



# World Population Video Companion Text

World Population is a six-minute film illustrating human population growth over the last 2,000 years. It starts in 1 CE, when the world population was approximately 170 million, depicts its expansion to the current level of 8 billion, and ends in the year 2050, with a projected population of over 9 billion people.

You will see a map of the world covered by yellow dots. Each dot represents 1 million people. The numbers at the bottom of the screen show the year. Icons in the lower right-hand corner provide historic reference points. Please note, this Companion Text is meant to supplement the information in the video – it is not a script.

Historical Information	
1 CE	The world population in 1 CE is about 170 million. Agriculture has advanced to the point where farmed land is producing 50 times more food than unfarmed land. As a result, large permanent settlements are developing in places where the climate is good and land is fertile, often along river banks and near deltas. These early settlements of people were much smaller and spread out than present day cities.
Han Dynasty	Located in present-day China, the Han Dynasty is one of the two major world civilizations at the beginning of the first millennium. An imperial census in China counted approximately 60 million people.
Roman Empire	The Romans control a highly developed empire. At one point, Rome has an estimated 1 million residents, but by 476 CE, the Roman Empire begins to decline. Global population reaches an estimated 190 million people.
Golden Age of India	Under the Gupta Dynasty (320-335 CE), India takes a prominent role in world culture, science, and the arts that lasts well into the 5th century.
Mayan Empire	Around 550 CE, the Mayan Empire is flourishing in Central America. Chichen Itza becomes the Empire's epicenter and the most famous city on Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula.
Spread of Islam	A new religion, Islam, develops in the Middle East in the 7th century. Increased trade contributes to Islamic expansion throughout parts of Europe and Asia.
Viking Conquest	Both the Vikings in Europe and the Ancient Puebloan cliff-dwellers in the Southwestern region of the present-day United States reach their cultural peak. The dots in Central and South America represent the Toltecs of Mexico, Mayans in Central America, the Moche civilization of Peru, and the Amazonian cultures of Brazil.
Trans-Saharan Trade	The use of camels and the spread of Islam encouraged the development of trade routes across the Saharan desert in Northern Africa. Berber people led caravans of thousands from Mediterranean settlements in Morocco and Egypt to Ghana, Mali, Niger, and Ethiopian empires in the southwest, south, and the east.
Crusades	Wars between Muslim and Christian armies in southeast Europe and the Middle East go on for 200 years. By 1100 world population reaches 320 million people.
Mongol Invasions	First war, then disease, cuts what is modern-day China's population in half, as indicated by the disappearance of dots.



Black Death	The Bubonic Plague travels from Asia, through the Middle East, and into Europe. It spreads most quickly in Europe because that is where population density and crowding are highest, two conditions under which contagion is most dangerous. In a period of five years, one-fifth of the world's population, 75 million people, are lost to the disease. This is the only point during the animation where population growth is negative – it drops by 10 million between 1300 and 1400, from 360 to 350 million. But as you can see, the dots disappear and reappear almost immediately. It took only 20 years to return to pre-plague population levels.	
Incan and Aztec Empires	The Incan and Aztec Empires are among the most flourishing cultures of the 15th century. The Aztecs build their capital city at Tenochtitlan in present-day Mexico. The Incan Empire extends from present-day Ecuador to central Chile, with its capital based in Cuzco in present-day Peru. Both cultures are decimated by disease brought over during the Columbian Exchange in the 15th and 16th centuries.	
European Exploration and Conquest	Curiosity, desire for prestige, and an effort to spread Christianity spurred European exploration and colonization during this time. Europeans land in North and South America, searching for gold, enslaving Indigenous people, and spreading diseases that decimate Indigenous populations. Hernando Cortez lands in Mexico and the Aztec Empire falls in his wake. Europeans bring the potato from the high Andes of South America back to Europe where food production expands and European population increases.	
Atlantic Slave Trade	Cash crop demands (such as sugar and tobacco) in Europe and the Americas lead to the spread of slavery and fuel the Transatlantic Slave Trade. West and Central African men make up the majority of enslaved persons sent to the Americas. The slave trade has a significant demographic impact on the sex-ratio and population growth rate of West and Central Africa.	
Colonial America	European diseases decimate Indigenous populations in the present-day United States. Even with European colonization, overall population growth remains stagnant until the 18th century.	
Industrial Revolution	The 18th and 19th centuries bring advances in food production, water supply, sanitation, transportation, and disease control. These advances enable people to live longer, and population, as a result, reaches 1 billion people worldwide in 1804.	
Modern Medicine	Advances in medicine and a new understanding of how diseases spread lead to preventions and treatments.	
1927	2 billion	Icons representing the World Wars, the Green Revolution and the Information Age appear quickly during this segment.
1960	3 billion	
1974	4 billion	
1987	5 billion	
1998	6 billion	
2010	7 billion	
2022	8 billion	
2037*	9 billion	
2050	You may want to pause the video at this point, with world population over 9.5 billion. The largely unpopulated areas show environments that can't support a large human population, like the deserts in northern Africa and Australia, or the fragile tundra of Canada.	

\* Median population projection according to the United Nations Population Division (2022).