

# Lesson Three

## Where are all the people?

This lesson focuses on the distribution and density of the population in the USA. This lesson explicitly prompts pupils to consider factors that explain why some places are more populated than others.

### Key Questions

- How is population distributed in the USA?
- Where are the most densely populated places in the USA?
- Where are the most sparsely populated places in the USA?
- How do populations of states differ?
- What factors affect population change?
- What will happen to the population of the USA in the future?

### Subject content areas

- Locational knowledge: Understanding the distribution of population across the USA and factors that affect this pattern.
- Place knowledge: Describe and understand the population characteristics of different settlements in the USA.
- Physical geography: Awareness of the impact physical features may have on the population distribution of the USA.
- Human Geography: Understand the distribution of the population in the USA and the characteristics of different states in the USA.
- Geographical skills and fieldwork: Using census data to explore the characteristics of the population of the USA.

### Downloads

- Lesson Plan PDF | MSWORD
- Where are all the people? (PPT)
- Factsheet for teachers PDF | MSWORD
- Population data sheet PDF | MSWORD
- Card sort activity PDF | MSWORD
- Outline map of the USA PDF | MSWORD
- Example of Pupil Work: Graph (PDF)
- Example of Pupil Work: Population Map (PDF)

### Additional Resources

- Printed 'outline maps of the USA' and printed 'population data sheets'
- Printed (cut + laminated) 'Card sort activity'

- Graph paper (computers to access Excel)
- Atlases (computers to access Google Earth)

## Starter

Show pupils the population distribution map of the USA using slide two of *Where are all the people* PowerPoint (see downloadable resources). Using slides two and three, ask pupils to describe the distribution and to suggest reasons for this distribution.

- Why might some places be densely populated?
- Why might some places be sparsely populated?

Gather answers from the class for a discussion of the population patterns experienced in the USA. Pupils should identify that 'red' areas are cities and urban spaces; with lighter green areas likely rural, or less inhabitable.

## Main

*Task one:* Using slide five of *Where are all the people* PowerPoint (see downloadable resources), watch this video to see how the population of the USA changed between 1790 and 2010. Go to YouTube website <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nu152kQRKeU>

- Ask pupils to describe how the distribution of people changed during this time?
- Where do you think most people live now?

*Task two:* Use the *card sort activity* (see downloadable resources) to discuss why there are more people in some places than other places, introducing the terms **population distribution** and **population density**.

Teachers should cut out these cards (and laminate if possible). Pupils should then be able to arrange them into physical and human factors and why they may be reasons for high or low density population.

This activity leads pupils to begin annotating their USA map by investigating the location of the most populous states and cities.

*Task three:* Using the *population data sheet* (see downloadable resources) pupils should use the data to shade the following on to their *outline maps of the USA* (see downloadable resources):

- The top 10 states by population (Table 1)
- The bottom 10 states by population (Table 2)

Pupils should create a key on their map to show which colour represents top and bottom states. Pupils should then use table three and an atlas to plot the ten most populous cities in the USA onto their maps. See *Example of Pupil Work: Population Map* (downloadable resources).

*Extension:* Using Table 1 (Top 10 cities in the US by population) pupils should draw a graph to show the size of the cities they have marked on to their map by drawing a population bar chart. This can be done on graph paper, or on excel if computer access is available. See *Example of Pupil Work: Graph* (downloadable resources).

## Plenary

During group discussion encourage pupils to estimate the population of three UK cities for comparison to the population of USA cities:

- London (8.6 million)
- Manchester (2.5 million)
- Glasgow (600,000 thousand)

Recap on the card sort activity by posing the following questions for group discussion:

- What are the economic and social factors that make cities more densely populated?
- Why might climate affect population density? (This will be explored in more depth in lesson four, so this may provide a good opportunity to establish baseline knowledge and ability)

(See *factsheet for teachers* (downloadable resources) for further links / ideas to explore with the pupils in terms of considering what might happen to the population of the USA in the future.)