressure, and overloaded sewer lines after heavy rains. Formal housing units were expensive and required bureaucratic deposits, so many newcomers built shelters on marginal land. Local community groups formed to demand expanded services, while municipal planners attempted a phased infrastructure build-out. The result: a mixed outcome of economic opportunity, increased household incomes, and rising demands for durable basic services and secure housing. Over time, some informal neighborhoods stabilized into long-term residential areas as incremental investments and legal recognition improved living conditions.

1. Identify the main push and pull factors in the case snapshot.

2. List two consequences the nearby city experienced as migration rose.

_____

_____

Multiple Choice

1. A common push factor for rural-to-urban migration is:
    a) More cultural events in villages
    b) Mechanization reducing farm labor needs
    c) Urban zoning laws
    d) Better public transit and transportation systems in cities

2. An immediate consequence of rapid urban growth often is:
    a) Decline in city employment opportunities
    b) Reduced demand for services
    c) Strain on water and sanitation systems
    d) Lower rents for everyone

3. An informal settlement typically forms because:
    a) Rural villages are being formalized instead
    b) Cities intentionally plan them as temporary camps
    c) People prefer no infrastructure
    d) Formal housing is unaffordable or unavailable

Matching

Write the letter of the correct definition on the line next to each term.

Term	Definition
1. ___ Push factor	A) Housing without formal services
2. ___ Pull factor	B) Money sent home by urban workers
3. ___ Informal settlement	C) Technology that reduces farm labor needs
4. ___ Mechanization	D) Condition pushing people away from farms
5. ___ Remittances	E) Attraction of jobs and services

Fill-in-the-Blank

1. The increase of people living in cities is called _____.

2. A _____ factor attracts people to urban areas.

3. Housing built without official planning is called an _____ _____.

Short Answer

Answer each question in 2-4 complete sentences.

1. Explain how mechanized agriculture indirectly increases rural-to-urban migration.

_____

_____

_____

2. Describe two ways cities can reduce large informal settlement growth.

_____

_____

_____

3. Give one example of how migrants' remittances affect rural households.