

Accessing the necessities of life— food and shelter

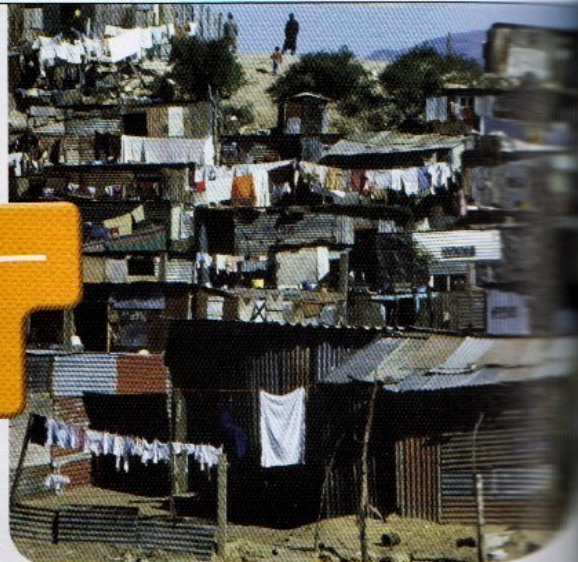
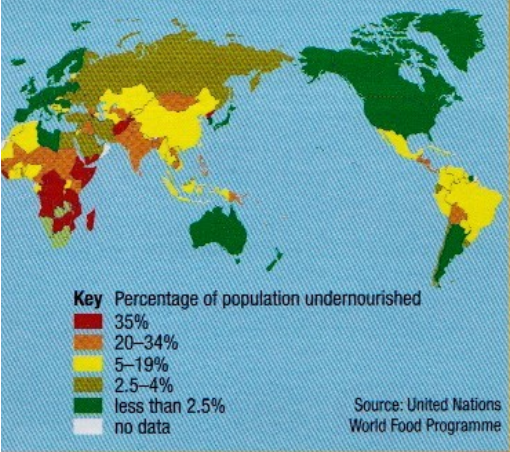
An adequate diet is essential for life. Poor diet causes malnutrition. Without a healthy body, malnourished people face a greater risk from infections and other diseases.

Adequate shelter in houses is another essential requirement for people. Shelter allows people to live together in family groups in the safety of a home. Without shelter people face ill-health and harm.

ACCESS TO FOOD

All people need enough nutritious food to grow and stay healthy. Malnutrition is where the body fails to develop because it lacks the essential vitamins and energy for growth. It is a problem facing much of the world's population. Around 850 million people worldwide are considered to be malnourished, and most of these live in the poorer countries of the world (see 9.5). Over 9 million people die each year from hunger and malnutrition. Out of these, 5 million are children.

9.5 Global undernourishment



9.4 Shanty towns are a feature of all cities in the poorer countries of the world.

Many children die from a few treatable infectious diseases including diarrhoea, pneumonia, malaria and measles. They would survive if their bodies and immune systems had not been weakened by hunger and malnutrition.

Is there enough food?

World agriculture is very efficient and the crops grown today produce large amounts of food. In fact there is 17 per cent more energy available per person per day from the foods we grow today than there was 30 years ago. This means there is enough food grown worldwide to feed everybody. The issue is not one of the amount or quality of the food produced, but how the food is shared around. While hunger is a problem in the poor world, being overweight is a major problem in many of the world's richest countries.

GEOGRAPHY FOCUS

In the world today, a child dies every three seconds as a direct result of the poverty they are forced to live in.

9.6 Share of children who are underweight and adults who are overweight, selected countries, mid-1990s

Country	Share underweight (%)	Country	Share overweight (%)
Bangladesh	56	United States	55
India	53	Russian Federation	54
Ethiopia	48	United Kingdom	51
Vietnam	40	Germany	50
Nigeria	39	Colombia	41
Indonesia	34	Brazil	36

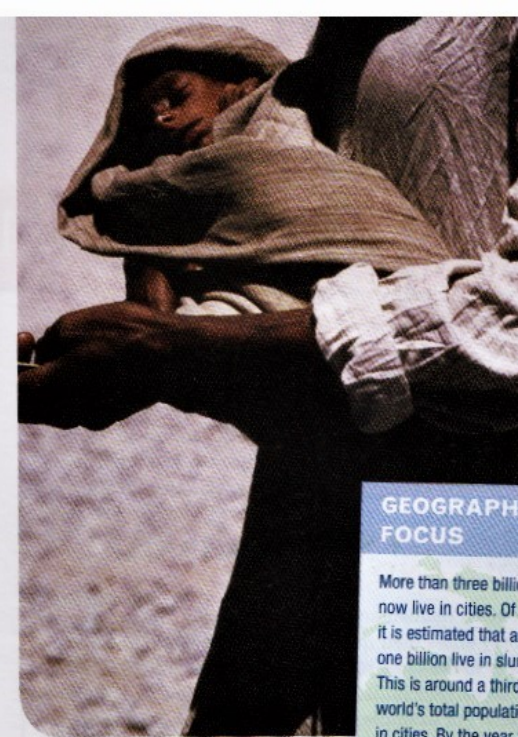
THE HUNGER CYCLE

Hunger is related very much to poverty. Poverty traps people in a downward spiral or cycle—a lack of food which leads to poor health, which leads to being unable to work, which leads to even greater poverty, and the cycle continues.

ACCESS TO SHELTER

Many of the world's cities are now growing at such a rapid rate that it makes it difficult for proper housing to be provided. Poor people—many of whom have moved from country areas in search of work—are unable to afford adequate housing. They build squatter settlements or shanty towns from whatever materials they can get on whatever piece of vacant land they can find.

These towns are known as slums. Most lack access to basic services such as water, sewage and electricity. Many are routinely cleared by the people who own the land they are built on. To avoid being cleared, shanty towns often develop on rubbish tips and other less favourable areas of a city. Disease and sickness are often common in slum areas. These issues are explored in greater detail in chapter 12.



9.7 In poorer countries malnutrition affects many children.

GEOGRAPHY FOCUS

More than three billion people now live in cities. Of these, it is estimated that about one billion live in slums. This is around a third of the world's total population in cities. By the year 2025, the figure is expected to rise by another billion.

Activities

Knowledge

- 1 What is malnutrition?
- 2 What impact does malnutrition have on the development of the human body?
- 3 What impact does hunger and poor nutrition have on the world's population today? Why is this impact greater on children?
- 4 Name four diseases that children commonly die from and explain the role malnutrition plays in these deaths.
- 5 What has happened to food production from agriculture over the last 30 years?
- 6 Explain the link between poverty and hunger.
- 7 What problems does food consumption cause in:
 - a the poor world
 - b the rich world?

- 8 What is meant by shanty towns or squatter settlements? Where are they located?
- 9 Describe the living conditions of the people living in slums.
- 10 How many people live in slums worldwide? How will this figure change in the future?

Skills

- 11 Refer to 9.5:

- a What percentage of Australia's population is undernourished? Name two other countries that have the same level of undernourished population.
- b What percentage of China's population is undernourished?
- c Which continent has the highest percentage of its population undernourished?

12 Refer to 9.6:

- a Name the country that has the highest percentage of children underweight.
- b Name the country that has the highest percentage of adults overweight.
- c How much higher is the percentage of children underweight in India than Ethiopia?
- d Construct two column graphs to represent the information in 9.6.

Application

- 13 Make a list of the items you could scavenge around your school that could be used to construct a shelter. Once you have a list of building materials, design a shelter making sure it is protected from wind, sun and rain. Estimate the size of the shelter, and the number of rooms.
- 14 Construct a diagram to show the operation of the hunger cycle described in this unit.

Surf

