

**Settlement** : is a place where a group of people live together and function together as a group.

Settlements can be classified as urban or rural according to their size and the kinds of activities that take place there.

Rural settlements are usually quite small; most people living there are involved in **primary activities** such as farming, fishing, forestry or mining. Rural settlements are, therefore, **unifunctional** (one function) and have primary activities.

It is important to know the difference between **SITE** and **SITUATION** of a settlement.

**SITE**: actual piece of land settled on – the physical characteristics of the piece of land.

Factors influencing the choice of site:

- Availability of water
- Arable land
- Grazing land
- Building materials level ground

**SITUATION**: The position of the settlement in relation to the surrounding environment.

Here we consider:

- Transport routes
- The general relief (e.g. valley, mountain etc.)
- Aspect
- Soil fertility

When the site, situation, customs and traditions are combined, we find that some areas tend to be nucleated while other areas are dispersed.

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Dispersed</b>	<b>Nucleated</b>
Water	Freely available	In short supply
Relief	Flat ground	Steeper ground
Soil	Unfertile	Fertile
Tradition	Nguni settlement	Tswana village
Defence	Peace time	War and violence
Climate	Mild	Extreme climates

**Wet-point settlement**: where there is water in a dry area, e.g. spring, oasis. If water is scarce, people gather around a wet point.

**Dry-point settlement**: where there is a dry point in a wet area, people settle on dry land, e.g. small hills suitable for settlement in a marshy area.

**Function of a Settlement**: most rural settlements are serviced by a central service centre. The service centres provide a market and provide goods and services to the surrounding population, for example, transport, medical, etc.

Once you have identified the settlement, you must identify the **characteristics** of that settlement.

## Characteristics of a settlement:

**Size:** The number of people living together. This can vary from the smallest isolated farmstead to a small hamlet (a few farms) to a village that may consist of a few hundred inhabitants. The size is also referred to as the **hierarchy** of the settlement. Ensure that you know their characteristics and South African examples. The triangle has a large base (lots of small settlements) and a narrow apex (less of the larger settlements)

**Pattern:** Settlements that are far apart are isolated or dispersed. Settlements that are close together to each other are clustered or nucleated.



There are various positives and negatives to living in isolated or dispersed settlements

### DISPERSED

#### Advantages

Farmers can make their own decisions

They can mechanise and implement environmentally friendly farming methods

#### Disadvantages

There is a shortage of social contact

Farmers cannot rely on community for any help

Requires a large amount of capital to maintain the farming practices

### NUCLEATED

#### Advantages

Help is readily available in times of trouble, health emergencies and war

Farmers need less capital, seeing that they can borrow machines and other implements from each other

#### Disadvantages

All farmers have to reach consent with regards to certain farming methods

Land is often fragmented, and thus sometimes too small to mechanise

If soil erosion occurs, all farmers are

affected, for example dongas that reach across farm boundaries

There is less opportunity for the use of individual choices

**Shape:** Another term used to describe the shape is the **morphology** of the settlement. This refers to how the buildings are arranged in relation to each other, and their physical appearance

