41. Settlements – main characteristics

Settlement = every inhabited place or locality, i.e. territories occupied by people.

Basic terms
<u>Commune</u> = grouping of settlements with population not larger than 2000-3000 inhabitants.
<u>Town</u> = grouping of settlements with population 2000-100000 inhabitants.
<u>City</u> = grouping of settlements with population more than 100000 inhabitants.

Since the beginning of our civilization, people have grouped to certain regions. These settlements were important for different reasons, e.g.:

- <u>good location</u>, e.g. nearby river as a source of water for irrigation
- <u>more people = greater chance to survive</u> in case of attack by other tribes, nations, etc.
- <u>grouping of tribes</u> meant higher degree of cooperation

First town were found, e.g. Ur, Babylon, Gizeh. Later, with developing civilizations, towns became larger and this resulted in many problems, e.g.:

- *social stratification* – rich and poor
- *health problems* – lack of health care, a lot of dirt in the streets, etc.

Can you think about other problems of cities in the past we cannot experience nowadays?

Therefore, settlements needed to be organized more. This need resulted in self-governing regions where different rules (laws) went into effect. In our geographic point of view, we will target the structure of a settlement in the past compared with recent period.

Settlement of the past
…had only few functions, e.g.:

- agricultural
- fishing
- mining
- forestry
- merchant

Settlements in recent days
Former functions of settlements have been supplemented by other (modern) functions, e.g.:

- transporting
- administrative
- recreational
- scientific

Settlements are divided according to their function into:

- *mono-functional*, with one prevailing function, e.g. agricultural
- *poly-functional*, with more functions, e.g. administrative, business, transportation, etc.

There are also settlements without any function. These are of residential purpose only.

Normally, communes (villages) do not comprise so many functions as towns. There are no hypermarkets, no industrial production or other factories, not so developed infrastructure as in towns.
Do you live in a commune or in a town?
Give 3 advantages of you living in a commune. Give 3 disadvantages of you living in a commune.
Give 3 advantages of you living in a town. Give 3 disadvantages of you living in a town.

Keywords
settlement, commune, town, location, tribe, self-governing region, functions of settlements