

Hoyt Sector Model: AP Human Geography Crash Course

Are you a city person? Whether you like it or not, you are probably like more than half of the population of the United States and live either in a city or close enough to quickly travel to one. Cities are growing much faster than rural areas, and it is important for you to learn about the dynamics of urban geography. There are several classic models used to understand and explain the internal structures of cities and urban areas, and we are going to learn about the **Hoyt Sector Model** in this AP Human Geography study guide.

Nature of the City

Cities are at the center of every advanced society and act as the hub of economic, social and political activities in that area. They have a variety shapes and functions, and their geography impacts the daily lives of those who live in the city and surrounding areas. All cities provide their residents a variety of services and functions: shopping, manufacturing, transportation, education, medical, and protective services.

Cities evolved over time, and if a city had favorable factors (agriculture, access to water, trade, defense), its population increased. This led to urbanization (rapid growth, and migration to large cities).

This increase in urban population resulted in rapid expansion of the city and greater urbanization of the society. After the conclusion of World War II, North America experienced rapid urbanization. There was a need for housing outside of the core urban areas due to growing population and demand. The result was the **suburbanization** of our society. Suburbanization is the movement of people from core urban areas to the outskirts.

Model of Urban Land Use

In the early 1900's, researchers wanted to find out how cities worked. They developed a variety of urban land use models to help describe and explain different types of cities and the neighborhoods that made up the city. All of the models used to explain urban land use have at their center the **central business district (CBD)**.

The CBD is found at the heart of every older city and is the area of skyscrapers, business headquarters, and banks. Spreading out from this intensive economic land use area is a fringe of wholesale and retail businesses, warehouses, transportation terminals and light industry. The residential area extends outward beyond this ring of activity. Several of these models try to depict the use of this urban area spatially.

It makes sense that students at the University of Chicago developed many of these land use models because Chicago was a city that saw rapid growth in the 18th century. One of these Chicagoan scholars was economist Homer Hoyt, who in 1939 developed the Hoyt Sector Model.

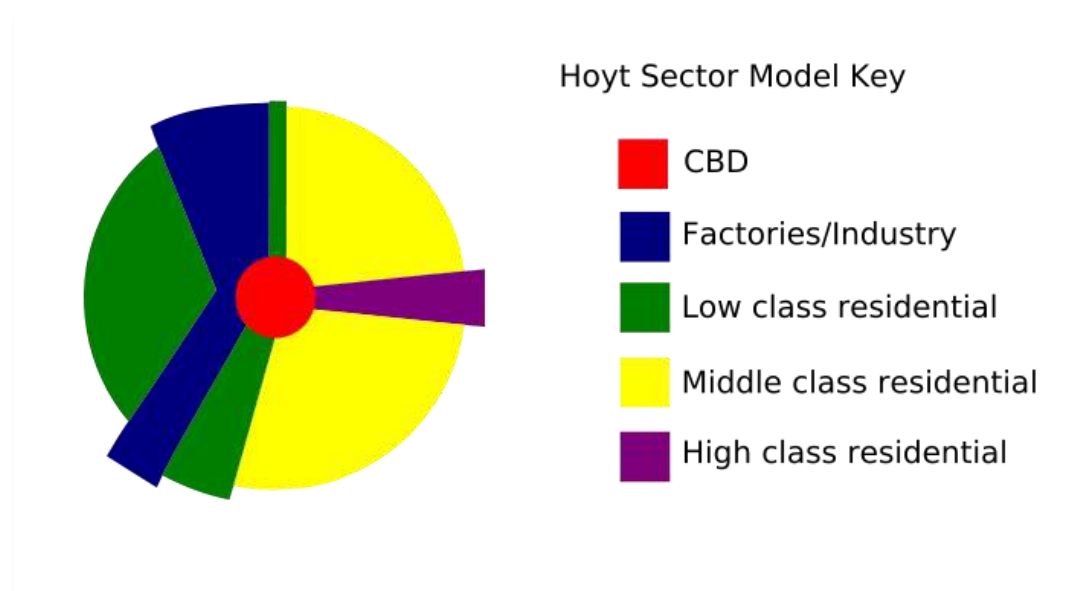
What is the Hoyt Sector Model?

Homer Hoyt wanted to provide an alternative to the concentric zone model as a way of explaining urban land use. Ernest Burgess developed the [concentric zone model](#) in the 1920s based on his studies of

Chicago. Burgess's model suggested that cities have zones arranged in a series of concentric bands that expand outward from the CBD.

Hoyt argued that instead of concentric sets of neighborhoods, cities are primarily laid out in pie or wedge-shaped zones and corridors developed from the core of the city to the outskirts. In the Hoyt Sector Model, the CBD is still in the center, but expanding outward away from it along transportation lines are zones used for industry and residential developments. For example, the electric streetcar allowed low-income areas to extend from the CBD to the outer edge of the city.

Land use within each sector would remain the same because like attracts like. The high-class sector would stay high-class because it would be the most sought after area to live, so only the rich could afford to live there. The industrial sector would remain industrial as the area would have a common advantage of a railway line or river.



[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)

What are the Sectors of the Hoyt Model?

The Central Business District

As with all classic models of urban land use, the Hoyt Sector Model has at its core the central business district (CBD). Every older city has one such district at its center; typically, it is the area with the high-rise buildings, banks, and large business headquarters. It is the commercial and business center of a city. In bigger cities, the CBD is often referred to as the "financial district."

The Industrial Sector

According to this model, in regions of the city with significant industrial transportation routes (rail, barge, freight), industrial corridors will develop. The noise and pollution of these zones drive all but the poorest residents away from these areas. In these zones, almost everyone rents. In Chicago, several of these industrial corridors stretched outward from the CBD along railroad lines and the Illinois-Michigan industrial canal.

Residential Sectors

Hoyt's model suggests that people will live in the different sectors based on income levels. Since desirable land (near lakes, hills, places away from the smells of the factories) was more expensive, the elite class neighborhoods were built in zones separated from lower, working-class zones.

Low-Class Residential

Next to the industrial corridors are the lower- or working-class residential zones. People who live here tend to be factory workers and live in low-income housing. Housing is cheap due to its proximity to industry where pollution, traffic, railroads, and environmental hazards make living conditions poor. Those who live in this sector do so to reduce the cost to commute to work. They are sometimes stereotyped as living on the "other side of the tracks," and may experience discrimination.

Middle Class

This residential area is a bit more desirable because it is located further from industry and pollution. People who work in the CBD have access to good transportation lines, making their commute easier. The middle-class sector is the largest residential area.

High Class

Hoyt's model also identified an elite zone, for the handful of upper-class people who live in the city. Michigan Avenue was that elite district in Chicago. High-class residential sectors tend to be quiet, clean, and have less traffic than the other ones. There is also a corridor that extends from the CBD to the edge of the city, where the prime real estate is found.

In many cities, you will find the high-class district on the west side, where prevailing winds enter the city and are upwind from industrial zones, which are dirty and smelly. It is unlikely that high-class residential housing would be found near factories or lower-class housing areas. In this way, Hoyt's model suggests a distinct physical separation between the wealthy and the poor.

Limitations of the Hoyt Sector Model

Hoyt's model is based on outdated rail transportation and does not consider the existence of personal cars that let people commute from low-cost land outside the city boundaries. The model also does not take into account the new concepts of edge cities. Edge cities are urban complexes consisting of a large node of office buildings with more workers than residents.

The CBD has lost some of its importance since it was created, as many retail and office buildings have moved into the suburbs. If you look at older cities, they tend to follow the Hoyt Segment Model, whereas newer cities follow Burgess's concentric zone model.