

Topic 3

Contemporary urban environments

This topic examines the processes of urban growth and change and in particular the social and environmental challenges that accompany these processes.

Environmental sustainability and social cohesion are key issues and themes that feature throughout the topic.

Urbanisation

1 Define the term urbanisation. (AO1)

2 marks

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Global patterns and megacities

Table 3.1 Levels of urbanisation around the world, 2015

Region	Percentage of people living in urban areas around the world
Africa	40%
Asia	48%
Europe	73%
Latin America and Caribbean	80%
North America	82%
Oceania	70%
World average	55%

2 Comment on the levels of urbanisation in different parts of the world as shown in Table 3.1. (AO2, AO3)

5 marks

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3 What are the main causes of urbanisation around the world? (AO1, AO2)

5 marks

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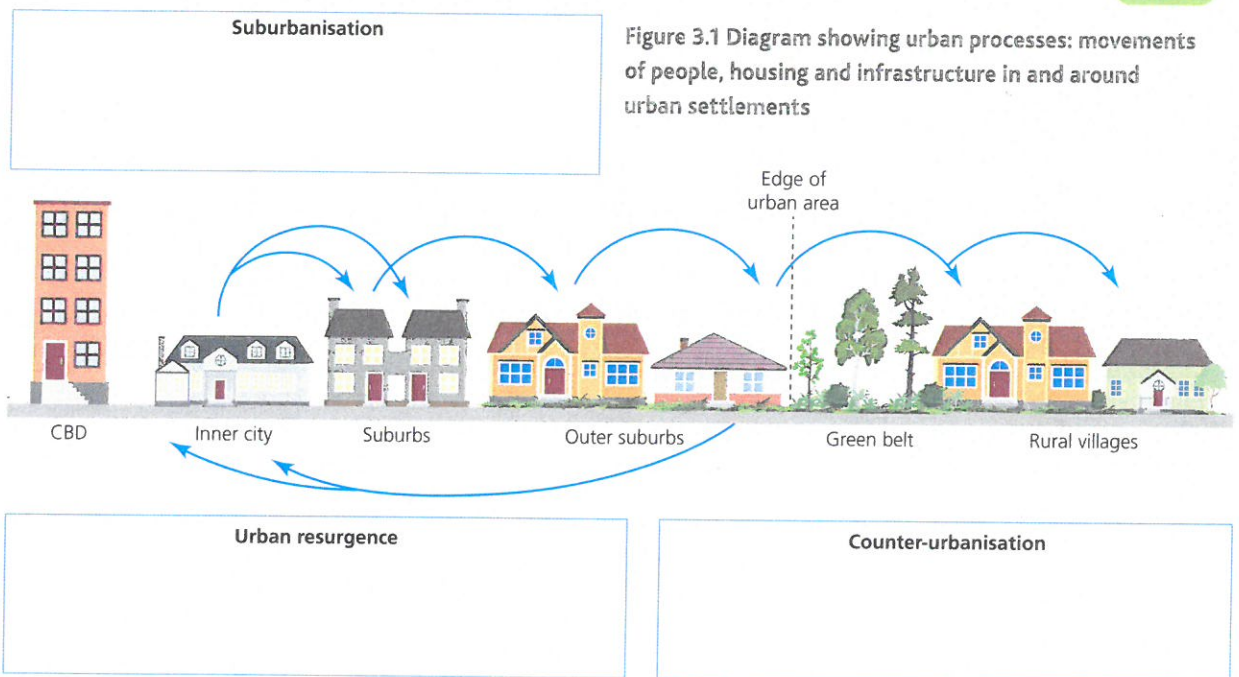
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4 Annotate Figure 3.1 which shows the processes of suburbanisation, counter-urbanisation and urban resurgence. For each process, identify the main causes, characteristics and effects. (AO1, AO2)

9 marks



5 What is a megacity? (AO1)

1 mark

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6 Examine the role of megacities and world cities in global and regional economies. (AO1, AO2)

8 marks

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Urban change and policy

7 Explain what is meant by decentralisation. (AO1)

2 marks

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11 Compare the characteristics of cities in high income countries with those in developing parts of the world. (AO1, AO2)

6 marks

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12 With reference to examples, analyse the physical and human factors that have shaped the spatial patterns of land use, segregation and diversity in contrasting urban areas. (AO1, AO2)

9 marks

Write your answer on a separate sheet of paper.

New urban landscapes

Urban morphology and land use have changed significantly in recent years as a result of economic and social forces and political intervention. This is typified in the UK where many city centres have experienced decline because of the decentralisation of residential

and business areas and the growth of out-of-town retail, business and industrial parks. Strategies have been introduced by central and local government to reverse this decline.

13 For any ONE of the defined new types of urban landscape listed below, describe the characteristics and account for their development in recent years. (AO1, AO2)

6 marks

- a Town centre mixed developments
- b Edge cities
- c Fortress landscapes

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14 Identify some of the key features expected to be seen in a post-modern Western city. (AO1)

5 marks

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Social and economic issues associated with urbanisation

The key social and economic issues associated with urbanisation are poverty and **economic inequality** leading to deprivation, **social segregation** and **cultural diversity**.

- 15** Explain why economic inequality exists as a key issue in many different urban areas. (AO1, AO2)

5 marks

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- 16** Analyse either social segregation or cultural diversity as an issue in contrasting urban areas. (AO1, AO2)

10 marks

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Urban climate

Urban areas create weather patterns and a distinct localised climate known as a microclimate. Air quality is often poor in many towns and cities. Particulate matter and photochemical smog are particular problems associated with urban environments.

- 17** Define what is meant by microclimate. (AO1)

2 marks

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- 18** Describe the impact that the urban area has on temperatures compared to surrounding rural areas. (AO1, AO2)

4 marks

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Urban drainage

21 a Contrast the surface and catchment characteristics of an urban drainage area with those of a rural area. (AO1)

3 marks

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b Explain the effects of the catchment characteristics and water usage in urban areas on the urban water cycle. (AO1, AO2)

6 marks

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22 Explain the meaning of 'sustainable urban drainage systems' (SUDS) and suggest methods using SUDS to manage urban catchment areas. (AO1, AO2)

6 marks

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Urban waste and its disposal

Waste generation and its disposal cause enormous problems for local authorities and urban planners. The problems are predicted to intensify as waste levels increase by around 7% as a global average.

Another important consideration is the relationship between levels of waste and economic development

and the importance of individual lifestyles and attitudes. Rapid population growth in low income countries will inevitably increase waste generation. However, the waste produced per person in high income countries is much higher. The amount of waste produced by society is more a function of its wealth and level of consumerism than of its population size.

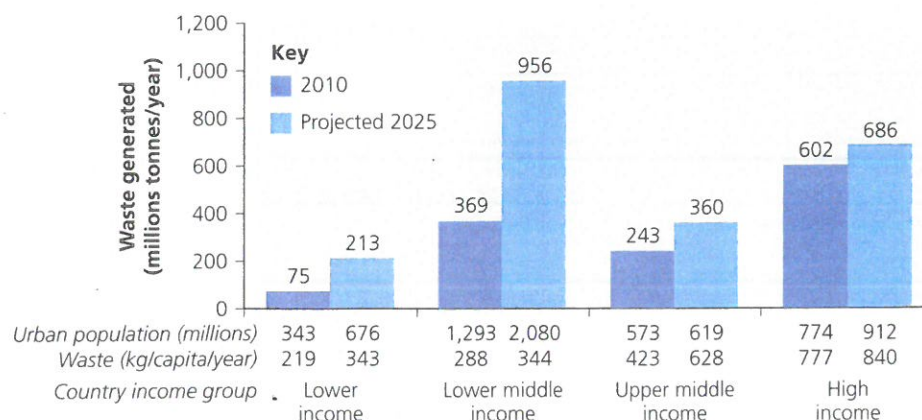


Figure 3.2 Trends in income waste generation

23 Analyse the trends in waste generation shown in Figure 3.2. (AO2, AO3)

6 marks

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There are alternative approaches to waste management. Figure 3.3 shows the waste management hierarchy of different approaches. These are ranked from the most

preferred option in terms of reducing environmental impact to the least preferred.

24 Annotate Figure 3.3 by outlining what each approach involves and why some waste management methods are preferred and encouraged while others are discouraged. (AO1, AO2)

10 marks

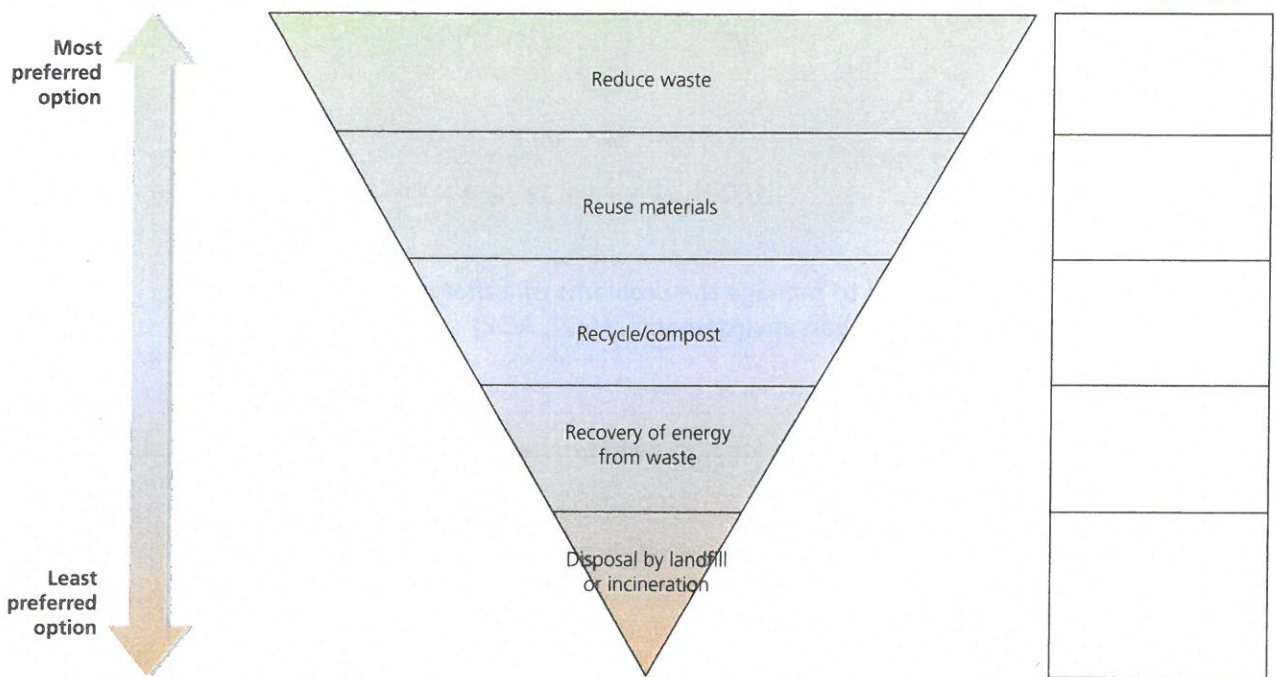


Figure 3.3 Waste management hierarchy

25 With reference to examples, compare the advantages and disadvantages of waste incineration with those of using landfill to dispose of waste. (AO1, AO2)

8 marks

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Other contemporary urban environmental issues

26 Explain why dereliction is an issue in some urban areas. (AO1)

5 marks

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27 Examine the causes and consequences of water pollution. (AO1, AO2)

7 marks

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28 Discuss the strategies used to manage the problems of *either* air pollution or water pollution or dereliction in urban environments. (AO1, AO2)

8 marks

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Sustainable urban development

A **sustainable urban environment** is one providing employment, a high quality of life, a clean, healthy environment and fair governance for all its citizens both now and in the long term. It will have a low ecological footprint and reduced impact on both the surrounding and the global environment.

To consider the sustainability and environmental impacts of major urban areas it is useful to think of the town or city as a system (as shown in Figure 3.4) with inputs from both local and global sources and with outputs which are released from the city into the local and global environment.

Exam-style questions (AS, Paper 1)

1 What is photo-chemical pollution? Circle the correct answer. (AO1)

1 1 mark

- A Pollution found in cities as a result of sunlight reacting with nitrogen oxides and other hydrocarbons from vehicle exhaust fumes resulting in the production of ozone
- B A name for the pollution found above an urban area resulting from the mix of different chemical gases emitted into the atmosphere from the city
- C A type of air pollution resulting from tiny particles of solid or liquid matter suspended in the atmosphere
- D A type of water pollution resulting from chemical effluents leaking into drainage systems from industrial premises

2 Outline reasons for urban resurgence. (AO1)

3 3 marks

(a) 2000



(b) 2025



Figures 3.5 Distribution of megacities, 2000–2025 (predicted)

3 Comment on the predicted changes in the distribution of megacities between 2000 and 2025 as shown in Figure 3.5. (AO2, AO3)

6 6 marks

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4 Analyse the impacts of deindustrialisation on urban areas. (AO1, AO2)

11 9 marks

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5 'River restoration and conservation in damaged urban catchments will enhance environmental quality as well as improve urban drainage.' With reference to a specific project, discuss this statement and evaluate the project outcomes. (AO1, AO2)

20 20 marks

Write your answer on a separate sheet of paper.

Exam-style questions (A-level, Paper 2)

6 What are the key features of counter-urbanisation? Circle the correct answer. (AO1)

20 1 mark

- A** During the 1950s and 1960s large-scale construction of council housing took place on the suburban fringe.
- B** One of the negative effects of counter-urbanisation is that it creates urban sprawl as it infringes on areas of the green belt.
- C** Counter-urbanisation leads to the social, economic and structural regeneration of the urban area following a period of decline.
- D** Counter-urbanisation affects the layout of rural settlements as modern, mainly private housing estates are built on the edge of small settlements.

