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## Part One: Theme Plates

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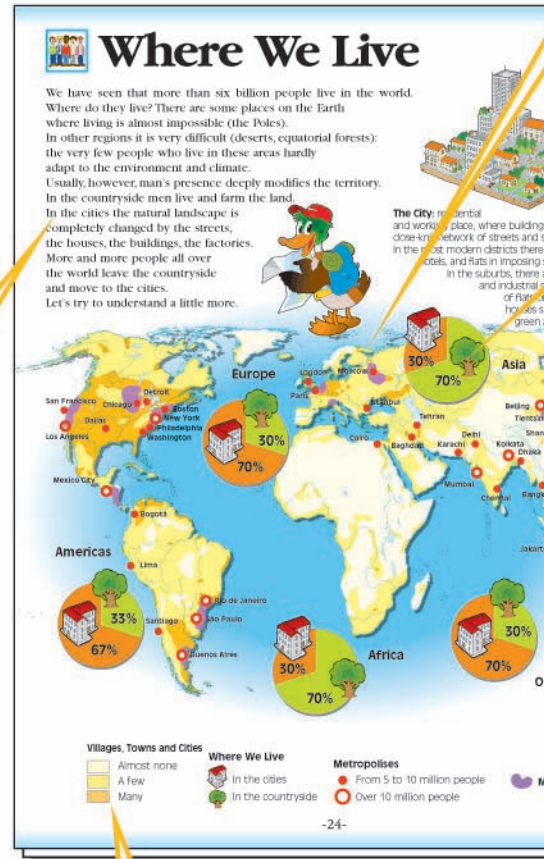
# Drawing the World

The book you are just starting to browse through is a special book: in your hands you have a theme atlas. An **atlas** is a collection of drawings (called maps) reproducing the entire Earth or parts of it (a continent, a nation, a region, a city). The Earth is immense and spherical, while a sheet of paper is flat. If you want to draw the entire world, you need to make it a lot smaller and a little simpler. So, for instance, in the map of your hometown, the street where you live will become a few centimetres long, and in the map of your region your town will be turned into a dot.



In the following pages you will only find maps – called **planispheres** – representing the entire Earth. Some of them (on pages 8 and 10) describe its main **general features**, natural ones (seas and oceans, mountains, plains, rivers and lakes) and political ones (state borders, capital cities). Most of them, however, are devoted each to a **specific theme**: climate and typical environments of various regions; plants, animals, and people living in those regions; the regions' natural resources; the activities taking place there, and their products; the various lifestyles (working, studying, family life); and the various problems to be tackled (diseases, poverty, war). In this way we will try to understand the current 'shape' of the world.

At the beginning of each twofold page (called plate) a short **introduction** explains the theme the plate deals with. Plates are grouped by subject in five large **sections**. To know which section you are in, just look at the small symbol near the title.



The **legend** at the bottom of the left page clearly explains the meaning of the colours, symbols and definitions used in the planisphere, in the charts and in the tables.