

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS (1)

- There are two types of settlements: **rural** and **urban**. Rural settlements have a number of characteristics that make them different from urban settlements. The former are usually smaller, with fewer shops and services. Rural settlements have a lower population density, and a larger percentage of the population works in farming, forestry, quarrying, etc.
- A **settlement pattern** describes the distribution of rural settlements across an area. Physical geography tends to cause an irregular distribution, as settlements usually cluster in areas with more favourable resources. A **dispersed** settlement pattern consists of isolated **farms** and/or small **hamlets**. In a **nucleated** pattern there are a number of **villages**.

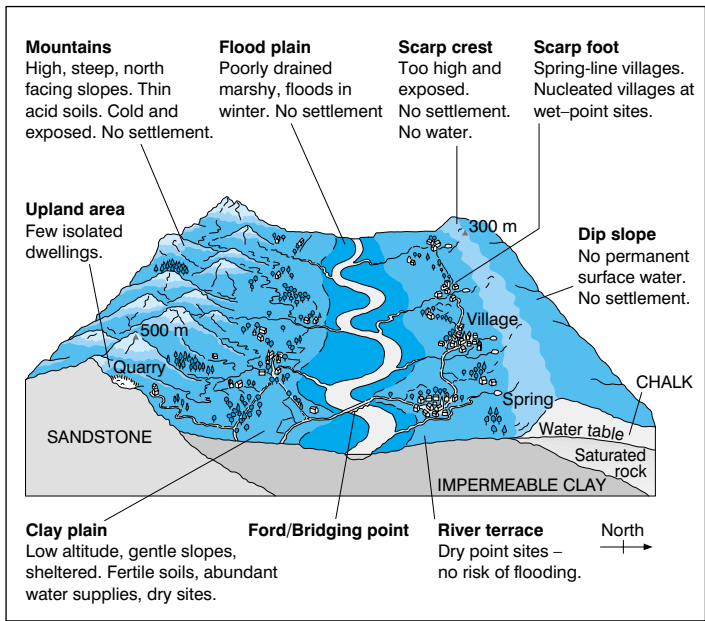
Site and situation

- An individual **settlement's** location can be described in terms of its **situation** and **site**. The situation of a settlement is its position in relation to the surrounding area. The site is the actual land on which a settlement is built. The site is described in terms of the physical geography on which the settlement stands. The earliest advantages of a particular site are those thought to be important to early settlers. Anglo-Saxon farmers looked for good access to farmland, a water source and nearby woods (for fuel and construction).
- Important sites are **wet points** and **dry points**. A dry-point site is a higher, and therefore drier, location in an otherwise wet or marshy area. A wet-point site is a source of water where there is little surface drainage. **Spring-line settlements** develop where impervious rock (e.g. clay) meets pervious rock (e.g. limestone).

Form and function

- The **functions** of a settlement are its **economic** and **social** activities. The functions of most rural settlements were originally agriculture, mining or fishing. Over time their functions have changed. The main function of some rural settlements is tourism now. Many have developed into **commuter** or **dormitory** settlements.

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS (2)



Factors influencing the sites and distribution of settlement

- The shape or **form** of a settlement refers to the plan outline of its built-up area. Settlements may be **linear (ribbon-like)**, **rectangular**, **circular** or **star-shaped**. Transport routes and flat land encourage growth in a particular direction in certain directions. Planning controls and flood-prone valleys may restrict development in certain directions. These positive and negative factors influence the shape of the settlement.
- It is possible to recognise the functions of settlements from Ordnance Survey (OS) maps. These functions include housing, industry, commerce, administration, recreation and transport.

Settlement hierarchy

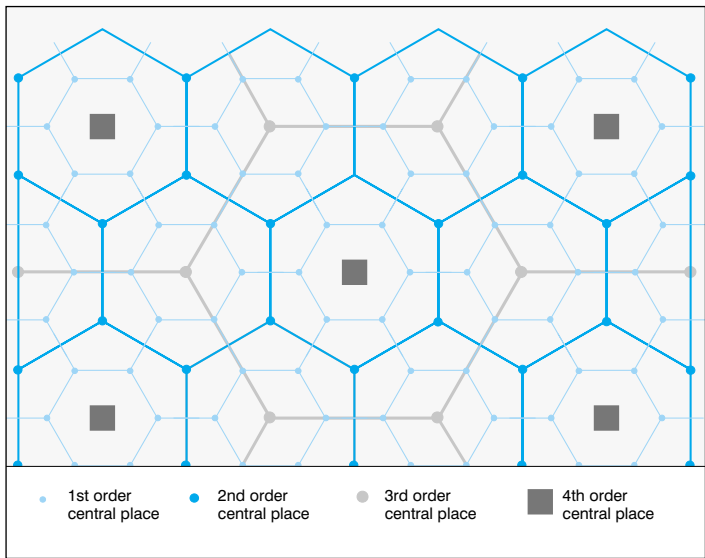
- Settlement patterns are largely determined by physical geography. A regular pattern of settlement would occur only on a flat, featureless plain where the population is evenly distributed. Human geographical factors can produce a regular settlement pattern so long as physical geography does not inhibit this. A settlement **hierarchy** tends to develop in an area. The hierarchy is ranked in order according to certain criteria. This is usually population size, but other factors, such as the number and types of shops and services, can also be used to order settlements.



Settlement hierarchy order

- The distribution of settlements can be explained in terms of **range**, **threshold** and **sphere of influence**. The range of a settlement is the maximum distance that a person is prepared to travel to use its services. The threshold represents the minimum area that a settlement can serve, if the shops and services are to remain profitable. The sphere of influence is the area served by the settlement. The arrangement of settlements based on these factors is explained by **central place theory**.

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS (4)



Settlement pattern according to central place theory

- **Convenience** or **low order** services are found at the bottom of the settlement hierarchy. People use these services regularly, so they are not prepared to travel very far for them. Convenience goods have a small sphere of influence and are found in many small rural settlements. In contrast, people buy **comparison goods** such as clothes and furniture less often. People are prepared to travel further to purchase these goods. Shops selling comparison goods have to serve a wider area in order to reach their threshold. The shops are found in **high order centres** such as towns and cities. They serve the population of the town in which they are located and people living in the surrounding area. There will be fewer higher order settlements and they will be further apart.

Settlement patterns (1–4)

- 1** Why is settlement dispersed in mountainous areas? (1)
- 2** What is the lowest bridging point of a river? (1)
- 3** 'London is located at the lowest bridging point on the River Thames.' Does this describe London's site or situation? (1)
- 4** What kind of site is a settlement built on a river terrace? (1)
- 5** Why are some settlements sited on top of a hill? (1)
- 6** A shop becomes vacant in the centre of a village. Which of the following is likely to be the least successful: newsagent, jeweller, grocer? (1)
- 7** Why is a Marks and Spencer store unlikely to locate in a settlement with a population of less than 25,000? (1)
- 8** Why have many villages in the UK changed from their original function? (1)
- 9** What determines the minimum and the maximum size of a settlement's sphere of influence? (2)
- 10** State two reasons why villages have developed along spring lines. (2)
- 11** What changes will happen to a village if it becomes a dormitory settlement? (3)
- 12** Why is the settlement pattern in East Anglia likely to be the closest to the theoretical pattern suggested by central place theory? (2)
- 13** Why is there a greater range of shops and services in towns than in villages? (3)

- 1 The agricultural land is poor so each farm needs a lot of land to be profitable. (1)
- 2 The first point upstream from the sea where it is narrow enough to build a bridge. (1) This is often the furthest point up the river that ocean-going ships can reach.
- 3 Situation. (1) The location is highly accessible from the surrounding regions, as all routes will tend to converge there.
- 4 Dry point (1) This is a very favourable site for settlement – close to water but not in danger of flooding.
- 5 For defensive reasons. (1) The inside of a river meander is another type of defensive site, e.g. Durham.
- 6 Jeweller. (1) There will not be enough customers in the village for the jeweller to reach its threshold.
- 7 Marks and Spencer is a high order store and needs a high population to remain profitable. (1)
- 8 Relatively few people depend on primary occupations such as farming, mining or quarrying now. (1)
- 9 The thresholds of the shops and services in the settlement determine the minimum size (1). The range determines the maximum size. (1) The shops and services have to serve enough customers to make a profit and these customers have to be within an acceptable travelling distance of the settlement.
- 10 The source of water (1) and the mixture of soils (1) are ideal for farming. The limestone soils are light and suitable for grazing whereas the heavier clay soils can be cultivated.
- 11 The village will get bigger because of house building. (1) The village shop may close because commuters shop in town. (1) The house prices will increase so the local population may no longer be able to buy homes. (1)
- 12 The relief is relatively flat and therefore good for settlement. (1) There are no major centres of heavy industry. (1)
- 13 A town serves a much larger population. (1) It serves both its own population and the population of surrounding villages (1). This allows both high and low order shops and services to develop. (1)