

Just how fast is the world population growing?

A) Collect the data

Go to the US census website to find a population clock <http://www.census.gov/main/www/popclock.html>.

This shows you the current population of the world.

Record the time and the world population.

Repeat this at 5-minute intervals throughout the lesson.

B) Process and present the data

Construct a line graph of your data. Use your graph to work out how much the world population is currently growing every

(i) half hour (ii) hour (iii) day (iv) year (v) second

The world population reached 6 billion on 12 October 1999. Use the figures below to construct a graph with the years from 1800 to 2200 along the x-axis.

Year	1800	1930	1960	1975	1987	2000
Population	1 billion	2 billion	3 billion	4 billion	5 billion	6 billion

C) Interpret and discuss the data

Use your second graph to predict when the world population will reach (i) 7 billion, (ii) 10 billion.

At these rates the world population will double every 40 years making 48 billion by the year 2119, however the United Nations estimates that it will actually be only 12 billion by then.

Why do you think the United Nations thinks this?

What other factors could affect the world population?

There is a fantastic website called www.geohive.com which investigates all sorts of things about the world population. Visit the website and, using some of the interesting ideas there, either design your own 'Population Explosion?' poster or write a summary of your own views regarding the world's population and what you think will happen in the next 50 years.