

Activity Sheet: The Population in Spain (pages 25-31 and 36-39)

Instructions: *Read the information in your book carefully. Look for the words you don't understand. When you think you understand the information try to fill in the gaps. They may not follow the order of the book, so it is important, that first you read all the information and then you answer the exercise. The names of territories in Spain, must be used in Spanish, your book has translated them into English, but you should translate them and use them in Spanish.*

The population of Spain is determined by natural factors such as **births, deaths** and fertility, which determine the **natural** growth of the population, but also social factors such as **migrations** and political and economical factors.

The absolute population in Spain in 2015 was of **46.6 million** people in which **22.9 million** were men and **23.7 million** were women. Spain has a **moderate** population density of **92** inhabitants per Km².

If we look at the European Union, Spain occupies the **5th** place, behind **Germany**, the most populated country in Europe, France, the United Kingdom and Italy.

The **National Statistics Institute** (INE) collects the data of the population in Spain. It calculates the population through the **census**, the **municipal register**, the **civil register**.

Spain's territory is divided in big **autonomous communities**, which are divided in **provinces**, that are subdivided in **municipalities**. There are **17** autonomous communities and 2 autonomous **cities**, **Ceuta** and **Melilla**. Each autonomous community has its own capital, except the **Canary Islands**, that has 2 capitals.

According to the map that shows the Population Cartogram (page 29), the most populated autonomous communities are **Andalucía**, the **Autonomous Community of Madrid**, **Cataluña** and the **Autonomous Community of Valencia**, while the less populated autonomous communities are **La Rioja**, **Navarra**, **Extremadura**, **Castilla y León**, **Castilla La Mancha** and **Aragón**.

Nevertheless, the distribution of the population is very irregular. This uneven distribution can be explained by historical reasons. By the end of the 19th century, most of the population lived in **Madrid**, which attracted the population being the capital, and in **coastal** and **island** regions as industries were located there. During the 20th century, a rural exodus took place with a lot of people from rural inland areas **migrating** to big cities and coastal areas, looking for work. In the late 20th century, **Madrid**, the **Mediterranean** coast, **western Andalucía**, the coast of **Cantabria** and the **Canary Islands** consolidated as heavily populated areas.

According to the map of population density (page 31) the most densely populated provinces, with more than 500 inhabitants per km², are **Madrid**, **Barcelona** and **Vizcaya**, followed by **Alicante y Guipuzcoa** with a population density that goes from 500 to 251 inhabitants per km², and **Gerona**, **Tarragona**, **Valencia**, **Albacete**, **Murcia**, **Sevilla**, **Málaga**, **Cádiz** with a density that goes from 121 to 250 inhabitants per km². The islands are also highly populated territories. Inside each autonomous community and province, population tends to concentrate in **cities**, especially in the capital.

There is a very big difference in population density between **rural** and urban areas. The expansion of **industry** and **tourism** triggered a mass exodus from rural areas to big cities. This

phenomenon is called **depopulation** and continues today as young people migrate to big cities to earn a living.

The consequences of rural depopulation include an **ageing** population, as most people is elderly and young people migrate to cities, the lack of **investment** and **infrastructure** as there are less consumers to provide for, and that **environmental** risks increase as less people is taking care of nature.

Solutions are complex but it may be necessary to implement measures to **balance** populations, increase economic opportunities in **rural** areas and introduce rural **development policies** to encourage agricultural activities. Making rural areas more economically diverse can also help, for example, introducing small-scale **industries**, traditional **crafts** activities and fostering rural **tourism**. Improving the means of communication (roads, train, bus...) will also encourage people to stay or will attract investment and new people to those areas.