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World's Biggest Settlements

are the largest and most densely populated forms of settlement. Although every city is unique in shape, size, and appearance, almost all have sprawled out from a central historic core into open space and agricultural land. Cities in most parts of the world are growing rapidly. As cities grow into the surrounding countryside they change forever the land- and water-based ecosystems that exist there. The people in growing cities use increasing amounts of the earth's resources, deposit many different kinds of wastes. As cities grow outward and meet the boundaries of other cities to form one continuous urban area. For example, in the three cities of Tokyo, Osaka, and Yokohama grew together to form one big metropolis (super-city).



“Cities are the most spectacular achievements of human civilization.”

Mathis Wackernagel & William Rees, "Our Ecological Footprint"

“Spreading cities in every country march across the globe, devouring half a million hectares of land every day.”

Prof. Peter Newman, Murdoch University, Australia

Fact File

Almost 50% of people in developing countries live in cities.

It's Your World

Canada is one of the countries in the world that is noted for its expertise in satellite technology. Radarsat is Canada's first observation satellite. Launched into orbit 800 km above the earth in 1995, it collects photographs of the earth from space every four hours a day. Geographers use the high-resolution images to study land use and settlement patterns, monitor the environment, and manage natural resources.

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Business corporations, and the public may use the services of the satellite. For around the world the satellite will provide a picture of your home from space.

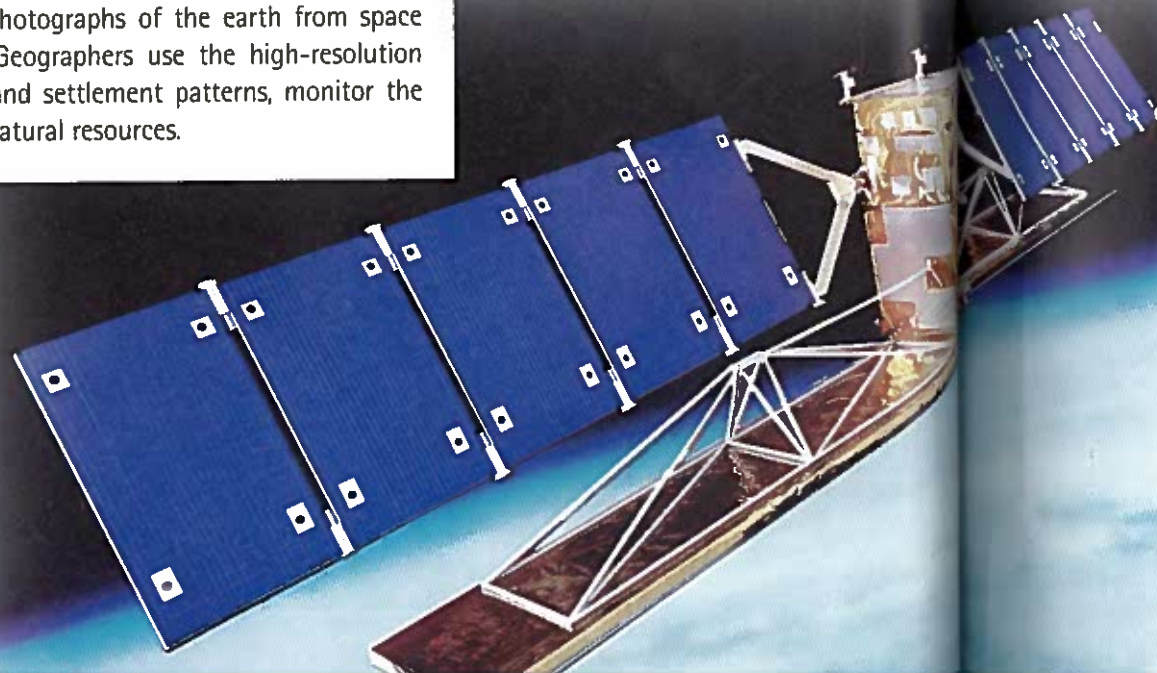


Figure 3.4 Three types of settlement patterns.

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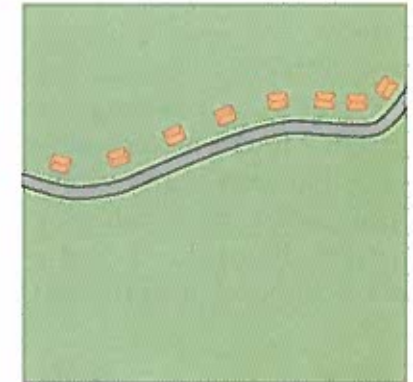
What Shape are You In?

Geographers use maps, aerial photographs, and satellite images as tools to describe and analyse settlement patterns. They look at the way in which the land is divided among its owners, as well as the way buildings and different-sized settlements are arranged on the land. Patterns are often described according to their shape.

There are three main types of settlement patterns in rural areas: linear, scattered, and clustered.

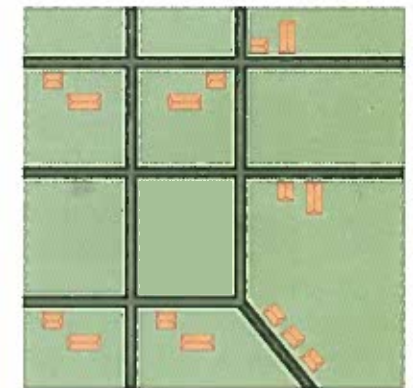
a) Linear

Sometimes called *strings*. This pattern consists of groups of houses or villages that form a long line, which can be straight (usually along a road or railway) or wavy (as found along the edge of a river or lake, or in a long, narrow valley).



b) Scattered

Sometimes called *dispersed*. This is the main pattern found in agricultural regions of North America. Each house sits alone, with just a barn or another outbuilding, on a piece of land quite separate from its neighbours.



c) Clustered

Examples of this pattern could be a group of houses close together, as found in tiny hamlets or villages in agricultural areas, or a concentration of gas stations, motels, and restaurants at a highway intersection.

