

AP HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

Preparing for the AP Test

A Compilation of Good Advice

Greenfield High School

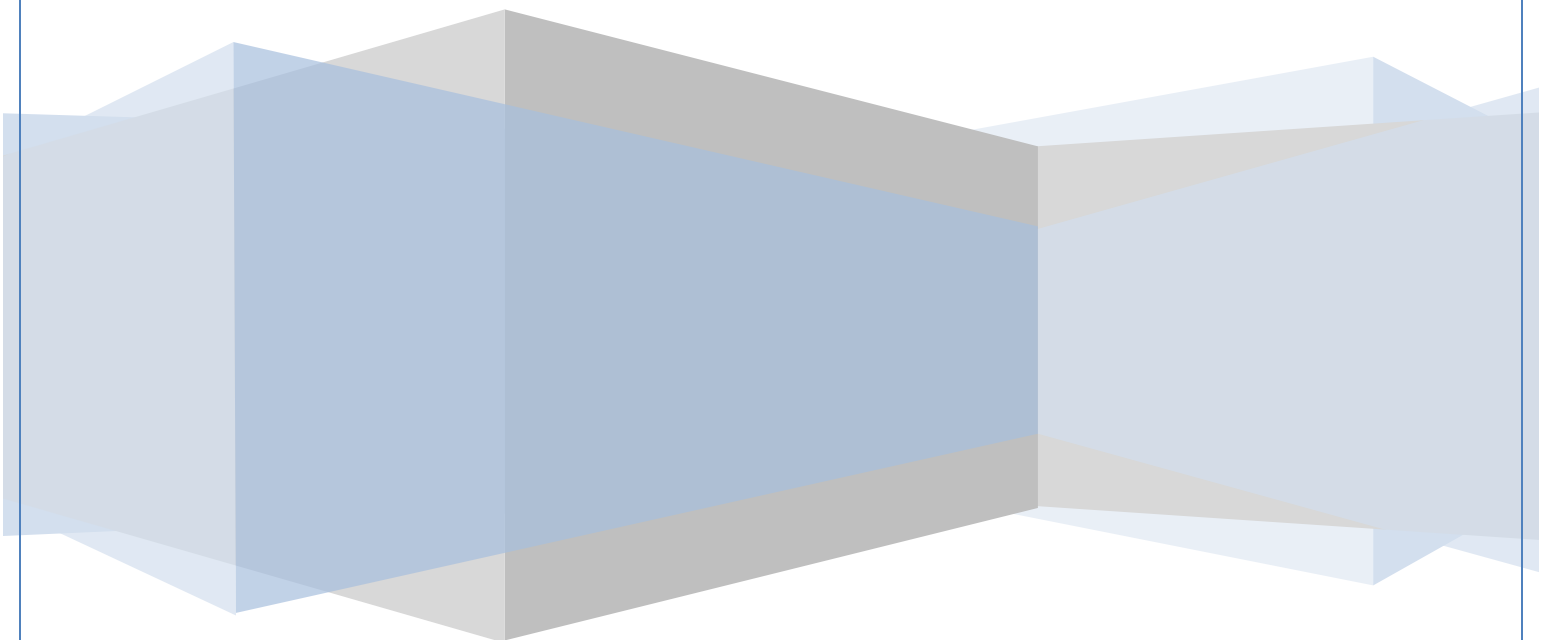


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THE EXAM ITSELF

HOW IS THE EXAM GRADED?

Each portion of the exam is worth about half of the student's overall grade. Once scores have been obtained for both the multiple-choice and free-response sections of the exam, they are combined and the total raw scores are converted to a composite score on AP's 5-point scale:

| AP Grade | Qualification |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 5 | Extremely well-qualified |
| 4 | Well qualified |
| 3 | Qualified |
| 2 | Possibly Qualified |
| 1 | No recommendation |

The most competitive colleges and universities require a 4 or 5 for credit. Some will accept a 3 for credit and/or placement. Scores of 1 and 2 are not accepted. Do not attach A, B, C, D, F grades to these scores. It is a difficult test. Good students can do poorly and mediocre students can score highly if they are good at this type of exam. Each year somewhere between 25% and 27% of students will earn the 4 or 5 score.

WHAT IS THE EXAM BASED ON?

They want to know if you can use the different models, theories, principles, and issues in human geography to explain how we organize the inhabited surface of the earth. There are five skills that the course and National Geography Standards ask students to master:

- 1. Use and think about maps and spatial data**
- 2. Understand and interpret the implications of associations among phenomena in places**
- 3. Recognize and interpret at different scales, the relationship between patterns and processes**
- 4. Define regions and the regionalization process**
- 5. Characterize and analyze changing interconnections among places**

Each test question will address one or more of these skills. Keep this in mind when answering!

STRESS MANAGEMENT TIPS

- Be prepared. If you did everything within your power to prepare, you will be less stressed.
- Trust in your ability! If you prepare, apply your intelligence, and don't forget what Human Geography is really about, you will be successful!
- Only worry about what you can control – you can't control the questions, just relax and do your best.
- You are in a win-win situation! Don't put too much pressure on your test results, research shows that even student that do not earn a passing score on the AP exam are more successful in college than their peers who did not attempt an AP course or AP test. You will be a more powerful thinker, a better prepared college student, and a more enriched person. There is no way to lose!

EXAM DAY

WHAT SHOULD I BRING WITH ME TO THE EXAM?

- A sweater or sweatshirt in case the testing room is cold (dress comfortably)
- Several sharpened #2 pencils (with good erasers, preferably a white engineering/drawing eraser) for the multiple-choice answer sheet.
- Black or blue ballpoint pens for the free-response questions. No other colors or gel pens (they are harder to read). Make sure they work and they are comfortable for you. (Bring your favorites) Test them for smearing. Do not use gel and felt-tip pens.
- Your school code – it should be provided to you by the proctor
- A watch to keep track of time. Make sure all beepers and alarms are turned off. Cell phones, iPods etc aren't allowed to track time
- Your social security number for identification purposes
- A school or government ID card.
- A snack, drink, and any medications you may need during the break. The break is only five minutes long, consider this when you pack.

WHAT CAN'T I BRING TO THE EXAM?

- Book bags, brief cases, or any other type of package or bag
- Any books including dictionaries textbooks etc
- Supplies such as compasses, correction fluid (white out), highlighters, rulers, and scratch paper
- Electronic devices – computers, cell phones, tablets, listening or recording devices
- Food and/or drink is not allowed while taking the test!

DAY OF THE EXAM TIPS

- Wake up early and eat a good breakfast – it's no fun taking a test while you are hungry.
- Dress comfortably
- Show up to the testing site early. Use the time to collect your thoughts and relax. Showing up late causes anxiety that won't help you perform at your best!
- On the day of the exam it's good to lighten up a bit! Tell each other jokes or think of something funny right before taking the test – it will help you relax. Research has shown that writing about your feelings just prior to a test will help you relax and perform better! Try it on a test prior and if it works for you, great!
- It may be helpful to briefly look over the visual elements of the textbook (maps & pictures) and think about them as well as the FRQ guidelines but take it easy! You want to have enough energy to take the exam comfortably.
- Follow all directions given by the test supervisor, if you do not, you risk being dismissed from the test and having your scores canceled.

PREPARING FOR THE EXAM (If you fail to prepare, prepare to fail)

When Should I Start Studying?

It is never too early to start studying for the exam! The earlier you begin, the more time you have to sharpen your skills. Do not procrastinate! Cramming is not an effective way to study, since it does not allow you the time needed to learn the test material and your brain simply does not work that way. You should start preparing a MINIMUM of 4 weeks before the exam. Earlier is better as the exam requires that you know a large body of information.

How Should I Prepare?

You need to prepare under realistic conditions. When athletes train, they work on the individual parts of their sport, say offense and defense, separately. They run drills and learn techniques. Before they go into actual competition, there will likely be scrimmage or exhibition games to test their combined skills to find out what needs work and they do it with the clock running.

Study Schedule

The study schedule below allows for thorough preparation. It is designed for 8 weeks, but you can condense it into a 4 week time span by combining each two-week period into a single week. Be sure to set aside AT LEAST 2 HOURS each day to study. The more time you spend studying, the more prepared and relaxed you will feel on the day of the exam. As you move through the course content, refresh your mind on all important people, issues, and events. Some students find it helpful to take notes when they study.

| Week | Activity |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1 (Mar 18-24) | Re-read all of the tips on the test and take a practice exam. Analyze your results paying close attention to areas of weakness. Review the questions from the practice exam in detail. |
| 2 (Mar 25-31) | Study “ Geography: It’s Nature & Perspectives ” (Rubenstein Chapter 1). Use all of your resources (CFA’s CSA’s note cards, and study guides) and be sure that you understand the content of the chapter. |
| 3 (April 1-7) | Study “ Population ” (Rubenstein Chapters 2 & 3). Use all of your resources. |
| 4 (April 8-14) | Study “ Cultural Patterns & Processes ” (Rubenstein Chapters 4-7). Use all of your resources. This is spring break. (More time for more chapters). |
| 5 (April 15-21) | Study “ Political Organization of Space ” (Rubenstein Chapters 8-9). Use all of your resources. |
| 6 (April 22-28) | Study “ Agricultural & Rural Land Use ” (Rubenstein Chapter 10). Use all of your resources . |
| 7 (Apr 29-May 5) | Study “ Industrialization & Economic Development ” (Rubenstein Ch 11-12). Use all of your resources. |
| 8 (May 6-12) | Study “ Cities & Urban Land Use ” (Rubenstein Chapter 13). Use all of your resources. |
| 9 (May 13-18) | Take a second practice exam and identify the areas that you need to review more. Study any areas in which you consider yourself to be weak using all of your available resources. Make sure to review the major themes the week of the exam. Essay questions usually tie together at least two units. Also review the models as many questions deal with them and ask you to apply them in a real-world situation. |

The Game Plan: Strategies for Preparing for the AP Human Geography Exam

1. Take Practice Exams & Answer Practice Questions

Outside of thoroughly studying the content described in the APHG course, the best way to prepare for the exam is by actually answering questions similar to those that you will see on test day. When you take practice exams, try to simulate the whole test taking experience (Instructions, quiet, time length etc). Find and take as many practice exams as you see fit and analyze your performance. Determine your strengths and weaknesses in the topic areas. Figure out which ones you had wrong and why they were wrong. (We will do some of this in class, but you can also do the same on your own). As you continue to prepare, focus on your specific problem areas. Practice applying the strategies in this guide to help you become an effective test-taker (CFA's, CSA's, practice exams) so that these strategies become second nature on test day.

2. Have a Plan for Reviewing Each Topic Area

- It is good to study an outline of a unit first, and then get more specific
- Review cumulatively. As you review each section, do not forget to also review the chapters you previously studied as well!

3. Use your Note Cards

Knowing your vocabulary and the names of important concepts helps in the multiple-choice section. Using these terms will earn you many points in the essay section.

- If they aren't adequate, update them as you review each unit.
- Use your own words; provide examples and anything else you think will help you to review
- Make a pact to get every flash card term correctly identified. If you get one wrong, start over. Keep going until you get the entire stack correct!

4. Make connections between the seven topic areas.

If you can build associations in your mind between what may seem at first to be unrelated subjects (e.g. population and economy), then you will remember it far better than if you studied those areas separately. FRQ's sometimes require you to do this!

5. Show What You Know!

To "show what you know," *keep models, theories, principles, and issues* in mind. Be ready to produce real-world examples to explain how something works, or even to explain how a theory may not be correct.

- Examine the component parts of models and know the details of those parts. Consider why a model is organized in a particular way. How and why do parts of different models change over time? Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of each model. If there are critics, review their responses to the model.
- Ask yourself what innovative theories were developed by geographers and related scientists. Who were these people and why were their ideas important?
- Know only the relevant history required for the test (the industrial revolution is important, the French Revolution is not). Start at approximately 1800 C.E. and go all the way to the present.

6. Be analytical on a daily basis!

You shouldn't just see a city with streets and buildings, you should use urban models to divide cities by their component parts (CBD, industrial land use, housing zones differentiated by income, ethnicity, age, or architecture) and you need to know how they became that way. What are the forces that shape a place? How do principles like site and situation matter? Are contemporary issues like urban sprawl a problem for expanding cities? These are the types of questions you should ask yourself as you walk around each day to prepare for the test. Read news articles and try to apply the concepts of the class. (I have tons on the wiki!)

7. Ask Questions

- As you review take notes and create a list of questions that you need answers to. Ask about them in class!
- Form a study group. (Friends don't always make the best study partners) Find a quiet place where you can focus. Any study group should have an organized plan to maximize time use. Look at the strengths of your group so that you know who can take the lead on certain types of review items. Put one person in charge of "re-teaching" each section in the course and have them design a "crash study guide" for the rest of the group.
- Try to make up multiple-choice questions on your own. Can you write a good multiple-choice question based on key terms?
- Try writing your own free-response questions and sharing them in class or with your study group.

8. Know Your Strengths & Weaknesses

Don't forget that you can earn a passing score by answering less than 50% of the multiple-choice questions correctly if you do well on the free-response section and vice versa. Everyone has strengths & weaknesses in their test taking abilities.

Study Resources:

- CFA's and CSA's
- AP Binder with articles, charts, and models
- AP test Prep books
- Website quizzes like Quia or Studyshack (use wiki)
- Textbook (Rubenstein & Kuby)
 - Besides our own you could find some used (trade?) to get a different perspective
 - de Blij, H. J., and Alexander B. Murphy. *Human Geography: Culture, Society, and Space*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
 - Fellmann, Jerome Donald. *Human Geography: Landscapes of Human Activities*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
 - Knox, Paul L., and Sallie A. Marston. *Places and Regions in Global Context: Human Geography*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
 - Norton, William. *Human Geography*. Don Mills, Canada: Oxford University Press.
 - Jordan-Bychov, Terry, Mona Domosh, Roderick Newman, Patricia Price. *The Human Mosaic*. Publisher: WH Freeman.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

The Facts

Number of Questions: 75

Time Allowed: 60 Minutes (45 second per question)

Writing Instrument: No. 2 Pencil

Needed for a 4 or 5: Minimum 50 correct answers (67%)

Questions reflect varying levels of difficulty, and the levels are mixed throughout the questions. Multiple choice questions on the AP test are designed to separate students by level instead of just test students on the material. Some questions will contain visual materials like maps, charts, graphs, illustrations, and pictures. Each question has five possible answer choices and each correct answer is worth 1 point. When taking the multiple choice section of the exam, you no longer lose points for incorrect answers. You will need to successfully answer as many questions as possible. No points are awarded for unanswered questions, so make sure to answer every question, even if you have to guess!

The approximate breakdown of topics covered includes the following:

| | |
|---|--------|
| Geography: It's Nature & Perspectives | 5-10% |
| Population | 13-17% |
| Cultural Patterns & Processes | 13-17% |
| Political Organization of Space | 13-17% |
| Agriculture & Rural Land Use | 13-17% |
| Industrialization, Economic Development, Environmental Issues | 13-17% |
| Cities & Urban Land Use | 13-17% |

If You Don't Know How To Take The Test, You Won't Get The Credit You Deserve!

Consider the following scenario:

Josh is a student getting good grades in AP Human Geography all year and then gets a low score on the AP Exam because he's not ready for these types of questions. On the other end of the spectrum, Jessica is a student who is not very comfortable with all the various topics in the AP Human Geography course. However, because she knows how to effectively answer the multiple-choice questions, she winds up getting a 4 on the exam – much to the chagrin of Josh.

Don't be like Josh! You need a strategy. The test authors are intentionally putting you under pressure. They write questions to trick you into choosing the wrong answer.

Rules of Effective Multiple Choice Test Taking

- Make sure that you mark your answers clearly and neatly on the answer grid
- Every once in a while, take a second to make sure that the number of the question in the test booklet matches up with the number of your answer on the bubble sheet. Avoiding mechanical mistakes, such as marking your answers on an incorrect line, can help you to avert a test-taking disaster.
- Finishing is not the real goal; accuracy is
- Go through the entire set of multiple-choice questions and answer the ones that you know for sure first, do not linger over any question for too long!
- There is no guessing penalty – fill in every answer! It’s like the lottery: “If you don’t play, you can’t win.”
- Guessing saves time
- Four out of every five answer choices are wrong
- Keep in mind that you have limited time, wasted time is your enemy. Use a watch to track time
- Ignore test takers who may finish before you do. Use the entire time given to go back and answer any questions that you may have left blank and to make sure your answers are precisely the way you want them to be.
- Be prepared for anything! The questions are in no particular order and your mind will have to be able to shift gears many times during the exam. Be mentally prepared for this.

Steps to Answering Multiple-Choice Questions

Step 1: Read & Rephrase the Question

- Take the time to read each question and the possible choices carefully. Remember, you are always looking for the *best* answer. Sometimes one or more wrong answers may seem correct at first, so read all answer choices for each question carefully. Look for key words like “All” “Except” and “NOT”
- Try to fully understand what the question is asking.
- Rephrase the question so that it is clear to you. What is the question really asking?

Step 2: When? Who and Where? What?

Before you read the answer choices, you must get an idea of:

- **When** the historical period or the political or economic context you are in
- **Who & Where** is involved and where
- **What** the question is asking you.

Answer these questions in your mind or even in the question booklet before you read the answer choices. Once you’ve answered these questions, take a moment to call up the relevant economic geography that you know. If it is a topic that you know, it should be easy to find the correct answer. If not, you can still use what you know to eliminate wrong answer choices using POE.

Step 3: Process of Elimination (POE)

By guessing randomly, you should get 1 in 5 correct on average. If you can eliminate even one choice, you have improved your odds. Get into the habit of guessing aggressively. Even if you don't know the answer, eliminate the choices that you know are impossible or unreasonable, guess, and move on.

- Always remember that 4 out of 5 choices are wrong.
- All answers are wrong until proven right.
- Get rid of the choices that you know are wrong by using a line through it or a diagonal slash through the corresponding letter in the test booklet (not the bubble sheet!) Do not waste time reading choices over and over.
- Deal with the choices that remain.
- When you reach a question you are not quite sure of, mark that question and come back to it (If you can eliminate at least two choices, you could also choose to answer quickly)

What if I can't eliminate anything?

- If you can't eliminate anything, circle it, randomly guess, and move on. Come back to it later if time permits.
- The multiple-choice section is difficult, if not impossible, for most students to finish on time without using strategy.

Step 4: Guess & Go

Using this question as an example, the benefits of “guess and go” will be explained:

The international treaty that laid the interior political boundaries of Sub-Saharan Africa was:

- A. The Treaty of Ghent
- B. Potsdam Agreement
- C. Camp David Accords
- D. Treaty of Versailles
- E. Berlin Conference

Maria's Approach

The political boundaries of Africa – I know this was decided by European colonial powers, and not Africans. It was in the late 1800's or early 1900's so that eliminates (A). Potsdam was at the end of World War II, and Camp David was much more recent. So that gets rid of (B) and (C). Now, what were the other two? Versailles was the home of French kings. But, they were gone at the end of the French Revolution, in the late 1700's. Berlin is near Potsdam. Here it's a “conference” and not a “treaty” like in (D)... Hmmmm... Both sound possible. Was it in France? The French had a lot of colonies in Africa. I think the Germans had colonies in Africa too, but I'm not sure how many or where. Which country would be more likely to host such an international treaty? The Germans were really powerful in the early twentieth century and defeated France a few times. But the French were the larger colonial power around the world. Hmmmm... Which one is more likely to be the location of this treaty? Well, (D) sounds great but so does (E). I put (D) for the last answer so maybe this one should be (E), or maybe that last one was wrong. Maybe I should read and rephrase the question again....

Marc's Approach:

The political boundaries of Africa – these were divided by European colonial powers around the late 1800's. Africa was the last part of the world to become colonized by Europeans. And the last part of the world to gain independence. Ghent was part of American history, so cross off (A). Potsdam and Camp David were about World War II and Israel, respectively, so cross off (B) and (C). Versailles is in France and Berlin is in Germany. So it's either (D) or (E). Versailles was the home of Louis XV, who lived in the 1700's. And it's a museum today. Thus, (D) doesn't sound right, I'll guess (E).

What's the difference?

Marc did all the work he could considering his remaining options, took a smart guess and moved on. (Guess & Go) Maria did all the work she could and got stuck trying to make a choice between the two remaining options. As the test goes on, Maria will lag further and further behind, not because she knows less, but because she is less willing to take a guess and move *onward* for the sake of *saving time*.

You are not trying to speed through the test or working with a focus on finishing the section. You are simply working accurately and efficiently on the questions that you can answer correctly so that you have a solid raw score. Circle questions in your test booklet that you'd like to revisit if you have more time. Also draw lines through answers that you have eliminated for sure to save time when you go back to it.

When you take practice exams, find the pace at which you can work efficiently and effectively without sacrificing accuracy. Don't waste extra time with a question once you have done all you can to solve it, and don't rush and misread and rephrase the question or the answer choices. Being accurate is far more important than finishing. You can answer all 75 questions and get most of them right OR you can answer 60 questions and get all of them right and still end up with the same score.

Know when to Bail

The exam is as much of a test on your pacing skills as it is of your course knowledge. Spend your time on questions that will pay off. If you have no idea what is being asked or do not know the subject matter, it's time to bail. (always read the answers though, as they may jog your memory).

Different Types of Multiple Choice Questions

To do well on the multiple-choice section, you not only need to know what you are being tested on, but how you are going to be tested. The following are different types of multiple choice questions with examples of each type. As you can see, questions will vary in difficulty. You must prepare yourself for different ways of being tested on similar content. It will enhance your ability to effectively answer questions on test day.

A. Definitional

These types of questions tend to be factual and test you on your ability to define particular concepts, processes, models, or theories.

- E1. Which of the following best defines a functional region?
- A. The boundary including all areas within the circulation of a particular newspaper
 - B. The boundary including all people who speak Creole in Louisiana
 - C. The boundary around gerrymandered voting districts
 - D. The boundary that includes the American “Deep South”
 - E. The boundary encompassing the United States of America

B. Cause and Effect Relationships

With these types of questions, you will be given a cause and asked to determine the correct effect from the possible responses given.

- E2. As a country becomes increasingly developed, economic activities become dominant in which sector?
- A. Primary sector
 - B. Tertiary sector
 - C. Non-basic sector
 - D. Secondary sector
 - E. Basic sector

C. Sequencing or Series of Related Events or Ideas

These types of questions can be somewhat tricky as you must remember and correctly sequence a set of a series of events.

- E3. Place the following agricultural events in the correct order:
- I. Biotechnological revolution begins genetically modifying plants and animals.
 - II. Mechanization takes hold allowing much more work to be done with much less human labor.
 - III. Developed countries extend certain agricultural innovations to the third world during the “Green Revolution”
 - IV. Rachel Carlson writes “*Silent Spring*”
- A. II, III, IV, I
 - B. II, IV, III, I
 - C. IV, II, III, I
 - D. III, II, IV, I
 - E. None of the above

D. Generalization

In a generalization question, you will be given a specific event, process, model, or theory and you must be able to identify the general principle that came about as a result of the event, process, model, or theory.

- E4. The von Thunen model describes agricultural activity as it takes place in relation to the market. Which of the following statements generally represents the agricultural landscape according to the model?
- A. Agricultural activity is solely determined by the longevity of the agricultural product.
 - B. Goods that are expensive to transport and spoil quickly must be located closer to the market
 - C. Smaller agricultural goods like beans, herbs, and berries will be grown closer to market than bigger good like pumpkins.
 - D. Animals will be located closer to the market, like grazing cattle and hens, because they are difficult to move.

E. Solution to a Problem

Solution problems tend to be combination questions; in this case you must first know the definition of a particular concept before being able to effectively solve the problem.

- E5. Which of the following economic enterprises is the best example of a footloose industry?
- A. Shoe store
 - B. Jewelry store
 - C. Dance company
 - D. Cheese factory
 - E. Big box store

F. Hypothetical Situation

In these types of questions, you put yourself in a hypothetical situation and use your knowledge of certain principles to determine an appropriate response.

- E6. You decide to eat dinner at the local diner, and get there right during the dinner rush when the restaurant is full of people. What is the most likely makeup of the group of diners?
- A. You don't recognize many of them so they must mainly be tourists, with a couple of familiar faces from the local area.
 - B. You don't recognize too many faces, but they seem very neighborly so most of them probably come from the neighboring town because they don't have a local diner, and the rest are from around town.
 - C. It's probably about an equal mix of tourists, locals, and people from neighboring towns.
 - D. You recognize most faces, but there are a few you don't know, that are probably from the neighboring towns, and possibly a couple of tourists stopping through.

G. Chronological Problem

Chronological problems are simply those that draw on your memory of the time period of certain notable events.

- E7. The Industrial Revolution took hold in England when?
- A. Late 20th century
 - B. Late 19th century
 - C. Late 18th century
 - D. Early 20th century
 - E. Early 18th century

H. Comparing/Contrasting Concepts & Events

In these types of questions you are asked to compare two events, processes, models, or concepts. As you answer these types of questions, define the two terms, processes or events being compared before even looking at your options. This will spare you a lot of confusion

- E8. India's population policy differs from China's in that
- A. They aren't different; they both strictly enforce a one-child per couple policy.
 - B. India is much more stringent, forcefully implementing their population policy.
 - C. China strictly adheres to their one child per couple policy with benefits for those who conform and punishments for those who don't while India does not really have a policy.
 - D. India encourages rather than enforces couples to limit the amount of children they have.

I. Multiple Correct Answers

In these questions, the response set contains an option that allows for multiple correct responses. These can be tricky as it isn't easy to use the process of elimination if you are not completely sure of the correct response.

- E9. Which of the following is a characteristic of American suburbs?
- A. Many suburban developments are eating up agricultural land.
 - B. Some suburban areas have developed small cities within themselves.
 - C. Many of the inhabitants of suburban areas participate in gentrification as they flee cities for quieter lifestyles.
 - D. Both A and B
 - E. All of the above

J. Negative Questions

Often these are comparisons where the two things being compared have a lot in common. When answering negative questions, which are easily identified through the terms "not" or "except," it is usually easier to determine all the true statements which have to be incorrect, leaving you with one false statement. In the answer booklet, use a check mark next to every statement that is true or not an exception. Then use POE to work through the other possibilities and find one that doesn't fit.

- E10. All of the following are characteristics of agribusiness EXCEPT...
- A. It in large part has led to the demise of the American family farm.
 - B. It has incorporated production, consumption, and marketing into an integrated whole.
 - C. It has allowed for increased family market gardening.
 - D. It has transformed agricultural productivity such that agricultural activities yield much more than they have historically.

K. Stimulus Response Questions

In these types of questions you are given a graph, cartoon, figure, map, or other bit of information that you must interpret before being able to correctly answer the question.

- E11. Based on this population pyramid, which of the following statements accurately describes Afghanistan's most likely population pyramid in twenty years.
- A. While growth is currently very rapid, in twenty years, it will have begun to stabilize, causing the base to be narrow.
 - B. Most likely, the population pyramid will resemble the current figure, as the current large base will begin reproducing, causing an even larger base.
 - C. The top of the pyramid will begin to widen as the death rate begins decreasing.
 - D. The pyramid will look less like a pyramid and more like a rectangle as the larger base moves up and fills the middle.

FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

The Facts

Number of Questions: 3

Time Allowed: 75 Minutes (25 minutes per question)

Writing Instrument: Blue or black pen

Needed for a 4 or 5: 60% of available points, at least 2 points on lowest scoring FRQ

All three questions are required to be answered and are weighted equally. (While rubrics have different point totals, there is a mathematical formula to weight the results for each question evenly). FRQ's are also called "constructed response questions." This means that the form of the response is given in the structure of the question. FRQ's often consist of a statement, sometimes accompanied with a graphic, and two to three questions following that statement. Questions have generally been a mix of recall and critical thinking, and may be based on stimulus material such as maps, graphs, photographs, diagrams, and verbal descriptions.

FRQ's are graded by official "AP readers." APHG teachers and professors very carefully and objectively grade each student's free-response questions. The readings are led by Chief Readers. Responses are read and scored multiple times each and computers are used to track reliability and validity. In order to maintain objectivity, a committee puts together a 6-12 point rubric for each of the three FRQ's. Points are determined by the question leader and chief reader. Once the reading starts, the rubric is almost never changed. The rubric provides possible responses for each of the question parts. Students are only given points if their response matches the rubric. In other words, if you make a good argument, but are not on the right track, you will not receive **any** points.

The Three Types of Free-Response Questions

1. Visual Questions

- At least one question will have a map, table, diagram, or model that you must analyze to answer part or all of the question. It is possible that all three questions will have some sort of visual element that you will have to analyze to some degree.

2. Critical Argument Questions

- This type of essay requires you to make a critical argument regarding a theory, principle, or issue in human geography. Basically, you will have to explain what is right and wrong about the question.

3. Process Questions

- This type of essay requires you to describe the details of a geographic theory, principle, or issue. In other words, how does something work in a particular order? EG: Factor A affects people X and causes them to migrate to place Z.

**** Hybrid Questions***

- Be aware that there are hybrid questions that may ask you to do all of these in a single essay.

STEPS TO ANSWERING A FRQ:

1. Preview The Questions & Select One

- Make sure to preview all three questions first.
- Estimate how long each response will take you. Spend about 25 minutes on each question. The proctor will say nothing until the 75 minutes are up, so it is your responsibility to track the time!
- Choose one and jump right in! You may write the essays in whatever order you choose – all responses are written in the same booklet.
 - A good strategy is to start with the questions that you can present the most concrete information for.

2. Re-Read the Question

- Read the question carefully and identify the directive terms (below) so that you can understand exactly what you are being asked to do.

3. Plan Your Answer

- Take 3-5 minutes to outline your answer listing your initial thoughts. Make sure that you address all parts of the question and maintain organization. (Write on test book)
- As you plan your essay, jot down evidence you can use as proof of your claims.
- Organize your information in a way that matches the question. (eg chronologically, by country, etc)

4. Begin Your Answer

- Make the reader's job easier!
 - Write the number of the question you are answering at the top of each page.
 - Start the next question on a completely new page.
 - Label and number each part of your response in the margins of your answer
 - Write clearly and neatly. Readers can't score what they can't read
- Focus first on answering the question accurately, clearly, and succinctly as possible. Say what you mean and mean what you say. When writing your response, get to the point ("Answer the damn question!" ☺)
- Don't waste your time with a thesis statement, conclusion, or rewriting the question in your answer. The readers only grade for content.
- Simply listing facts is not enough. Write complete sentences with coherent, supporting thoughts like a short answer. (No bullet points!!)
- Support your responses with accurate geographic examples whenever possible. Devote a paragraph to each example. If the FRQ calls for examples from a particular region, be certain to use examples from that region and link your examples of the question's prompt.
- Identify and relate relevant areas of human geography other than that which is being directly addressed in the question.
- Leave some blank space at the end of each essay in case you have extra time and think of something else to add.

5. Edit

- If there is time, proofread. It is all right to make additions if you can think of any. Draw an arrow to where the material is to be inserted.
- If you have time, it's ok to write a short 3-5 sentence conclusion. You will not lose credit for not having a conclusion, but a strong final paragraph can certainly add to the essay's overall effect and, in some cases, add points.
- Don't leave a question blank. (It will disqualify you from a 4 or 5!!!)

FRQ DIRECTIVE WORDS

List/Identify.

Listing or identifying is a task that requires no more than a simple enumeration of some factors or characteristics. A list does not require any causal explanations.

Define.

A definition requires a student to provide a meaning for a word or concept. Examples may help to demonstrate understanding of the definition. Describe. A description involves providing a depiction or portrayal of a phenomenon or its most significant characteristics. Descriptions most often address “what” questions.

Discuss.

Discussions generally require that students explore relationships between different concepts or phenomena. Identifying, describing, and explaining could be required tasks involved in writing a satisfactory discussion. Present different aspects of an issue by explaining various sides or opinions.

Explain.

An explanation involves the exploration of possible causal relationships. When providing explanations, students should identify and discuss logical connections or causal patterns that exist between or among various geographic phenomena.

Compare/Contrast.

This task requires students to make specific links between two or more concepts. Show similarities and differences.

Evaluate/Assess.

An evaluation or assessment involves considering how well something meets a certain standard and as such generally requires a thesis. It is important to identify the criteria used in the evaluation. If no criteria are explicitly given in the question, students should take care to clearly identify the ones that they choose to employ. Specific examples may be applied to the criteria to support the student’s thesis. Evaluation or assessment requires explicit connections between the thesis or argument and the supporting evidence. In short, make a judgment about something. Appraise positives and/or negatives and take a stand on an issue.

Analyze.

This task usually requires separating a phenomenon into its component parts or characteristics as a way of understanding the whole. An analysis should yield explicit conclusions that are explained or supported by specific evidence or well-reasoned arguments. Define all components especially in terms of their relationship to each other and to their meaning and importance.

Describe.

This task is often connected to analyze. You are expected to give an account of some situation and, from the description, produce conclusions regarding its importance, relationships, possible consequences, etc.

“To What Extent”.

Some questions include the phrase *to what extent*, which calls for a judgment regarding the scope, depth, or limits of the topic.

Other Free-Response Tips

- The best essays do two things:
 - They address all parts of the question
 - They support the answer with specific, accurate examples and information
- Readers AWARD points, they do not take points off. Once you have scored a point, you can't lose it. If you don't have the specific elements contained in the rubric, you won't get the points. Wrong answers are not deducted from your score. Make sure to write & show what you know!
- The first example listed in your answer should be the one that you are most confident about. If the question only calls for one example, the first one will be scored and those following it are not scored. THEY MEAN THIS! Do not throw a bunch of things against the wall and see what sticks. This is meant to discourage students from guessing.
- Try not to contradict yourself in the essay. Get to the point and move on.
- Often times a FRQ will draw from two or more units within the course. Try to give balanced treatment to all aspects of the question.
- FRQ's sometimes ask students to compare two geographic concepts and provide examples of each. Whenever you see two comparable or contrasting concepts, you should remember that you may be asked to discuss them together on the AP exam. You should be able to compare, contrast, and define related terms.
- Geography is a synthetic, or interdisciplinary, field that brings together many scholars with different interests. In your essays, remember that geography provides a wide range of perspectives for you to use when considering how to answer and given question.
- Make sure that you can interpret maps and infer meaning from the maps' central ideas. (Geography is the study of spatial interaction and maps = communication!)
- Review geographic regions of the world. AP readers often comment that students confuse geographic regions. Familiarize yourself with examples and situations in each region that you could use in your responses.
 - (Review E. Asia, SW Asia, W. Europe, Eastern Europe, North America, etc)
- Think of regions not only as places, but also as processes. Regions change through time – and they even move! In the 18th century for example, European colonists thought of the “American West” as including upstate New York and Kentucky. In the early 19th century, the “American West” was located in the area we now call the “Midwest.” By the late 19th century, the term “American West” referred to the Rocky Mountains, Great Basin, and Pacific Coast.
- Pay attention to sources, especially if it is someone you recognize or can connect the source to topics like religion, politics, or agriculture. If the question is asking about the demographic transition model, tie in the economic development aspects of the model along with the population trends in each of the stages of the model.
- Essays are ranked by the amount and quality of accurate evidence that they present. Essays that don't get beyond very broad, general statements will receive lower scores.
- If you quote, (which is not required), keep quotations short and few in number. Never quote an entire passage and never quote without immediately following up with your interpretation of the quoted words.
- Do not use first person!!! (I, you, we). Don't insert personal opinion, bias, or judgment of sources or info. Present the material and opinions of others, not yours.
- Use examples that most people will recognize. Although a local example may fit perfectly, the readers may not know that particular example and may not give you points. Use examples that apply on the state, national, or global scale.

Free-Response FAQ

1. *Can I include a diagram or sketch in my FRQ?*

- Yes you can include a diagram or sketch. It is highly recommended that you don't include this as the only piece of your answer. You should link your diagram to your overall response – fully describe what it means and how it relates to your response.

2. *What if I have no idea how to respond to the question?*

- If this happens do not panic. You should be able to offer at least some geographic analysis of the issue, even if you truly are stumped. Start by writing something related to the course and an issue you think might be tied to the FRQ. For example there was an FRQ that asked students to analyze chicken farming in the US. Several students wrote about agricultural changes in the US and were successful. It is sometimes possible to score a majority of the points for the question in the last part of your essay. Stay positive and give your best effort. Above all else, do not leave a FRQ blank!!! Even if you are prepared there is usually a “challenge” or “curveball” FRQ that will give you a run for your money. (Blank responses result in a dash, Attempts result in a “0.” There is a statistical difference!)

3. *How long should my FRQ response be?*

- There is no right or wrong answer to this question. Your answer is the right length if it answers the question! Just remember to make sure that you have enough time to answer all of the FRQ's adequately. An effective essay generally spans at least one page, ideally two although some very brief answers are great too.

4. *Will I have enough time to write my answers?*

- Students generally have JUST enough time to write their responses. Just make sure to keep an eye on your own time and progress.

5. *How can I prepare for the FRQ's?*

- One of the best ways to prepare is to review key terms and models throughout the course. Define the key terms in your own words. Look at maps and diagrams in the textbook and think about how they apply to the overall theme of the chapter. Keep a list of current events, controversies, and issues in each key region of the world. Practice by taking as many FRQ's as you can!

6. *How Do You Get All of The Points For Each Part of a FRQ?*

1. ***Make sure you answer the question being asked.*** Carefully study the language used in the prompt and follow the prompt.
2. ***Make sure that you answer all parts of the question.*** If the question asks you to define a term and offer an example, make sure that you address both parts of that multi-part question
3. ***Check to see if the FRQ calls for a SPECIFIC type of example.*** The question may ask for an example from a particular historical era or region on the map. It may ask you for an example of a country or a region – be careful to use the appropriate example. Choose your example carefully and integrate it into your response.

4. ***Be geographically analytical in your response.*** Avoid personal opinions and side comments that distract from your direct response. Don't forget that human geography is about the interconnections between people and places. Every unit we have studied ties in with each other because the world is a truly interconnected place. Try to draw together relationships from different parts of the course. For example, if a question asks you to discuss how globalization threatens linguistic diversity you could also insert terms like time-space compression, friction of distance, assimilation, cultural diffusion, or other related concepts. *Do not write random unrelated ideas just to impress the reader with your geographic vocabulary!* Integrate concepts directly tied to the FRQ's focus. The object is to get to the point and support your point.

5. ***If there is stimulus in the FRQ (chart, map, picture, graph) be sure to integrate it into your response.*** The stimulus is there for a reason! Use specifics from the stimulus in your response. Take time to analyze it and feel free to draw on it.