

# Settlement Geography

Settlement Hierarchy & Zone of  
influence

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# What is a Settlement Hierarchy?

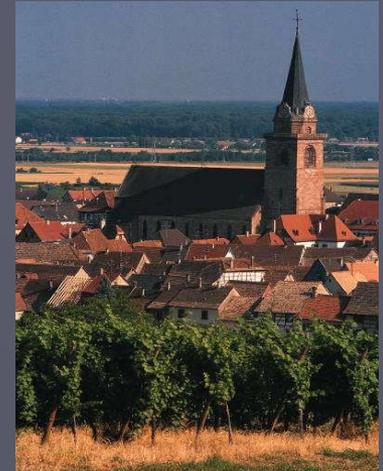
Learning objectives:

- ▶ To understand what a settlement hierarchy is.
- ▶ To understand that settlements have a sphere of influence

# What is a Settlement Hierarchy ?

- ▶ A settlement hierarchy is when settlements are ranked in order of size or importance.
- ▶ Put the following photos into an order of size

Village



Town



City



Hamlet



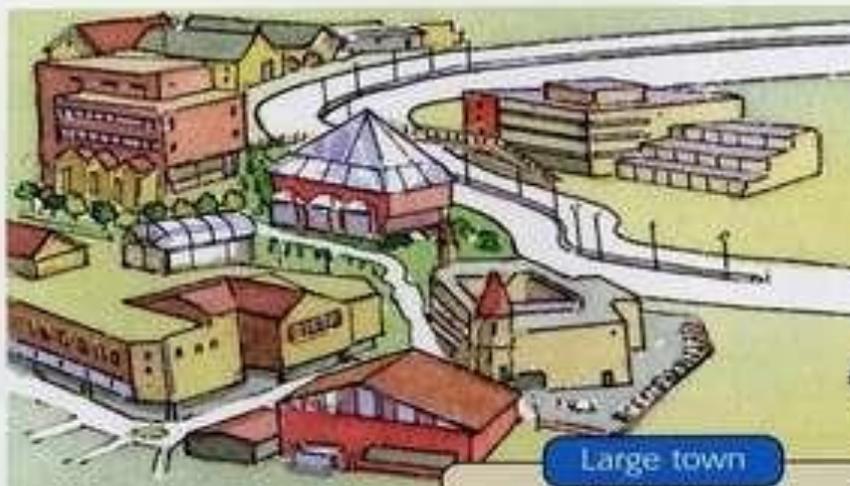
# The settlement hierarchy

A settlement may stay tiny, and not even have a phone box. Or grow large and lively with a whole range of services. Look at these examples.



**City**

... department store, cathedral, university, football stadium, airport ...



**Large town**

... shopping centre, secondary school, college, cinema, theatre, sports centre, museum ...

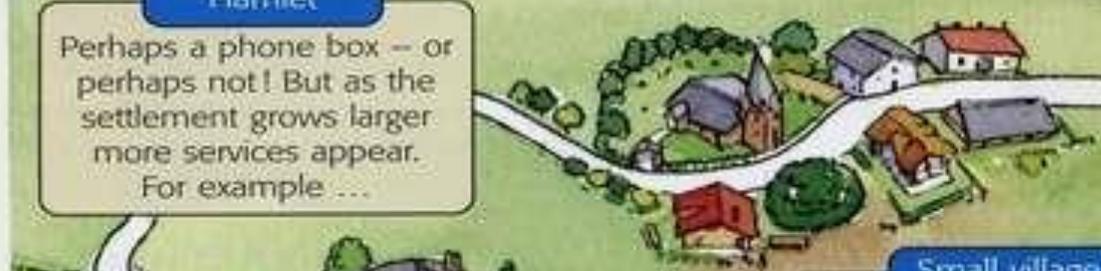


**Small town**

... library, clothes shop, shoe shop, bank, restaurant, hotel ...

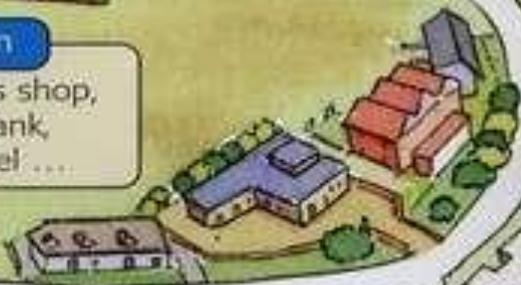
**Hamlet**

Perhaps a phone box – or perhaps not! But as the settlement grows larger more services appear. For example ...



**Small village**

... village shop, church, post office ...



**Large village**

... primary school, small supermarket, health centre, cafe ...

# Settlement hierarchy

This refers to the arrangement of settlements in an 'order of importance', usually from many isolated dwellings or hamlets at the base of the hierarchy to one major city, (usually the capital) at the top.

The order of importance is usually based on one of the following:

- the area and population of the settlement (**size**)
- the range and number of **services/functions** within each settlement
- the relative **sphere of influence** of each settlement.

# Settlement hierarchy

## Population

1,000,001 +

Conurbation

100,001 – 1,000,000

City

2,001 – 100,000

Town

101 – 2,000

Village

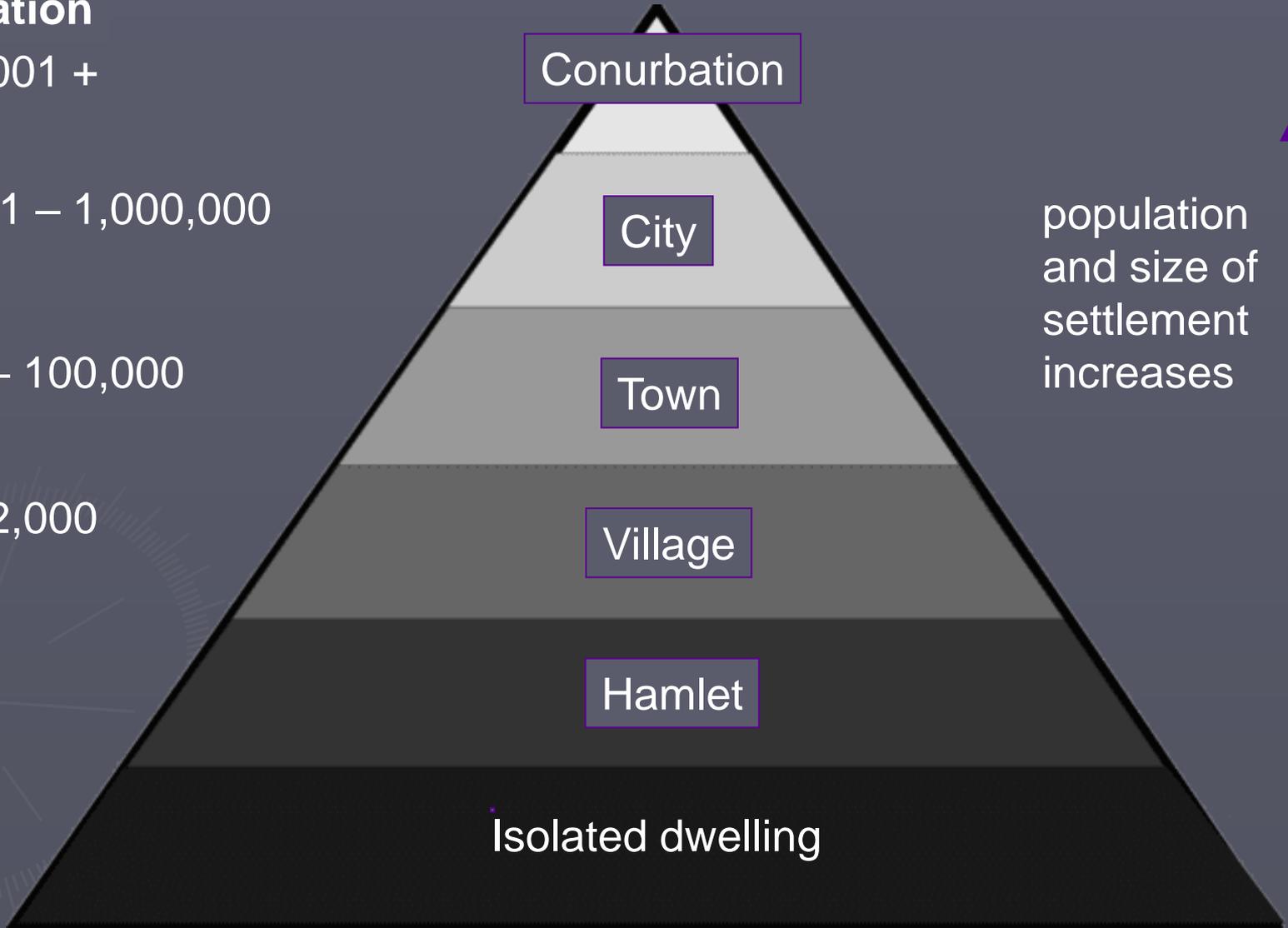
11-100

Hamlet

1-10

Isolated dwelling

population  
and size of  
settlement  
increases



Identify this type of settlement



## Sphere of influence

This is defined as the area served by a particular settlement.

It is the area around a central place in which it distributes services, recruits labour and takes in school children.



# Where would you go to buy the things from these shopping lists...?

## ▶ List A

- Newspaper
- Cadburys chocolate
- Milk
- Stamps

## ▶ List B

- New shoes
- CDs/DVDs
- Sports top
- Christmas present for your friend

## ▶ List C

- Presents for your family
- Clothes for you
- Visit the cinema/go out for dinner whilst you're there

# Sphere of influence

Sphere of Influence is based upon two main principles:

Threshold Population – the minimum number of people needed to support a settlement or service.

Range – the maximum distance that people are prepared to travel to obtain a particular service.

Put the following in order, with the one with the largest range first:

small  
supermarket

corner shop

department store

regional shopping centre

# The Central Place Theory

- ▶ Settlements are places to which people travel to buy things.
- ▶ People travel from a market area
- ▶ Each type of settlement is a central place, but they will be offering different types of services.
- ▶ Christaller came up with the Central Place Theory- this is used to describe the sizing and spacing of settlements according to the services they offer.

# High or low order goods?



# High order goods...

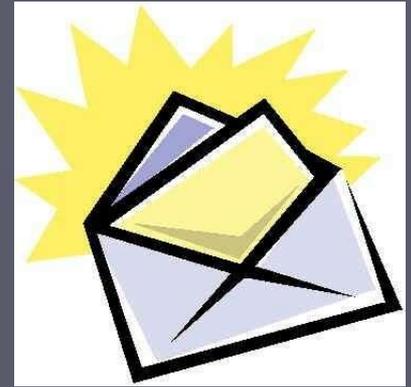


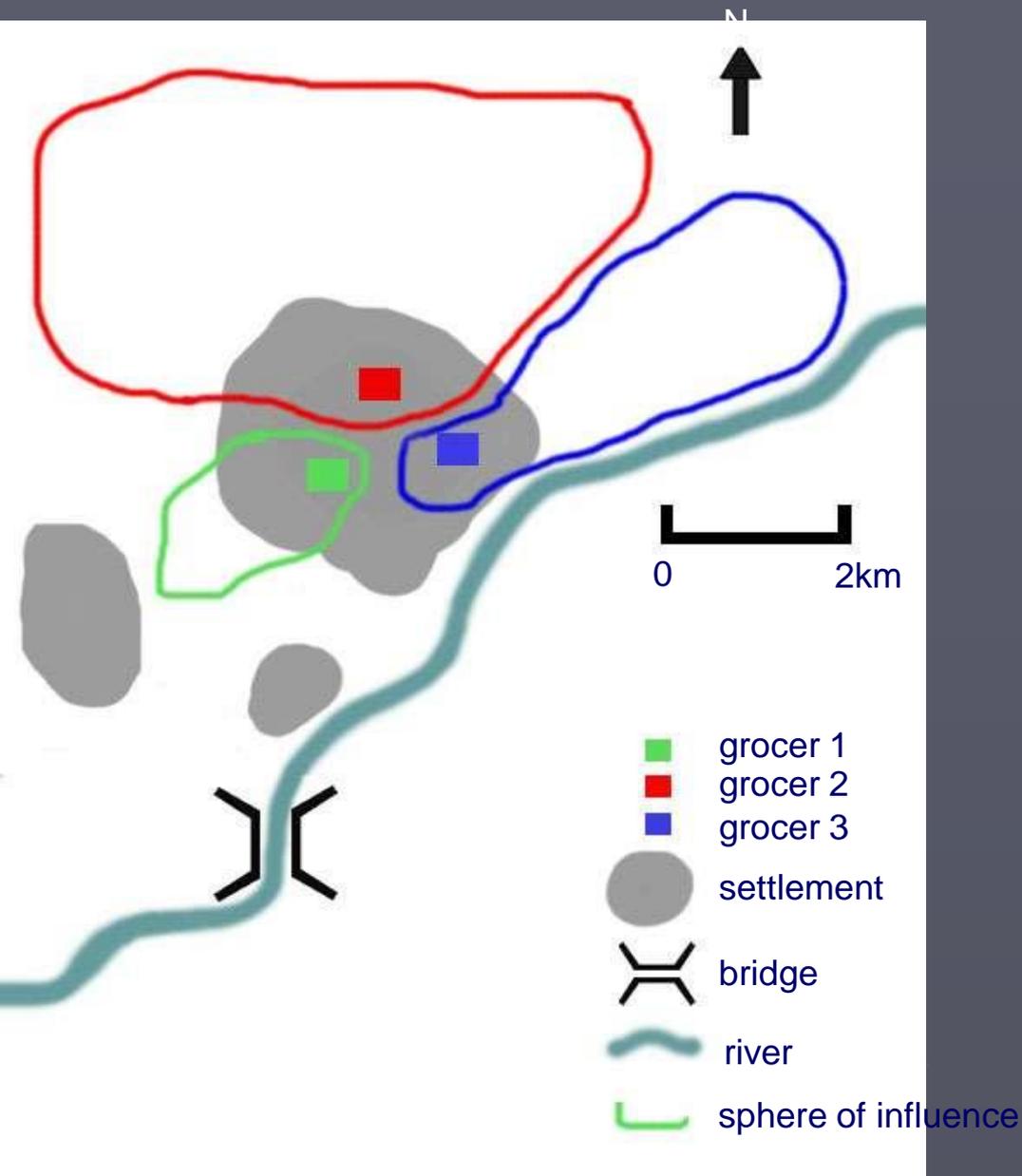
- ▶ These are **comparison** goods
- ▶ Before people buy them, they compare prices and quality.
- ▶ People do not buy these goods very often
- ▶ Therefore the shops have a higher threshold population, and will need to locate in a larger settlement to make a profit.



# Low order goods

- ▶ These are **convenience** goods
- ▶ People use them regularly and do not need to compare prices
- ▶ Shops selling these need a smaller threshold population to make money as people buy them more frequently
- ▶ The shops therefore locate in smaller settlements.





Which grocers has the largest sphere of influence?

Describe the shape of the sphere of influence of 'grocer 3'.

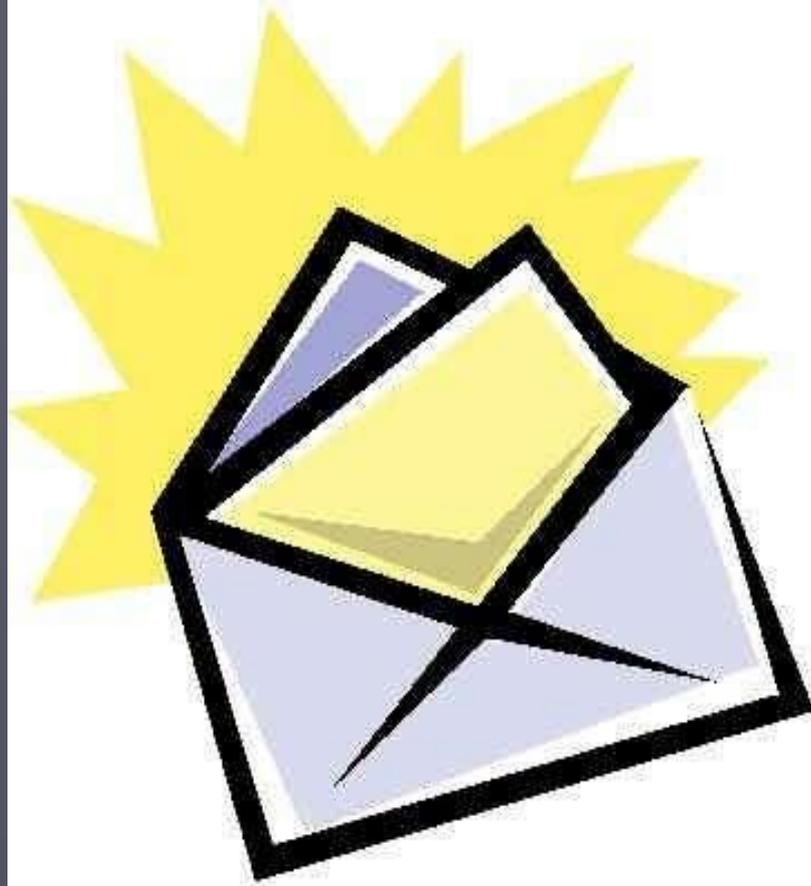
Why don't people travel to 'grocer 3' from the east?

Give some possible reasons why 'grocer 1' has the smallest sphere of influence.

# QUICK QUIZ



## 2. High or low?



3. Would this be sold in a shop that sells convenient or comparison goods?



4. The threshold population of this good is... large or small?



5. The range of this good is large or small?



## 6. True or false?

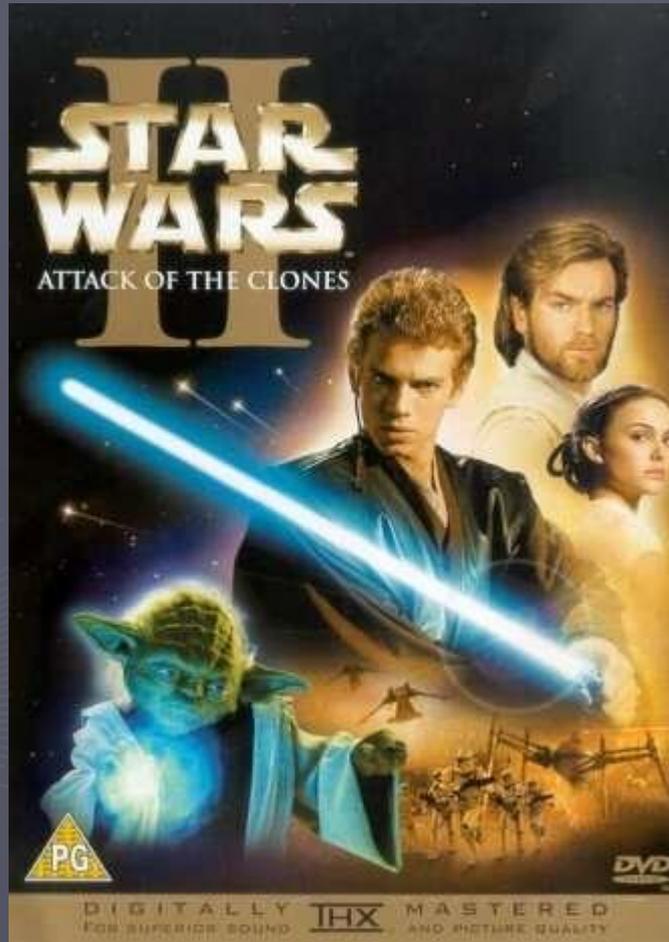
- ▶ A conurbation is at the top of the settlement hierarchy?



# 7. High or low?



# 8. High or low?





Thank  
you!