

4: Johannesburg and urbanisation



Video summary	Before watching	While watching	
Chioma is in Johannesburg in South Africa. Johannesburg is densely populated and has experienced rapid urbanisation, which has brought both opportunities and challenges for the population living there. One challenge in particular has been maintaining the electricity supply: demand for electricity can be such that 'load-shedding' becomes necessary, when the supply is shut off in some areas to ensure that the system doesn't get overloaded. Chioma also explores the differences in the standard of living across Johannesburg, including in the Alexandra Township and Sandton. The video also investigates the impact of apartheid on South Africa and how the consequences of apartheid remain relevant. While there are efforts to reduce inequality - such as the Corridors of Freedom project - it is clear that there are still huge differences in the standards of living across South Africa.	Show students a map of South Africa and locate the major cities, such as Johannesburg, Cape Town and Pretoria. Discuss why people may choose to move from rural areas to urban areas and what opportunities and challenges may arise from this. Record students' suggestions and monitor whether they arise during the video. Discuss what students may already know about South Africa's history and the impact that this might have on South Africa's population today. Introduce key terms such as: Rural to urban migration: movement from the countryside to towns and cities. Urbanisation: the increasing proportion of people living in towns and cities. Load-shedding: a temporary curtailment of the power supply to certain areas to prevent excessive demand on the generating plant. Apartheid: a system of racial segregation in South Africa that separated people by race and ethnicity. Segregation: the separation of people into different groups based on characteristics such as race and ethnicity.	You may wish to stop at relevant points during this short film to pose questions and check understanding, or wait until the end. Useful questions might include: • What is rural to urban migration? • Why would rural to urban migration cause urbanisation? • What are the opportunities of a rapidly growing city? • What are the challenges of a rapidly growing city? • Why is the electricity supply a problem in South Africa? • What is 'load-shedding'? • What is housing like in the Alexandra Township? • What is housing like in Sandton? • Why are there differences in the housing quality? • What was 'apartheid'? • What is 'segregation'? • What evidence is there that segregation is still having an impact in South Africa, desppite segregation laws ending? • What are the 'Corridors of Freedom'?	
After watching			

Using online mapping, further investigate the different areas seen within the video to explore the similarities and differences between the locations. Students could create a table to record the similarities and differences. Students could also explore more of the city and add this to their research.

1/2 © BBC Teach 2025



4: Johannesburg and urbanisation



After watching (continued)

Continue the discussion about why people may want to move from rural to urban areas and what challenges this brings when counting the population size of a city. In 2022 there was a census in South Africa. However it is reported that there are many undocumented people that can't be accounted for. What potential issues are there if the population size is larger than reported?

Investigate further the process of load-shedding. What issues can arise as a result of load-shedding? Do students think load-shedding happens in the UK? In 2022 load-shedding measures were introduced to reduce the risk of blackouts due to energy shortages across Europe. Discuss with students how they think load-shedding could affect them if they were living in Johannesburg. How might people cope when the power is off?

Apartheid was in place in South Africa from 1948 until the early 1990s. The word apartheid is Afrikaans for 'separateness'. Discuss with students why they think the effects of apartheid are still being felt today in cities such as Johannesburg.

Explore further the concept of 'townships'. Townships are urban areas that were created under apartheid to segregate non-white people. They were built on the outskirts of towns and cities and had the effect of alienating communities. Since the end of apartheid many townships have undergone significant transformation; however, they are still home to many low-income families and individuals.

Curriculum notes	Where next?	Links
 This clip will be relevant for teaching Geography at KS3 in England and Northern Ireland, 3rd/4th Level in Scotland and Progression Step 4 in Wales. In the English National Curriculum this video can be used to help teach the following: Using maps of the world to focus on Africa, focusing on the environmental regions, hot deserts, key physical features, countries and major cities. Understand geographical similarities, differences and links between places through the study of human and physical geography of a region within Africa. Human geography related to population and urbanisation. 	Explore the impact of apartheid on education in South Africa - for example, the Bantu Education Act which was enforced in 1953. What impact would this have had on development and opportunities for the population of South Africa? Black schools were under-resourced, overcrowded and had a different curriculum to white schools. This segregation continued into universities and there were separate universities and Technikons (vocational training institutions) for black and white students.	Urban patterns in LICS and MICS: https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/z96vr82/ articles/zgj6xbk Urban processes in LICs and MICS: https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/z96vr82/ articles/zc7htrd Migration: https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zg7nvcw/ articles/zgrbg7h Energy resources: https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zjsc87h/ articles/z3bgvwx

2 / 2 © BBC Teach 2025