

## Can Geography Save your Life if Godzilla Attacks?

Submitted to NCTA at the Program for Teaching East Asia, University of Colorado

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**Lesson recommended grade level:** 10 -11<sup>th</sup> grade

**Estimated number of classes:** 1.5-2 90-minute blocks with advance homework assignment

**Lesson overview/ introduction:** This lesson uses the geography of Godzilla's many attacks on Asian cities as a high-interest hook for students to consider the key geographic theme of migration, focusing on causes of migration and movement factors. Using internet information and selected viewing of Godzilla films (optional), students will identify the geographical locations of Godzilla attacks, selecting one for their project. Then, based on their knowledge of geography, geographic push-pull factors, and research into key geographic characteristics of their city and the surrounding region, they will work in small groups to determine a survival/escape plan for when Godzilla attacks their city.

**Background:** I have been lucky enough to take three different classes through TEA-NCTA with Dr. William Tsutsui, whose work was the inspiration for creating this lesson for my AP Human Geography course. One of the recurring themes in Dr. Tsutsui's NCTA courses was the historical meaning and importance behind the Godzilla films and their usefulness in historical study. Dr. Tsutsui discussed the Cold War anxieties in Japan in the 1950s, looking at political divides, the recovering economy, the forces of nature, and dangers of nuclear weapons. It became clear that the early 1950s Godzilla movies show a lot about human interactions and the environment.

This led me to examine how I could use the film in my AP Human Geography course. One point that stuck with me in Dr. Tsutsui's discussions of the 1954 original *Godzilla (Gojira)* was that most discussions of the film focus on the monster but, in reality, the majority of the film focuses on human response to the monster (NCTA class meeting: June 24, 2020). This point is what inspired me to look at how my students would respond if Godzilla were to attack. I decided to pick the locations that Godzilla had attacked in various films so I could discuss what actually occurred in the films. And, as an extension activity, talk to students about how the attempt to save people was successful or unsuccessful. Many of my students did not know where many of the cities in Asia were prior to this activity so, mapping was critical for my students to be able to complete the activity. Some students needed to do more research to learn about the surrounding areas than others to complete their safety plans and discuss the best options. This is likely due to my students range from 10th-12th grade my AP course.

I would recommend teachers have groups of various level students or be sure to build research time and clear steps to complete the activity. My students enjoyed creating safety plans for their cities and they were able to apply the geographic knowledge and concepts of migration push pull

factors. After this lesson my students examined refugees and asylum seekers and were able to apply their knowledge of migration to the next topic.

**Lesson objectives/ outcomes:** Students will be able to identify, understand, and apply knowledge of movement factors in human geography.

**Ties to standards:** AP Human Geography Units 2.10 Causes of Migration and 2.11 Forced vs. Voluntary Migration

**Materials:**

- Handout “Geography of Godzilla” for all students (two pages may be printed back-to-back or provided electronically)
- [Lesson powerpoint](#)
- You Tube Video “Migration-Why do people migrate:”  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54xM8VlgP7s>
- Blank map of the world.
- Websites for Students to learn more about the city they choose:
  - <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/>
  - <https://luminocity3d.org/WorldPopDen/#3/12.00/10.00> (Population Density)
  - <https://calculator.academy/population-density/>

**Advance preparation:** Before conducting the lesson, teachers unfamiliar with the history and plot of the original 1954 Japanese and 1956 American versions of *Godzilla* should read about these films. Two brief, interesting articles are:

- Dannie C. Bell, “Godzilla: A Crash Course.” *The Crimson*, April 15, 2021.  
<https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2021/4/15/godzilla-class-bill-Tsutsui/>.
- Juan Siliezar. “Round 2: Godzilla vs. Kong. *The Harvard Gazette*, March 29, 2021. <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2021/03/godzilla-grabs-the-spotlight-in-course-on-japanese-monsters/>

In addition, review the handouts and slide packet and make copies of blank world map. The slide packet proceeds step-by-step through the activity. Points of instruction and activity for each slide are provided below in Part II. Note that for Part I, students should be assigned to watch the *Godzilla* film at home several days in advance.

**Procedure:**

**Part I. Introducing Godzilla**

1. Introduce this extended lesson by asking if students have seen or know about the many *Godzilla* films that have been made. Can anyone tell the class about the very first *Godzilla* movies, when they were made and/or the plot?

2. If not, if students have access to the Internet, allow 5 minutes for students to research the first (Japan, 1954) Godzilla movie, called *Gojira* in Japanese. Otherwise, share the story of the first Godzilla films from the 1950s, highlighting the fact that Godzilla films can be studied for the complex relationship Godzilla and with his geographic and environmental surroundings. One continuing theme in Godzilla films is the monster's attacks on cities around the world, starting with his destruction of Tokyo. (See: Thomas DiFonzo et.al. "Godzilla: Celebrating 60 Year of Destruction..." *WSJ*. [graphics.wsj.com/godzilla-60-years/#chapter=destruction](https://graphics.wsj.com/godzilla-60-years/#chapter=destruction). In this activity, the class will explore the geography of Godzilla's path of destruction.

3. Several days (or longer) before the lesson, distribute the Godzilla film watching guide handout, assigning students the task of selecting a Godzilla film to watch at home. Explain that, using the guide, students will be looking for geographic information in the Godzilla film they choose.

**Part II. Slide pack discussion: Identifying, understanding, and applying knowledge of movement factors in human geography.** Note: For copyright reasons, images of Godzilla have been removed from my slides, but teachers can easily insert great images from the Internet to capture student attention when using in the classroom.

**Slide 1:** Introduction for teachers.

**Slide 3:** Based on information on the slide, ask students why people tend to live where they do.

- *Some possible answers:* Early settlements: fertile valleys (Nile River Valley, Tigris and Euphrates, etc.); fresh water supply; temperate climate (not too extreme); places with good communication.

**Slide 4:** Review the concept of movement. Ask students what are some things that move?

- *Some possible answers:* People – move goods; animals, goods (resources, food supply, weapons); ideas (entertainment, news information, architecture); and Godzilla (while sometimes slowly).

**Slides 5-7:** Review essential geographic terms on these slides. Students may already be familiar with some terms.

**Slide 8:** Ask students to drag and drop or draw lines on the slides to match them to the correct category. Ask volunteers to share their answers in class discussion. Discuss why they put examples in the category they did. There may be some discrepancies with examples. For example, some movement involves people moving out of their country while others moved to other regions within their country.

**Slide 9:** Discuss the difference between push and pull factors noted on this slide.

**Slide 10:** Students will watch the short video linked in Slide 9 and take notes on why people live in certain areas based on social, economic and political factors.

**Slide 11:** This slide provides a map of China, with population distribution. Have students look for and identify:

- The most populated areas. Note that these areas are highly concentrated on the east coast and 90% of the population lives on just 30% of the land.
- Why students think these areas are the most populated.
- *Responses might include:* Physical geography, trade and commerce, Millionaire cities, core-periphery inequality.

**Slide 12:** As a class, discuss the question, “What makes movement challenging for humans?”

- Some possible answers: Landforms can create boundaries; political boundaries (border gate); cultural values; family size.

Follow student responses by asking, “What makes movement easier for people?”

- Some possible answers: Waterways, highways

**Slide 13:** Provide students with a blank map of the world. Ask them to locate and label cities/countries listed that had been attacked by Godzilla in the movie franchise history.

**Slide 14:** After labeling their maps, students will then look at the population density of the world shown on Slide 13. Students will want to take notes on the density of the cities they labeled on their map, as they will need to reference the population density map when making decisions in the assessment activity on Slide 15.

**Slide 15:** In preparation for the culminating small group activity, as a class, discuss what you would do if Godzilla were to attack. Consider the movement factors the class previously talked about and ask students to analyze them. Discussion points:

- How can you analyze these movement factors to help you survive?
- Identify points or locations – what are your options?
- How would you decide where to go?
- What connects the different locations? Highways? Open land? Waterways?
- How are you going to get to the location you chose to go to?
- Are there any patterns that occur over the connections?

## **Part II. Assessment of Knowledge: Applying Geography to Escape Godzilla**

**Slide 16:** Assign students to work in groups of three or four. Their task is to devise a plan for what they would do if (when) Godzilla were to attack one of the cities that was a target in one of his movies, based on their understanding of geography, migration factors, and specifically, push and pull factors.

- Student groups will randomly draw a city based on the list of attacked cities in Godzilla films on Slide 12. Students may exchange with another group if they would like.
- Student groups will research their city to find population density, geographical features, connections to other locations, and patterns of movement. *Note:* If students have a hard time finding population density, they can use arithmetic density to figure it out on their own. *Arithmetic Density*=*Total Population/Total Land Area*

- After students complete research, they will need to decide what best options for escape if Godzilla were to attack the city and how to lead others to safety.
- Each group will share out this information to the class and be able to ask each other questions to determine which group has the most reasonable solution.

17. Extension activity.

## Film Watching Guide: The Geography of Godzilla

Pick one of the Godzilla films or shows to watch prior to class on (Insert date). Below is a list with links to free versions of the films. If you would like to watch a Godzilla film that is not on the list, that is fine as well. If you are unable to access any of these please see me as soon as possible so I can loan you a copy of one of the films or help you access it from the public library.

While watching the film take notes using the graphic organizer (page 2) to help you with the following:

- Geographical locations mentioned or shown in the film.
  - Describe the physical geography.
  - Describe the cultural landscape.
- What absolute and/or relative locations are attacked by Godzilla?
- How do people respond to Godzilla? Do responses differ based on different characteristics or roles of the people in the film?

Film/ Show Title	How to Access/ View (as of Fall 2022):
<i>Godzilla (Gojira)</i> (1954) This is the uncut Japanese original.	<a href="#">Free on YouTube Movies</a>
<i>Godzilla, King of the Monsters</i> (1956) Original US version	<a href="#">Free on Amazon</a> <a href="#">Free on YouTube Movies</a>
<i>Godzilla, King of the Monsters</i> (2019 version)	<a href="#">Free on HBOMax</a> and available at many local libraries.
<i>Godzilla vs. Mechagodzilla</i> (1976) English language version	<a href="#">Free on Amazon</a>
<i>Godzilla</i> (2014)	<a href="#">Free on HBOMax</a>
<i>Godzilla</i> (2004)	<a href="#">Free on HBOMax</a>
<i>Mothra v. Godzilla</i> (1964)	<a href="#">Free on Amazon</a>
<i>Godzilla v. Gigan</i> (1972)	<a href="#">Free on HBOMax</a>
<i>Godzilla v. Hedorah</i> (1971)	<a href="#">Free on HBOMax</a>
<i>Godzilla v. Megalon</i> (1973)	<a href="#">Free on HBOMax</a>
<i>Godzilla Raids Again</i> (1955)	<a href="#">Free on HBOMax</a>
<i>Son of Godzilla</i> (1967)	<a href="#">Free on Amazon</a>
<i>Godzilla v. Mechagodzilla</i>	<a href="#">Free on HBOMax</a>
<i>Godzilla v. Kong</i> (2021)	GooglePlay or Apple TV (from\$3.99)


## Film Watching Guide: The Geography of Godzilla

Godzilla Film Picked:	
Geographic locations in the film:	Describe the physical geography:
	Describe the cultural landscapes:
Locations attacked by Godzilla:	Absolute Location:
	Relative Location:
How do people respond to Godzilla?	General Response:
	Responses that differ:
	Physical movement of people:



# Inspiration for the Lesson- Dr. William TsuTsui

I have been lucky enough to take three different classes through TEA-NCTA with Dr. William Tsutsui whose work was the inspiration for creating this lesson for my AP Human Geography course. One of the recurring themes in the courses was the historical meaning and importance behind the Godzilla films and their usefulness in historical study. Dr. Tsutsui discussed the Cold War anxieties in Japan in the 1950s looking at political divides, the recovering economy, the forces of nature, as well as the dangers of nuclear weapons. It became clear that Godzilla shows a lot about human interactions and the environment, which led me to examine how I could use the film in my AP Human Geography course. One point that stuck with me in Dr. Tsutsui's discussions of the original *Godzilla* film (*Gojira*) was that most discussions of the film focus on the monster but, in reality the majority of the film focuses on human response to the monster (June 24, 2020). This point is what inspired me to look at how my students would respond if Godzilla were to attack. I decided to pick the locations of areas that Godzilla had attacked so I could discuss what actually occurred in the films and, as an extension activity, talk to students about how the attempt to save people was successful or unsuccessful. Many of my students did not know where many of the cities in Asia were prior to this activity, so mapping was critical for my students to be able to complete the activity. Some students needed to do more research to learn about the surrounding areas than others to complete their safety plans and discuss the best options. This is likely because my students range from 10th-12th grade in the course. I would recommend teachers trying this lesson have groups of various level students or make sure to build in research time and steps to complete the activity. My students enjoyed creating safety plans for their cities and they were able to apply the concepts of push pull factors. After this lesson my students examined refugees and asylum seekers and were able to apply their knowledge of migration to the next topic. --Lindsey Perdue



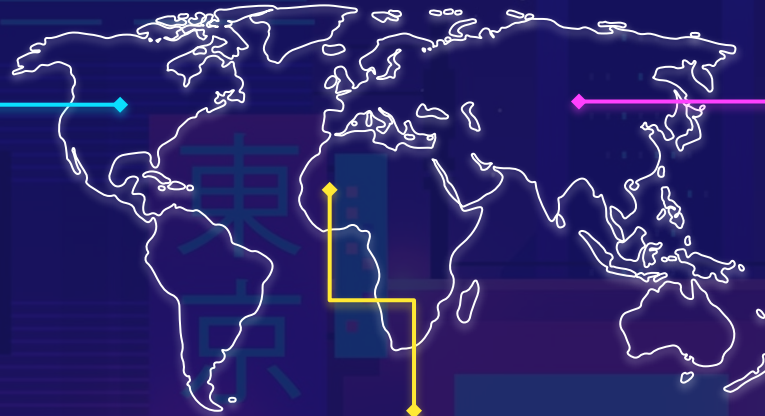
# Can geography save your life if godzilla attacks?

2.10 Causes of Migration

2.11 Forced & Voluntary Migration

Developed by Lindsey Perdue

# Where do people tend to live



## Water

75% of the global population lives within 500 miles of the sea

## Elevation

85% live in areas less than 1,600 feet above sea level

## Geographic Realm

85% live between  $68^{\circ}$  and  $20^{\circ}$  North latitude



ホテル

東京

東京

ホテル

What  
moves  
?

ようこそ

# Essential Terms

## Migration

The movement of people, involving change of residence. This can be internal (within a country) or external (across more than one country). This can also be voluntary or forced. This usually happens for an extended period of time and is not temporary circulations such as tourism. Push-pull factors impact migration.

### Immigrant

People who move to a new country of residence.

### Voluntary Migration

This may include transnational, transhumance, internal, chain, step, guest worker, and rural-to-urban.

### Emigrant

People who leave their country of origin.

### Forced Migration

This may include slavery and events that produce refugees, internally displaced people, and asylum seekers.

# Essential Terms

## Transnational

People move from one country to another but, keep ties to their original country. They are moving to an area with similar cultural background.

## Chain Migration

The process when immigrants from an area follow others from that area to a particular destination.

## Refugee

People who are forced to migrate from their home country to avoid the impacts of armed conflict, situations of violence, violations human rights or disasters. These people cannot return to their home country due to fear of persecution. (Rubenstein 2020, 95)

## Asylum Seeker

People who have migrated to another country that are seeking refugee status. (Rubenstein 2020, 95)

These people are seeking protection from persecution and/or human rights issues in their home country. This term applies while the application for refugee status is pending.

## Transhumance

Movement centered around agriculture and seasons. Movement happens with livestock and animals between mountains and lowland pastures. (Rubenstein 2020, 328)

## Step Migration

Gradual migration that follows a series of stages to a final destination. (Rubenstein 2020, 94)

## Guest Worker

People from countries are allowed to immigrate to obtain jobs temporarily. (Rubenstein 2020, 108)

# Big numbers may be helpful

281M

Migrants

People living in a  
country other than  
their country of birth

3.6%

Of the Population

Global

2020

Year

Increased by 128  
million in 1990

# Classify migration (Drag and Drop)

Syrian Refugee

Leaving a country for economic opportunity

Internment Camp

Moving from a city to suburbs for more land

Victims of Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas

Voluntary Internal



Forced Internal



Voluntary External



Forced External



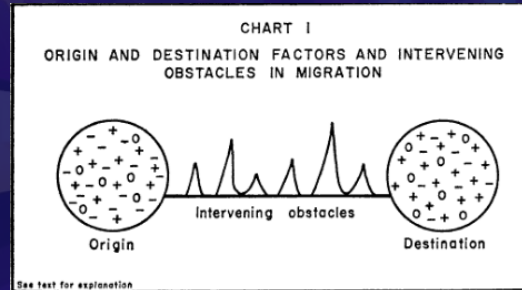
# Push and Pull Factors

## Push Factors

- Negative features that cause a person to move away from a place
  - Unemployment
  - Lack of resources
  - Low wages
  - Natural hazards
  - Godzilla attacks

## Pull Factors

- Attractions (real or imagined) at another location to make it appear more desirable
  - Better wages
  - More jobs
  - Good schools
  - Nice weather



Lee's push-pull model of migration (Lee 1966, 50)

# Why do people live in certain areas?

01

Social

Notes:

02

Political

Notes:

03

Economic

Notes:

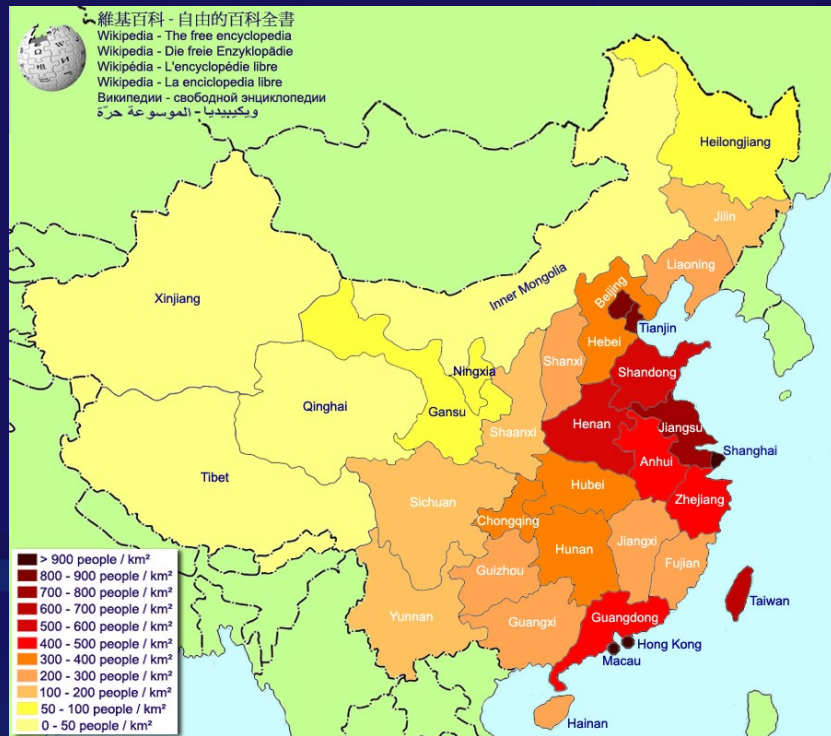



# How does where we live impact how we live?

Example: Population Distribution in China

Most people live in.....

Why do you think this is.....





What makes  
movement  
challenging  
for humans?

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ホテル

ようこそ

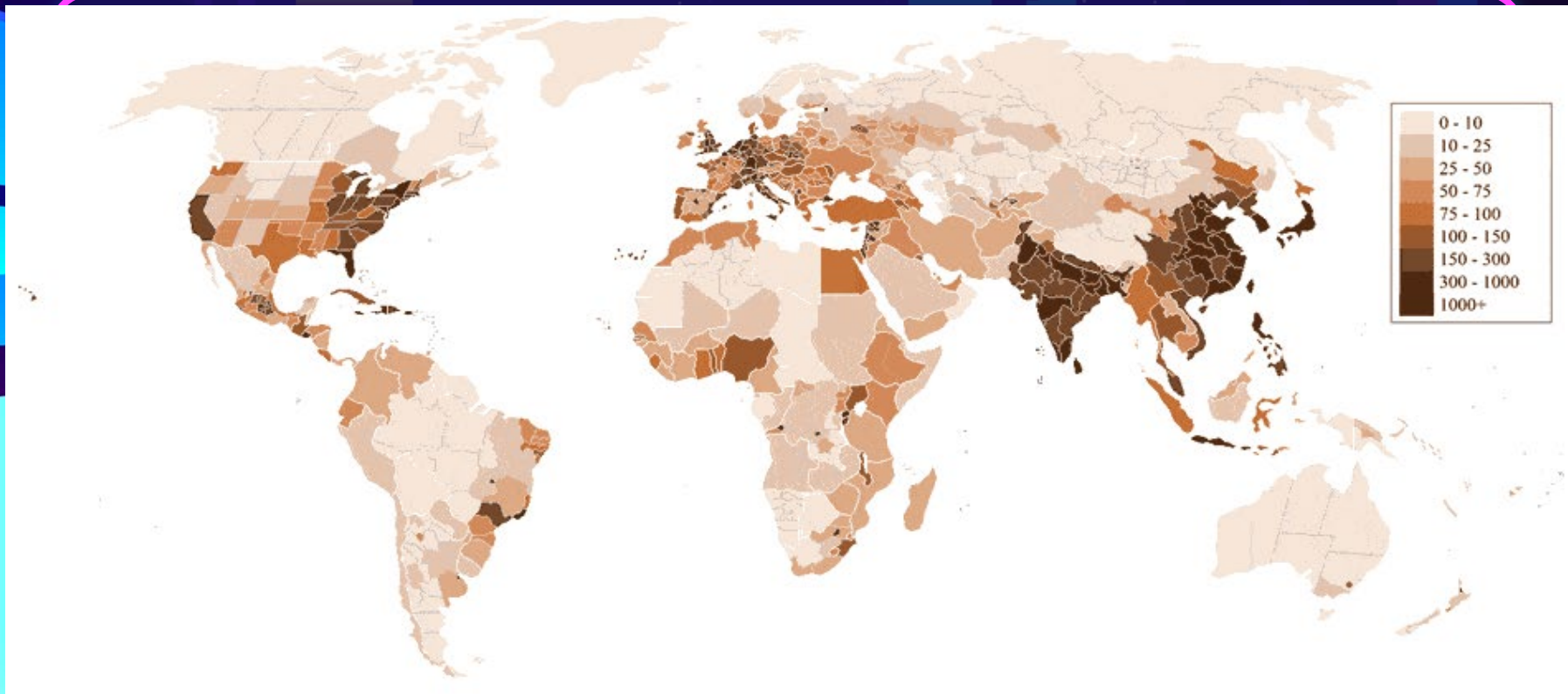
東京

# Mapping Godzilla Attacks

On the map provided locate and identify the following locations. Make a key to show where Godzilla has attacked.

- Sydney, Australia (2004)
- Hong Kong (1995)
- Honolulu, USA (2014)
- Las Vegas, USA (2014)
- San Francisco, USA (2014)
- Moscow, Russia (1968)
- Paris, France (1968)
- London, England (1968)
- Shanghai, China (2004)
- Okinawa, Japan (1974)
- Fukuoka, Japan (1994)
- Osaka, Japan (1955)
- Nagoya, Japan (1964)
- Hakone, Japan (2001)
- Tokyo, Japan (1954)
- Beijing, China (1968)
- New York, USA (1998)

# World Population Density: people/km



# What can you do if godzilla attacks?



## Identity locations

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What areas are attacked? What are your options?



## Look for connections

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What connects different locations and are they accessible?



## Look for patterns

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What patterns of movement happen over the connections you identified?



## Stay or Go

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How do you use your geographic skills to lead survivors to safety?

# What is your plan?

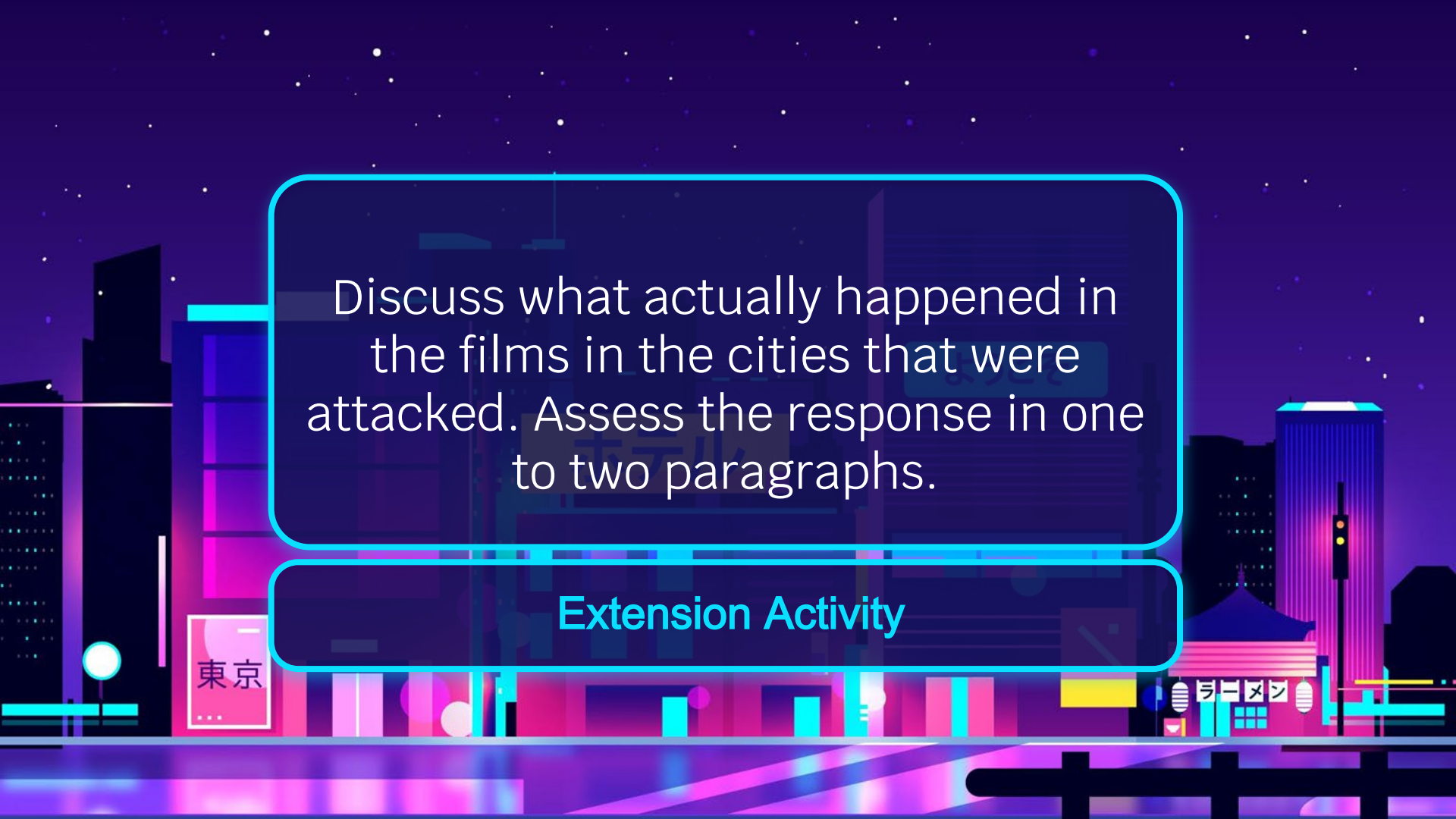
**Activity:** In groups you will come up with a plan for a Godzilla attack based on your understanding of geographical skills.

**Step 1:** One group member will pull a location out of a hat that Godzilla has attacked.

**Step 2:** As a group briefly research this location. Find population density, geographical features, connections to other locations and any patterns of movement.

**Step 3:** Based on the information you find, what do you do to lead other survivors of a Godzilla attack to safety. Where do you go and why?

**Step 4:** Create a poster that includes the information from steps 2 & 3

A stylized, colorful illustration of a city skyline at night. The background is a deep purple with scattered white stars. In the foreground, there are various buildings and structures. On the left, a tall, dark building is partially visible. Next to it is a pink sign with the Japanese characters '東京' (Tokyo) and three small dots below it. To the right of the sign is a yellow building with a red roof. Further right is a tall, thin building with a blue and white striped pattern. In the bottom right corner, there is a black silhouette of a fence. The overall style is modern and graphic, with a focus on vibrant colors and geometric shapes.

Discuss what actually happened in the films in the cities that were attacked. Assess the response in one to two paragraphs.

### Extension Activity

# Works consulted

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# Thanks!

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Do you have any questions?

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