

AP HUMAN GEOGRAPHY STUDY GUIDE

183 High-Yield Concepts

Advanced Placement Course | College Board CED-aligned

- All 7 CED units: geography tools, population, culture, politics, agriculture, cities, development
 - Exam weights on every unit; real AP exam format on the how-to page
- Key models: DTM, von Thunen, Christaller, Weber, Rostow, core-periphery
 - Perfect for the AP Human Geography exam in May

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How to Use This Guide

This guide condenses the AP Human Geography course and exam description into high-yield concepts. It is not a textbook replacement -- it is the fastest way to review everything the exam covers and to target your weak units.

The AP Human Geography exam is 2 hours 15 minutes: 60 multiple-choice questions (60 min, 50% of the score) and 3 free-response questions (75 min, 50% of the score). The 7 units below map to the College Board Course and Exam Description, with unit weights on each section title.

How to use the concepts

- Each concept = term + concise explanation + high-yield exam tip (+ example where useful).
- First pass: read every concept in order. Underline anything unfamiliar.
- Second pass: focus only on the concepts you underlined.
- Two weeks before the exam: rapid-review every tip line (they are the highest-yield).
- Use the Table of Contents to jump straight to your weakest units.

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		Total: 183 high-yield concepts

How to use the TOC: work through the units in order on your first pass, then jump back to your weakest units for review. Each concept includes an Explanation, a high-yield exam tip, and where useful an Example. Mark the concepts you miss with a small dot in the margin and revisit them 48 hours later.

Unit 1: Unit 1: Thinking Geographically

8-10% of the AP Human Geography exam. Maps, scale, regions, and the geographic tools that organize every other unit.

1 Absolute Location

Explanation: The exact position of a place on Earth using a coordinate system such as latitude and longitude. It does not change with context or perspective.

AP Human Geo Tip: Use absolute location when a question asks for exact coordinates or an address; use relative location when it asks how a place relates to others.

Example: New York City's absolute location is about 40.7 N, 74.0 W -- a fixed grid reference.

2 Relative Location

Explanation: The position of a place described in relation to other places, such as 'downstream from the mill' or 'two hours from Chicago'. It is socially and contextually defined.

AP Human Geo Tip: Relative location explains site and situation: situation describes a place's connections to other places, which drives trade and growth.

Example: A town grows because it sits at the crossroads of two rivers, even though its absolute coordinates never change.

3 Site

Explanation: The physical characteristics of a place: climate, topography, soil, water sources, and vegetation. Site is what a place IS.

AP Human Geo Tip: Site = physical features of the place itself. Situation = where it is relative to others. Both appear in urban geography FRQs.

Example: Singapore's site -- a deep-water harbor on a strategic strait -- made it a natural port city.

4 Situation

Explanation: The location of a place relative to other places and its connections through transportation and communication networks. Situation explains why places rise or fall with trade routes.

AP Human Geo Tip: Situation explains the rise of port and canal cities; when routes shift, situational advantage changes.

Example: Constantinople grew because it sat on the trade route between Europe and Asia.

5 Toponym

Explanation: The name given to a place. Toponyms reveal cultural history: colonial names, religious names, and names honoring leaders.

AP Human Geo Tip: Toponyms are evidence of past cultures and conquests; the exam uses them to identify layers of cultural influence.

Example: Quebec, Madrid, and New York all carry the imprint of the empires that named them.

6 Latitude & Longitude

Explanation: Latitude lines run east-west and measure distance north/south of the equator; longitude lines run north-south and measure distance east/west of the prime meridian. Together they create the global grid.

AP Human Geo Tip: Latitude = parallel lines; longitude = meridians. The International Date Line follows 180 degrees longitude with deviations.

Example: The equator is 0 degrees latitude; the prime meridian through Greenwich, England is 0 degrees longitude.

7 Time Zones

Explanation: The world is divided into 24 roughly 15-degree-wide time zones based on longitude, each one hour apart. Political boundaries often distort them.

AP Human Geo Tip: China uses one time zone for the whole country; this kind of political override is a classic MC item.

Example: Crossing the International Date Line eastward subtracts a day; westward adds one.

8 Map Scale

Explanation: The ratio between distance on a map and distance on the ground, expressed as a fraction (1:100,000), a statement, or a graphic bar.

AP Human Geo Tip: *A large-scale map shows a small area in detail (city map); a small-scale map shows a large area with less detail (world map).*

Example: A 1:10,000 map is large scale (detailed); a 1:50,000,000 map is small scale (broad).

9 Projection

Explanation: A method of transferring Earth's curved surface onto a flat map. Every projection distorts area, shape, distance, or direction -- none is perfect.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Projections trade one distortion for another: Mercator preserves shape/direction but inflates area near poles; Peters preserves area but distorts shape.*

Example: On Mercator, Greenland looks as large as Africa even though Africa is about 14 times bigger.

10 Mercator Projection

Explanation: A cylindrical projection preserving shape and direction (lines of constant bearing are straight) but severely distorting area near the poles. Created by Gerardus Mercator in 1569 for navigation.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Mercator = shape true, area false. It makes high-latitude countries look huge -- a classic map-distortion question.*

Example: Ship captains still use Mercator-derived charts because compass bearings are straight lines.

11 Robinson Projection

Explanation: A compromise projection that shows the whole world with less distortion of shape and area than Mercator, though neither is perfect. Often used in classrooms and atlases.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Robinson = 'good enough everywhere, perfect nowhere'. Compare it to the equal-area Peters and conformal Mercator.*

Example: The National Geographic Society used Robinson-style world maps for decades.

12 Equal-Area Projection

Explanation: A projection (e.g., Peters, Mollweide) that preserves the true relative sizes of landmasses at the cost of distorting shapes.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Equal-area = true size, distorted shape. Useful when comparing the area of countries or continents.*

Example: On a Peters projection, Africa and South America keep their true proportions but look stretched.

13 Reference Map

Explanation: A map designed to show where things are: political boundaries, roads, cities, rivers. It emphasizes location and physical features.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Reference maps = location; thematic maps = pattern of one theme (density, migration, language).*

Example: A road atlas is a reference map; a map of election results is a thematic map.

14 Thematic Map

Explanation: A map that displays a specific theme or topic -- population density, climate, language, GDP -- through color, symbols, or proportional shapes.

AP Human Geo Tip: *The four types to know: choropleth, dot distribution, graduated symbol, isopleth. Identify each from a visual.*

Example: A map shading states by unemployment rate is a choropleth thematic map.

15 Choropleth Map

Explanation: A thematic map that shades areas (counties, states, countries) with graduated colors or patterns to show the intensity of a variable.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Choropleth = shaded areas by value. Watch out for the 'modifiable areal unit problem' when areas vary in size.*

Example: A map of the US colored by state-level COVID rates is a choropleth.

16 Dot Distribution Map

Explanation: A thematic map using dots, each representing a fixed quantity, to show the distribution and density of a phenomenon.

AP Human Geo Tip: Dots show density and clustering; one dot always equals the same amount, so dot size never varies.

Example: One dot = 1,000 people shows the dense Northeast corridor clustering on a population map.

17 Graduated Symbol Map

Explanation: A thematic map where symbol size is proportional to the magnitude of the variable at each location.

AP Human Geo Tip: Bigger symbol = bigger value. Used for totals like GDP or population, not rates.

Example: A map of cities with circles sized by metro population is a graduated symbol map.

18 Isoline Map

Explanation: A thematic map connecting points of equal value with lines (isotherms for temperature, isobars for pressure, contour lines for elevation).

AP Human Geo Tip: Isolines connect equal values; the closer the lines, the steeper the change.

Example: Contour lines bunched tightly indicate a steep mountain slope.

19 Cartogram

Explanation: A thematic map that distorts the size of areas to match a variable, such as population or GDP, rather than land area.

AP Human Geo Tip: Cartogram = area resized by data value. Used for population or election maps.

Example: A population cartogram makes India and China huge and Russia small.

20 GIS (Geographic Information System)

Explanation: A computer system that captures, stores, analyzes, and displays geographic data in layers. GIS overlays data like land use, population, and roads for analysis.

AP Human Geo Tip: GIS = layered digital maps for analysis. It powers site selection, disaster response, and redistricting.

Example: A retailer overlays demographic, income, and traffic layers to choose store locations.

21 GPS (Global Positioning System)

Explanation: A satellite-based system that determines exact locations on Earth. Used in navigation, mapping, and tracking.

AP Human Geo Tip: GPS = location finding; GIS = spatial analysis. Do not mix them up.

Example: Ride-share drivers use GPS to find your exact pickup point.

22 Remote Sensing

Explanation: Collecting data about Earth's surface from a distance using satellites or aircraft, often through imagery or sensors.

AP Human Geo Tip: Remote sensing = data from above; the exam pairs it with GIS for environmental monitoring.

Example: NASA satellites monitor deforestation in the Amazon through repeated imagery.

23 Field Observation

Explanation: Collecting geographic data by direct observation and measurement on the ground, including surveys, interviews, and ground-truthing.

AP Human Geo Tip: Field work ground-truths remote sensing: verify what the satellite image shows on the ground.

Example: A geographer visits a farm mapped by satellite to confirm the crop type.

24 Census Data

Explanation: Official population counts and demographic data collected by a government, typically every 10 years. The US Census drives reapportionment and funding.

AP Human Geo Tip: Census data = the backbone of demographic analysis; the US Constitution requires it every decade.

Example: The 2020 US Census determined how many House seats each state gets.

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Formal Region

Explanation: A region with a shared, measurable trait -- language, climate, or political boundary -- where everyone in it shares the characteristic.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Formal = uniform trait (e.g., the Corn Belt, French-speaking Quebec).*

Example: The Corn Belt is formal because every county in it grows corn.

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Functional Region

Explanation: A region organized around a central node or focal point, such as a city and its commuting hinterland, a port, or a radio station's coverage area.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Functional = organized around a node; think of a metropolitan area and its suburbs connected to downtown.*

Example: The New York metropolitan region functions around Manhattan as its core.

Unit 2: Unit 2: Population and Migration Patterns and Processes

12-17% of the AP Human Geography exam. Population growth models, demographic transitions, and the causes and effects of migration.

27 Population Distribution

Explanation: The pattern of where people live on Earth. Population clusters in East Asia, South Asia, Europe, and the US Northeast -- the rest is sparse.

AP Human Geo Tip: Four major clusters: East Asia, South Asia, Europe, Southeast Asia. Most of Earth's surface is nearly empty.

Example: Two-thirds of humanity lives within a few hundred miles of a coastline.

28 Population Density

Explanation: The number of people per unit of area. Arithmetic density = total people / total land; physiological density = people / arable land; agricultural density = farmers / arable land.

AP Human Geo Tip: Arithmetic = all land; physiological = farmable land; agricultural = farmers per farmable land. Physiological best measures pressure on food supply.

Example: Egypt's arithmetic density looks moderate, but its physiological density is extreme because people crowd the Nile valley.

29 Arithmetic Density

Explanation: Total population divided by total land area. It treats all land as equal, so deserts and mountains count the same as farmland.

AP Human Geo Tip: Arithmetic density is the crude measure; compare it to physiological density to see real crowding.

Example: Australia's arithmetic density is tiny because its interior is nearly empty.

30 Physiological Density

Explanation: Total population divided by arable (farmable) land. High physiological density means many people per unit of farmland, indicating pressure on agriculture.

AP Human Geo Tip: Physiological density = people per arable land. The higher it is, the more a country must import food or intensify farming.

Example: Bangladesh has very high physiological density: millions of people per square mile of cropland.

31 Agricultural Density

Explanation: The number of farmers per unit of arable land. Low agricultural density suggests efficient, mechanized farming with few workers needed.

AP Human Geo Tip: Agricultural density = farmers / arable land. Developed countries have LOW agricultural density (mechanization).

Example: The US has far lower agricultural density than India because machines replace farm labor.

32 Carrying Capacity

Explanation: The maximum population an area can support sustainably given its resources and technology. Exceeding it causes resource depletion and crisis.

AP Human Geo Tip: Carrying capacity is not fixed -- technology raises it, but limits always exist.

Example: Easter Island's collapse is a classic carrying-capacity overshoot story.

33 Crude Birth Rate (CBR)

Explanation: The number of live births per 1,000 people per year. High CBRs (30+) mark high-growth countries; low (under 15) mark low-growth countries.

AP Human Geo Tip: CBR and CDR are per 1,000 people; natural increase rate = (CBR - CDR) / 10 as a percent.

Example: Niger's CBR is around 40; Japan's is around 7.

34 Crude Death Rate (CDR)

Explanation: The number of deaths per 1,000 people per year. Affected by health care, nutrition, age structure, and disasters.

AP Human Geo Tip: A low CDR + high CBR = rapid growth; both low = stagnation or decline.

Example: War-torn or AIDS-affected regions can have CDRs above 20.

35 Natural Increase Rate (NIR)

Explanation: The percentage growth from births minus deaths, ignoring migration: $(\text{CBR} - \text{CDR}) / 10$. Africa's NIR is highest; Europe's is near zero or negative.

AP Human Geo Tip: $\text{NIR} = \text{births minus deaths only}$. Add net migration for total population change.

Example: If CBR = 30 and CDR = 10, the NIR is 2% per year.

36 Doubling Time

Explanation: The number of years for a population to double at its current growth rate. Approximate rule: 70 divided by the NIR percentage.

AP Human Geo Tip: Use the Rule of 70: $\text{doubling time} = 70 / \text{growth rate (\%)}$.

Example: A 2% growth rate doubles a population in about 35 years ($70 / 2$).

37 Total Fertility Rate (TFR)

Explanation: The average number of children a woman will have in her lifetime. The replacement level is about 2.1 in developed countries.

AP Human Geo Tip: TFR below 2.1 = population decline over time; TFR above 4 = very rapid growth.

Example: Niger's TFR is around 7; South Korea's is under 1 -- among the world's lowest.

38 Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)

Explanation: The number of infant deaths (under age 1) per 1,000 live births per year. High IMR signals poor health care and nutrition.

AP Human Geo Tip: IMR is a development indicator: rich countries are under 5, poor countries often over 50.

Example: Sierra Leone's IMR is above 70; Iceland's is below 2.

39 Life Expectancy

Explanation: The average number of years a newborn is expected to live. Higher with better health care, nutrition, and sanitation.

AP Human Geo Tip: Life expectancy + IMR together measure a country's health and development level.

Example: Japan's life expectancy exceeds 84; Afghanistan's is in the low 60s.

40 Demographic Transition Model (DTM)

Explanation: A five-stage model describing how population changes as a country develops: (1) high birth/death, (2) death falls births stay high = explosion, (3) births fall, (4) both low = stable, (5) decline possible.

AP Human Geo Tip: DTM stage 2 = population explosion (death rates fall first). Stage 4 = low growth; Stage 5 = decline, aging.

Example: The UK passed through stage 2 during its Industrial Revolution; many African countries are in stage 2-3 today.

41 Stage 1 of the DTM

Explanation: High birth rates and high death rates roughly balance, producing little or no growth. Characteristic of pre-industrial societies; no country is in Stage 1 today.

AP Human Geo Tip: Stage 1 = pre-agricultural/industrial equilibrium; no current country sits in Stage 1.

Example: Paleolithic hunter-gatherer bands lived in a Stage-1-like equilibrium.

42 Stage 2 of the DTM

Explanation: Death rates plummet (medicine, sanitation, food) while birth rates stay high, producing explosive population growth. Most rapid growth in human history occurs here.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Stage 2 = the population explosion. Identify it by falling death rates with still-high birth rates.*

Example: Kenya in the 1980s: improved health care cut deaths while births stayed around 50 per 1,000.

43 Stage 3 of the DTM

Explanation: Birth rates begin to fall as urbanization, education, and contraception spread, while death rates stay low. Growth slows but the population is still young.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Stage 3 = birth rates dropping; urbanization and women's education drive the decline.*

Example: Mexico and Brazil moved through Stage 3 in the late 20th century.

44 Stage 4 of the DTM

Explanation: Both birth and death rates are low, producing near-zero growth and an aging population. Characteristic of most developed countries.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Stage 4 = low-low, stable or slightly growing; expect aging and labor shortages.*

Example: The United States and most of Europe sit in Stage 4.

45 Stage 5 of the DTM

Explanation: Birth rates fall below death rates, so the population naturally declines. Countries may add policy incentives (child allowances, immigration) to offset losses.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Stage 5 = population decline. Japan, Germany, and Italy are examples.*

Example: Japan's population has been shrinking since 2010 despite incentives to have children.

46 Population Pyramid

Explanation: A bar chart showing the population by age and sex. Wide base = young, fast-growing; narrow base = aging, shrinking; bulges = baby booms.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Read the shape: triangle = growth, rectangle = stable, inverted = decline. Bulges track historical events like wars and booms.*

Example: Japan's pyramid is top-heavy (many elderly); Niger's is a wide-based triangle.

47 Dependency Ratio

Explanation: The number of dependents (under 15 and over 64) per 100 working-age people (15-64). High ratios strain economies and services.

AP Human Geo Tip: *High dependency ratio = many children or elderly per worker. Aging countries face old-age dependency; poor countries face youth dependency.*

Example: Japan's ratio rises as its workforce shrinks and retirees grow.

48 Sex Ratio

Explanation: The number of males per 100 females in a population. Skewed ratios result from sex-selective migration, war casualties, or cultural preference.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Sex ratios diverge from 100 due to migration (male labor) or cultural son-preference.*

Example: Qatar's sex ratio is extreme -- about 260 males per 100 females because of male migrant workers.

49 Malthusian Theory

Explanation: Thomas Malthus (1798) argued population grows geometrically while food grows arithmetically, so population would outstrip food and trigger famine, war, or disease.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Malthus = population outruns food. Neo-Malthusians apply it to resources; critics note technology (Green Revolution) broke the prediction.*

Example: Malthus predicted catastrophe by the mid-1800s; the Green Revolution's high-yield crops disproved his timing.

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Anti-Malthusians (Cornucopians)

Explanation: Thinkers who argue human ingenuity and technology can always expand resources and carrying capacity, so Malthusian catastrophe is avoidable.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Cornucopians = technology solves scarcity. The exam contrasts them with Neo-Malthusians.*

Example: Julian Simon's bet that commodity prices would fall (they did) is a cornucopian argument.

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Epidemiological Transition

Explanation: The shift in disease patterns from infectious diseases (cholera, malaria) to chronic diseases (heart disease, cancer) as countries develop. Stage 5 adds re-emerging diseases and aging-related decline.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Epidemiological transition tracks the DTM: stage 2-3 = infectious diseases decline, stage 4-5 = chronic diseases dominate.*

Example: The shift from tuberculosis to heart disease as the leading US killer marks the transition.

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Push Factors

Explanation: Negative conditions that drive people out of a place: war, famine, unemployment, persecution, environmental disaster.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Push = flee FROM. Pull = attracted TO. List both in migration FRQs.*

Example: Syria's civil war pushed millions of refugees abroad.

Unit 3: Unit 3: Cultural Patterns and Processes

12-17% of the AP Human Geography exam. Language, religion, ethnicity, and how culture diffuses, adapts, and creates landscapes.

53 Culture

Explanation: The shared beliefs, customs, values, arts, and practices of a group. Material culture = physical objects (tools, buildings); nonmaterial culture = beliefs and values.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Distinguish material (objects) from nonmaterial (values) culture in examples.*

Example: A temple is material culture; the religion it serves is nonmaterial.

54 Cultural Trait

Explanation: A single element of a culture, such as a food, gesture, or clothing style. Traits combine into complexes and systems.

AP Human Geo Tip: *A trait is the smallest unit of culture; a complex is a cluster of related traits.*

Example: Bowing is a cultural trait in Japan; chopstick use is another.

55 Cultural Hearth

Explanation: A place where a culture, innovation, or idea originates and from which it diffuses outward. Early hearths include Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley, and Mesoamerica.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Hearths = origin points; match each hearth to what diffused from it (writing, agriculture, religion).*

Example: Agriculture as a practice diffused from hearths like the Fertile Crescent.

56 Cultural Diffusion

Explanation: The spread of cultural traits from one place to another. Relocation diffusion = people carry it; expansion diffusion = it spreads outward from a source.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Diffusion types are the most-tested concept in this unit: relocation vs the three expansion types.*

Example: Starbucks spreading from Seattle to the world is expansion diffusion; Irish immigrants bringing pubs to Boston is relocation.

57 Relocation Diffusion

Explanation: The spread of a trait through the physical movement of people who carry it, such as migrants bringing their language or religion to a new land.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Relocation = the people move, the trait moves with them. Think of diasporas.*

Example: Spanish spread to the Americas through colonizers -- relocation diffusion.

58 Expansion Diffusion

Explanation: The spread of a trait outward from a hearth without the people moving, through contact. Includes hierarchical, contagious, and stimulus diffusion.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Expansion = trait spreads while people stay; subdivide into hierarchical, contagious, stimulus.*

Example: A viral meme spreads by expansion diffusion across the internet.

59 Hierarchical Diffusion

Explanation: The spread of a trait from nodes of power or influence -- big cities, elites, celebrities -- downward to smaller places or less powerful people.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Hierarchical = from the top down; fashion, ideas from capitals, chain stores in big cities first.*

Example: A new iPhone releases in New York and LA before smaller towns -- hierarchical diffusion.

60 Contagious Diffusion

Explanation: The spread of a trait through direct, person-to-person contact, often radiating outward uniformly from the source like a wave.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Contagious = everyone who touches it spreads it; no hierarchy, just proximity.*

Example: A flu outbreak spreads contagiously through a school population.

61 Stimulus Diffusion

Explanation: The spread of an underlying idea or principle that is adapted and changed by the receiving culture, so the form differs but the idea travels.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Stimulus = the idea spreads, the expression changes; think of McDonald's menus adapting to local tastes.*

Example: India's McAloo Tikki burger is stimulus diffusion of the fast-food concept.

62 Acculturation

Explanation: The adoption of some traits of another culture while retaining one's own, often by immigrants adapting to a new society.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Acculturation = blending while keeping identity; assimilation = fully losing it.*

Example: A Mexican immigrant in the US who speaks English at work but Spanish at home is acculturating.

63 Assimilation

Explanation: The complete absorption of a minority culture into the dominant culture, losing distinct identity, language, and customs.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Assimilation = full absorption; often measured by language loss and intermarriage.*

Example: Many immigrant families are fully assimilated by the third generation.

64 Syncretism

Explanation: The blending of elements from two or more cultures into a new, hybrid form, especially in religion, music, and food.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Syncretism = fusion; look for blended religions (Santeria, Vodou) and cuisines.*

Example: Santeria blends West African Yoruba beliefs with Catholic saints.

65 Multiculturalism

Explanation: A policy or value system that celebrates and preserves distinct cultural groups within one society rather than forcing assimilation.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Multiculturalism = separate-but-valued identities; Canada is the classic policy example.*

Example: Canada's official policy supports immigrant languages and cultural festivals.

66 Language Family

Explanation: A group of languages with a common ancient ancestor. The Indo-European family includes English, Spanish, Hindi, and Russian; Sino-Tibetan includes Mandarin and Cantonese.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Know the major families: Indo-European (largest), Sino-Tibetan, Niger-Congo, Afro-Asiatic.*

Example: English, Hindi, and Russian all descend from Proto-Indo-European.

67 Language Branch & Group

Explanation: A branch is a subdivision of a family (Germanic, Romance); a group is further subdivided (West Germanic includes English and German).

AP Human Geo Tip: *Order from big to small: family -> branch -> group -> language.*

Example: English sits in the Germanic branch of the Indo-European family.

68 Lingua Franca

Explanation: A language used for communication between people who do not share a native tongue, such as English in business or Swahili in East Africa.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Lingua franca = bridge language for trade and diplomacy; English is the global one.*

Example: Pilots and air-traffic controllers worldwide use English as the lingua franca.

69 Official Language

Explanation: The language a government designates for official business, education, and law. Some countries have several (Switzerland, India).

AP Human Geo Tip: *Official languages are political choices that can privilege some groups over others.*

Example: Quebec's French Language Charter makes French the sole official language of the province.

70 Pidgin Language

Explanation: A simplified language that develops between groups with no common language, used for basic trade and communication.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Pidgin = simplified contact language; when children learn it natively it becomes a creole.*

Example: Tok Pisin of Papua New Guinea began as a trade pidgin.

71 Creole Language

Explanation: A pidgin that has become a native, fully developed language learned by children as their first language.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Creole = nativized pidgin; Haitian Creole is the most famous.*

Example: Haitian Creole blends French vocabulary with West African grammar.

72 Dialect

Explanation: A regional or social variety of a language with distinct vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Dialects = regional variants; isoglosses map their boundaries.*

Example: 'Soda' vs 'pop' vs 'Coke' marks American dialect regions.

73 Isogloss

Explanation: A boundary line separating regions that use different words or pronunciations for the same thing.

AP Human Geo Tip: *An isogloss = a word boundary on a map; clusters of isoglosses define dialect regions.*

Example: The isogloss between 'soda' and 'pop' runs through the US Midwest.

74 Endangered Language

Explanation: A language at risk of dying out as its last native speakers age and younger generations shift to a dominant language.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Endangered = few speakers, no transmission; language death erases cultural knowledge.*

Example: Of the world's ~7,000 languages, hundreds have fewer than 100 speakers left.

75 Language Extinction & Revitalization

Explanation: When a language's last speakers die and no one learns it. Revitalization efforts (Maori, Hebrew, Welsh) try to reverse decline.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Hebrew is the great revival story -- extinct as a spoken tongue, revived as Israel's official language.*

Example: Welsh-medium schools in Wales are reviving a once-declining language.

76 Ethnic Religion

Explanation: A religion tied to a particular ethnic group and place, with no active proselytizing: Judaism, Hinduism, Shinto, and many indigenous faiths.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Ethnic = born into it, tied to a hearth, little missionary outreach; universalizing = open to all.*

Example: Hinduism is an ethnic religion centered in South Asia.

77 Universalizing Religion

Explanation: A religion that seeks worldwide membership and actively converts: Christianity, Islam, Buddhism.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Universalizing = converts welcomed, global spread. Christianity and Islam are the largest.*

Example: Missionaries spread Christianity and Islam to every continent.

Explanation: The world's largest religion (about 2.3 billion). Branches: Roman Catholic, Protestant, Eastern Orthodox. Hearth in the eastern Mediterranean; now strongest in the Americas and Europe.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Know the three main branches and where each dominates (Catholic in Latin America, Protestant in northern Europe/US, Orthodox in Russia/Eastern Europe).*

Example: Roman Catholicism dominates Brazil and Mexico; Protestantism dominates Scandinavia.

Unit 4: Unit 4: Political Patterns and Processes

12-17% of the AP Human Geography exam. States, nations, boundaries, geopolitics, and supranational organizations.

79 State

Explanation: An independent political unit with a defined territory, permanent population, government, and sovereignty. Not to be confused with 'nation' or 'country' in everyday speech.

AP Human Geo Tip: A state = sovereign territory. The exam wants the four criteria: territory, population, government, sovereignty.

Example: France is a state; Quebec is not (it lacks sovereignty).

80 Nation

Explanation: A group of people with a shared identity -- common culture, language, history, and often ethnicity -- who may or may not have their own state.

AP Human Geo Tip: A nation = a people; a state = a territory. 'Nation' does not require borders.

Example: The Kurds are a nation spread across Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria.

81 Nation-State

Explanation: A state whose territory corresponds to a single nation, with a strong shared identity: Japan, Iceland, Poland.

AP Human Geo Tip: Nation-states are the ideal type; few are perfect because borders rarely match nations.

Example: Japan is the classic example of a nation-state.

82 Multinational State

Explanation: A state containing multiple nations or ethnic groups, such as Russia, Canada, or Nigeria.

AP Human Geo Tip: Multinational = many nations in one state; centrifugal forces often pull at them.

Example: Canada contains the Quebecois, First Nations, and English Canadians.

83 Multistate Nation

Explanation: A nation spread across the territory of multiple states, such as the Kurds, Basques, or Hungarians.

AP Human Geo Tip: Multistate = one nation, several states. The opposite of a multinational state.

Example: The Basque nation spans Spain and France.

84 Autonomous Region

Explanation: A region within a state that has self-governing powers over local affairs, such as Catalonia in Spain or Scotland in the UK.

AP Human Geo Tip: Autonomous = self-rule within a state; not full sovereignty.

Example: Catalonia controls its education and policing but not foreign policy.

85 Sovereignty

Explanation: The authority of a state to govern itself without external interference. Sovereignty is the core of the modern state system.

AP Human Geo Tip: Sovereignty = supreme internal authority; globalization and supranational bodies (EU) challenge it.

Example: EU member states pool parts of their sovereignty over trade and law.

86 Territoriality

Explanation: The attempt by an individual or group to control and claim space, and the emotional attachment to that territory.

AP Human Geo Tip: Territoriality = claiming and defending space; it drives boundary conflicts.

Example: Neighbors who fence disputed property lines are exercising territoriality.

87 Colonialism

Explanation: The establishment of political control by one state over another territory, exploiting its resources and people. Driven by European powers from the 1500s to 1900s.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Colonialism = political control + exploitation; distinguish it from imperialism (broader influence).*

Example: Britain's control of India was colonialism; US economic dominance of Latin America is often called imperialism.

88 Imperialism

Explanation: The extension of a state's power and influence over others through military, economic, or cultural means, not always direct rule.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Imperialism = broader domination; colonialism is one form of it.*

Example: The Scramble for Africa was imperial expansion by European states.

89 Neocolonialism

Explanation: Continued economic and cultural influence of former colonial powers over developing countries through debt, trade terms, and corporations.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Neocolonialism = control without formal rule; debt and dependency keep former colonies tied.*

Example: A former colony whose economy depends on exporting raw materials to the old power shows neocolonial patterns.

90 Berlin Conference (1884-85)

Explanation: European powers met to divide Africa into colonies with borders drawn on maps with no regard for African nations, creating the arbitrary borders that still cause conflict.

AP Human Geo Tip: *The Berlin Conference = Africa carved up; borders split ethnic groups (multistate nations) and forced rivals together.*

Example: The Nigeria-Cameroon border splits the Fulani people because of a European-drawn line.

91 Shatterbelt

Explanation: A region of persistent instability and conflict, often caught between larger powers, such as the Balkans, the Caucasus, or the Middle East.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Shatterbelt = chronically unstable region; identify them by outside-power rivalry.*

Example: The Balkans were a shatterbelt between the Ottoman, Russian, and Austro-Hungarian empires.

92 Boundary

Explanation: A line that separates political entities. Boundaries can be physical (mountains, rivers) or cultural (language, religion).

AP Human Geo Tip: *Boundaries = separation lines; classify by type AND by how they were drawn (antecedent, subsequent, superimposed, relic).*

Example: The Pyrenees form a physical boundary between Spain and France.

93 Physical Boundary

Explanation: A boundary following natural features like rivers, mountains, or deserts. The Rio Grande and the Andes are examples.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Physical boundaries = natural features; they rarely match cultural divides.*

Example: The Rio Grande separates the US and Mexico.

94 Geometric Boundary

Explanation: A boundary drawn as a straight line, often along latitude or longitude, ignoring culture and terrain. The US-Canada border at 49 degrees north is the classic example.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Geometric = straight-line borders; typical of superimposed colonial borders.*

Example: The 49th parallel between the US and Canada runs for over a thousand miles.

95 Antecedent Boundary

Explanation: A boundary drawn BEFORE the area was settled, such as the US-Canada border west of the Rockies.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Antecedent = drawn before settlement; subsequent = drawn after; superimposed = forced on existing peoples.*

Example: The boundary between Malaysia and Indonesia on Borneo preceded much of the interior settlement.

96 Subsequent Boundary

Explanation: A boundary drawn AFTER settlement, reflecting cultural or linguistic patterns that emerged over time, such as the border between the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Subsequent = follows cultural reality; often emerges from negotiation after settlement.*

Example: The Czech-Slovak border follows the linguistic divide that developed over centuries.

97 Superimposed Boundary

Explanation: A boundary forced on existing cultural groups by outside powers, ignoring ethnic and political patterns, such as most African borders.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Superimposed = imposed, ignoring culture; the cause of many post-colonial conflicts.*

Example: The borders of Iraq, drawn by Britain, combined Kurds, Arabs, and others into one state.

98 Relic Boundary

Explanation: A former boundary that no longer functions but still shapes the landscape, such as the Berlin Wall's former line or the boundary between East and West Germany.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Relic = historical line still visible in maps or memories; the Great Wall of China and Hadrian's Wall are relics.*

Example: The former Iron Curtain line still shows in German settlement patterns.

99 Demarcated vs Delimited Boundary

Explanation: Delimitation = defining the boundary on a map or treaty; demarcation = physically marking it on the ground with fences, walls, or monuments.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Delimitation = on paper; demarcation = on the ground. Both are boundary-establishment steps.*

Example: The Treaty of Paris delimited the US-Canada boundary; surveyors later demarcated it.

100 Territorial Waters

Explanation: The coastal waters (up to 12 nautical miles) over which a state has sovereignty; beyond them lie Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) up to 200 nautical miles.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Territorial waters = 12 nm; EEZ = 200 nm for resource rights, not full sovereignty.*

Example: China's claims in the South China Sea extend past 12 nm, sparking disputes.

101 Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

Explanation: The international treaty setting rules for territorial waters, EEZs, and seabed resources. States can claim an EEZ of 200 nautical miles.

AP Human Geo Tip: *UNCLOS = 12 nm territorial, 200 nm EEZ; island claims hinge on rocks vs islands.*

Example: Under UNCLOS, a tiny island can extend a state's EEZ across vast ocean.

102 Centripetal Forces

Explanation: Forces that unify a state: shared language, religion, national identity, infrastructure, and common threats. They hold countries together.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Centripetal = pulls together; centrifugal = pulls apart. List examples for each on FRQs.*

Example: National anthems and shared Olympic pride are centripetal forces.

103 Centrifugal Forces

Explanation: Forces that divide a state: ethnic or religious conflict, regional inequality, weak institutions, and separatist movements.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Centrifugal forces threaten unity; devolution and independence movements are their results.*

Example: Regional income gaps between rich Catalonia and poorer Spain pull the country apart.

104 Devolution

Explanation: The transfer of power from a central government to regional or local governments, often in response to centrifugal forces.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Devolution = power down to regions; the UK's Scottish Parliament and Spain's autonomous communities are examples.*

Example: The UK devolved powers to Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland after 1997.

Unit 5: Unit 5: Agriculture and Rural Land-Use Patterns and Processes

12-17% of the AP Human Geography exam. Farming origins, revolutions, systems, and the economics of food production.

105 Agriculture

Explanation: The deliberate cultivation of plants and raising of animals for food, fiber, and other products. It began with the First Agricultural Revolution.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Agriculture = intentional domestication; distinguish subsistence (for self) from commercial (for sale).*

Example: Growing wheat for a family's own bread is subsistence agriculture.

106 First Agricultural Revolution (Neolithic)

Explanation: The domestication of plants and animals around 10,000 BCE in hearths like the Fertile Crescent, East Asia, and Mesoamerica, enabling settled villages.

AP Human Geo Tip: *First Revolution = domestication; hearths include the Fertile Crescent, Nile, Indus, Yellow River, Mesoamerica.*

Example: Wheat and barley were domesticated in the Fertile Crescent; rice in East Asia.

107 Second Agricultural Revolution

Explanation: The period of new crops, crop rotation, and improved tools that accompanied the Industrial Revolution (1700s-1900s), boosting yields and freeing labor for factories.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Second Revolution = science + industrialization; crop rotation and the seed drill multiplied output.*

Example: Jethro Tull's seed drill and the Norfolk four-course rotation are hallmarks.

108 Third Agricultural Revolution (Green Revolution)

Explanation: The post-WWII spread of high-yield varieties, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and irrigation, especially in developing countries. Norman Borlaug led it.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Green Revolution = high-yield seeds + chemicals; it averted famine but raised water/soil and inequality costs.*

Example: Mexico's and India's wheat yields tripled with Borlaug's dwarf wheat varieties.

109 Biotechnology / GMOs

Explanation: Genetic modification of crops for traits like pest resistance, drought tolerance, and nutrition. GMOs are a continuation of the Green Revolution and are controversial.

AP Human Geo Tip: *GMOs = genetic engineering; the exam tests the benefits (yield, nutrition) and risks (monoculture, patents).*

Example: Bt corn produces its own insecticide, reducing pesticide spraying.

110 Subsistence Agriculture

Explanation: Farming that produces only enough food for the farmer's family, with little or no surplus for sale. Common in less developed regions.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Subsistence = feed the family; intensity varies from shifting cultivation to intensive wet rice.*

Example: A family growing cassava for its own consumption practices subsistence agriculture.

111 Commercial Agriculture

Explanation: Farming for profit, selling crops or livestock on the market. Characterized by large scale, mechanization, and specialization.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Commercial = for the market; agribusiness is its industrial form.*

Example: A Kansas wheat farm selling its entire crop is commercial agriculture.

112 Intensive Agriculture

Explanation: Farming with high inputs of labor or capital per unit of land to maximize yields, such as market gardening and wet rice cultivation.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Intensive = high input per acre; extensive = low input per acre.*

Example: Dutch greenhouse tomatoes are intensive; Mongolian herding is extensive.

113 Extensive Agriculture

Explanation: Farming with low inputs per unit of land, relying on large areas, such as nomadic herding and ranching in arid or sparsely populated regions.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Extensive = large land, low input; think ranching, shifting cultivation, nomadic pastoralism.*

Example: Cattle ranching in the Australian outback is extensive agriculture.

114 Shifting Cultivation

Explanation: Slash-and-burn farming where land is cleared, farmed for a few years until fertility falls, then abandoned to regrow. Practiced in tropical rainforests.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Shifting cultivation = rotate fields, let forest regrow; it is sustainable at low density but destructive when pressured.*

Example: The Yanomami practice shifting cultivation in the Amazon basin.

115 Nomadic Herding (Pastoral Nomadism)

Explanation: The seasonal movement of livestock (goats, camels, cattle) to find pasture and water, practiced in arid lands like the Sahel and Central Asia.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Nomadic herding = moving herds with seasons; it is extensive, subsistence agriculture.*

Example: The Maasai move cattle across the East African savanna with the rains.

116 Intensive Wet Rice Farming

Explanation: Highly productive paddy rice farming in monsoon Asia, using flooded terraces, manual labor, and double-cropping to feed dense populations.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Wet rice = intensive subsistence feeding huge populations in East/South/Southeast Asia.*

Example: Terraced rice paddies in the Philippines' Ifugao region maximize every slope.

117 Market Gardening

Explanation: Intensive commercial production of fruits, vegetables, and flowers for urban markets, often near cities. The 'truck farming' of the US Southeast.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Market gardening = perishable produce near markets; the Netherlands and California's Central Valley are leaders.*

Example: The Salinas Valley ships lettuce nationwide -- market gardening at scale.

118 Plantation Agriculture

Explanation: Large commercial farms in tropical and subtropical regions growing cash crops (coffee, cocoa, sugar, bananas) for export, often with a colonial legacy.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Plantations = tropical export cash crops; they created dependency and shaped colonial economies.*

Example: Banana plantations in Central America supply global markets.

119 Mixed Crop and Livestock Farming

Explanation: Commercial farming combining crops and animals on the same operation, using animal manure as fertilizer and crops as feed. Common in the US Midwest and Europe.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Mixed farming = crops + livestock synergy; the US Corn Belt pairs corn with hogs.*

Example: An Iowa farm growing corn to feed its own hogs is a mixed operation.

120 Dairying

Explanation: Commercial milk production, located near urban markets because milk is perishable -- the classic von Thunen inner ring.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Dairying sits close to cities (perishability); improvements in refrigeration extended its range.*

Example: Wisconsin and the Netherlands are dairying heartlands.

121 Ranching

Explanation: The commercial herding of livestock over large areas, such as cattle in the American West, Australia, and the Pampas.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Ranching = extensive commercial livestock; it responds to global beef demand.*

Example: Brazilian cattle ranching drives Amazon deforestation.

122 Mediterranean Agriculture

Explanation: Commercial farming of olives, grapes, citrus, and wheat in Mediterranean climates (dry summers, wet winters): California, Spain, Italy, Chile.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Mediterranean agriculture = olives, grapes, citrus; wine regions are its signature.*

Example: Napa Valley grapes and Tuscan olives are Mediterranean agriculture.

123 Aquaculture

Explanation: The farming of fish, shellfish, and seaweed in controlled environments. The fastest-growing food sector, supplying over half of the world's seafood.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Aquaculture = farmed seafood; it relieves wild fisheries but raises pollution and disease concerns.*

Example: Norway's salmon farms and China's shrimp ponds are aquaculture.

124 Von Thunen Model

Explanation: A model predicting that agricultural land use around a market forms concentric rings: dairy/perishables closest, then timber, then grain, then extensive ranching at the edge.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Von Thunen = land rent falls with distance from market; perishable, heavy goods sit closest.*

Example: Dairy farms ring a city, while wheat farms sit farther out where land is cheap.

125 Von Thunen Assumptions & Limits

Explanation: The model assumes an isolated city, uniform land, no roads, and equal transport costs in all directions -- assumptions modern transport and refrigeration break.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Modern changes: refrigerated trucks made dairying distance-insensitive; highways bent the rings.*

Example: Refrigerated rail lets California produce serve New York -- violating von Thunen's perishability rule.

126 Commodity Chain

Explanation: The full sequence of production, processing, and distribution of a product, from farm to consumer, often spanning multiple countries.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Commodity chains connect farmers to consumers globally; value added grows at processing stages.*

Example: A coffee bean moves from Colombian farm to roaster to caf in a global commodity chain.

127 Agribusiness

Explanation: The large-scale, corporate control of agriculture, integrating farming, processing, and distribution. It dominates US and global food systems.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Agribusiness = corporate integration of the food system; it favors scale and standardization.*

Example: Tyson Foods controls chickens from hatchery to supermarket.

128 Economies of Scale in Agriculture

Explanation: Larger farms produce at lower average cost per unit through mechanization and bulk purchasing, driving consolidation and the decline of small farms.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Scale = bigger farms, lower unit costs; small farms can't compete and consolidate.*

Example: US farm size has grown while farm count has shrunk since 1950.

129

Monocropping

Explanation: Growing a single crop over a large area year after year. Efficient but vulnerable to pests, disease, and soil depletion.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Monoculture = one crop; the Irish potato famine shows its catastrophic risk.*

Example: The Great Irish Famine (1845-52) followed the collapse of the single potato crop.

130

Desertification

Explanation: The degradation of dryland soils from overgrazing, overcultivation, and deforestation, turning productive land into desert. The Sahel is the classic case.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Desertification = human-caused land degradation in drylands; the Sahel's southward creep is the example.*

Example: Overgrazing in the Sahel contributes to the advancing desert edge.

Unit 6: Unit 6: Cities and Urban Land-Use Patterns and Processes

12-17% of the AP Human Geography exam. Urbanization, city models, land use, and urban challenges.

131 Urbanization

Explanation: The increasing share of a population living in cities. Today over half of humanity is urban; the fastest growth is in less developed countries.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Urbanization = share in cities; LDCs have the fastest-growing megacities today.*

Example: Lagos, Dhaka, and Kinshasa are among the fastest-growing cities on Earth.

132 Urban Hierarchy

Explanation: The ranking of settlements by size and function, from hamlets and villages to cities and megacities. Larger settlements are rarer and serve larger hinterlands.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Hierarchy: hamlet < village < town < city < metropolis < megacity. Each level serves a larger area.*

Example: A regional capital sits above towns but below the national capital in the hierarchy.

133 Central Place Theory

Explanation: Walter Christaller's theory that settlements serve as central places providing goods to surrounding hinterlands; larger places offer rarer goods and sit farther apart.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Christaller = central places arranged in hexagons; threshold (min customers) and range (max distance) shape spacing.*

Example: Gas stations (common) are everywhere; symphony halls (rare) only in big cities.

134 Threshold & Range

Explanation: Threshold = the minimum population needed to support a good; range = the maximum distance people will travel for it. High-order goods have higher thresholds and ranges.

AP Human Geo Tip: *High-order = rare, expensive, large threshold/range; low-order = everyday, small threshold/range.*

Example: A hospital has a huge threshold and range; a corner store has tiny ones.

135 Primate City

Explanation: A city more than twice as large as the next-largest city, dominating its country's economy and culture, such as Paris, Bangkok, or Mexico City.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Primate = disproportionately dominant; common in countries with a colonial or centralized past.*

Example: Bangkok is roughly forty times larger than Thailand's second city.

136 Rank-Size Rule

Explanation: The rule that a country's nth-largest city is about 1/n the size of the largest, producing a smooth size distribution (US fits it roughly).

AP Human Geo Tip: *Rank-size = orderly distribution (US); primate = one giant (Mexico, France, Thailand).*

Example: If the largest city has 8 million, the second should be ~4 million under rank-size.

137 Megacity

Explanation: A metropolitan area with over 10 million people. There are 30+ megacities, mostly in Asia.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Megacity = 10+ million; megacities concentrate in Asia (Tokyo, Delhi, Shanghai).*

Example: Delhi, Tokyo, and Shanghai all exceed 30 million people.

138 Megalopolis

Explanation: A chain of overlapping metropolitan areas forming a giant urban region, such as BosWash (Boston to Washington DC) or the Rhine-Ruhr corridor.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Megalopolis = many metros merged into one corridor; BosWash is the textbook example.*

Example: BosWash holds about 50 million people along the US Northeast coast.

139 Bid-Rent Theory

Explanation: Land prices and rents fall with distance from the city center because of transport costs; commercial uses outbid residential, which outbids agricultural.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Bid-rent = land value falls outward; explains the tall downtown and sprawling suburbs.*

Example: Retail pays the highest rent downtown; warehouses and farms sit farther out.

140 Concentric Zone Model

Explanation: Ernest Burgess's model of Chicago: five concentric rings -- CBD, transition zone, working-class homes, middle-class homes, commuter zone.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Concentric = rings around the CBD; the first model, based on 1920s Chicago.*

Example: Burgess's ring 2, the zone of transition, held factories and poor migrants.

141 Sector Model

Explanation: Homer Hoyt's refinement: urban growth follows transportation corridors, so land uses extend outward in wedges or sectors along rail lines and highways.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Sector = wedges along transport routes; wealthier housing follows the best corridors.*

Example: In Hoyt's model, an industrial sector follows a rail line radiating from the CBD.

142 Multiple Nuclei Model

Explanation: Chaplin and Harris's model: cities grow around several separate nodes (downtown, airport, industrial parks, suburbs) rather than one center.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Multiple nuclei = several centers; modern edge cities are new nuclei.*

Example: Los Angeles fits the multiple nuclei model with its dispersed job centers.

143 Galactic City (Edge City) Model

Explanation: A post-WWII model where the CBD declines and suburbs develop their own job centers -- edge cities with offices, malls, and housing.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Edge cities = suburban job nodes; the model describes American sprawl since 1970.*

Example: Tysons, Virginia is the classic edge city outside Washington DC.

144 Latin American City Model

Explanation: Griffin-Ford model: the CBD at the core with a wealthy 'spine' extending outward, surrounded by concentric rings of middle and lower-class housing, with squatter settlements at the periphery.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Latin American model = wealthy spine + peripheral squatter settlements; identify the spine on a diagram.*

Example: In the Griffin-Ford model, the rich live along the commercial spine; the poor in outer barrios.

145 Southeast Asian City Model

Explanation: McGee's model: a port zone and old CBD surrounded by zones of mixed land use, with no single clear center and kampungs (villages) scattered through the city.

AP Human Geo Tip: *McGee = no single CBD, mixed zones, port focus; applies to Jakarta, Bangkok, Manila.*

Example: Jakarta's kampungs intermingle with commercial zones -- McGee's pattern.

146 African City Model

Explanation: A model of sub-Saharan African cities with three CBDs (colonial, traditional, and market zones) and rings of ethnic and mixed neighborhoods.

AP Human Geo Tip: *African model = multiple CBDs from colonial layering; ethnic neighborhoods ring the center.*

Example: Nairobi shows the colonial and market CBDs side by side.

147 Urban Sprawl

Explanation: The uncontrolled outward expansion of low-density development, consuming farmland and requiring cars. Driven by highways and cheap land.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Sprawl = low-density outward growth; it raises infrastructure costs and carbon emissions.*

Example: Phoenix's enormous footprint is sprawl built for the car.

148 New Urbanism

Explanation: A planning movement favoring walkable, mixed-use, transit-oriented neighborhoods with higher density, designed to counter sprawl.

AP Human Geo Tip: *New urbanism = walkable, mixed-use, transit-oriented; think Seaside, Florida or Portland.*

Example: Seaside, Florida is the model new-urbanist town.

149 Smart Growth

Explanation: Policies directing growth into existing urban areas: zoning reform, transit investment, and preserving greenfields outside the city.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Smart growth = density in, sprawl out; pairs with new urbanism.*

Example: Portland's urban growth boundary is a smart-growth tool.

150 Gentrification

Explanation: The influx of wealthier residents into formerly low-income neighborhoods, renovating housing and raising rents, often displacing longtime residents.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Gentrification = reinvestment + displacement; the exam wants both the benefits and the costs.*

Example: Brooklyn's Williamsburg transformed from industrial to hipster, pricing out tenants.

151 Filtering

Explanation: The process by which housing ages and filters down to lower-income occupants over time, as the wealthy move to newer housing.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Filtering = housing moves down the income ladder as it ages; gentrification reverses it.*

Example: Victorian homes in many US cities filtered from rich to poor to renovated.

152 Redlining

Explanation: The discriminatory practice of denying mortgages or insurance to neighborhoods based on race, historically drawn as red lines on maps.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Redlining = race-based denial of credit; the Fair Housing Act (1968) made it illegal, but effects persist.*

Example: The HOLC redlining maps of the 1930s still predict today's wealth gaps.

153 Blockbusting

Explanation: The practice of real estate agents inducing white flight by spreading fear that minorities are moving in, then buying homes cheap and selling high.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Blockbusting = fear-driven turnover; it profited agents at sellers' expense.*

Example: 1950s agents stoked panic sales in Chicago, flipping houses for profit.

154 Zoning

Explanation: Local laws regulating land use by district: residential, commercial, industrial. Zoning shapes urban form and can exclude low-income housing.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Zoning = land-use regulation; exclusionary zoning blocks affordable housing.*

Example: Single-family-only zoning in many suburbs effectively excludes apartments.

155

World City

Explanation: A city that functions as a global command center for finance, corporate headquarters, and services, such as New York, London, and Tokyo.

AP Human Geo Tip: *World cities = global economic command centers; alpha, beta, and gamma tiers rank them.*

Example: New York, London, and Tokyo are the classic alpha world cities.

156

Globalization of Urban Areas

Explanation: Cities connect through global finance and migration, competing to attract capital, talent, and events; cities like Dubai and Singapore market themselves globally.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Global cities compete for investment; tax incentives and mega-events are lures.*

Example: Dubai's skyline and airports are a bid for global status.

Unit 7: Unit 7: Industrial and Economic Development Patterns and Processes

12-17% of the AP Human Geography exam. Industrialization, development measures, and global economic patterns.

157 Industrialization

Explanation: The shift from agrarian to manufacturing economies, beginning with the Industrial Revolution in Britain (late 1700s) and diffusing worldwide.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Industrialization = manufacturing-based growth; Britain was the hearth, textiles the first industry.*

Example: Britain's cotton mills led the first industrial wave.

158 Industrial Revolution

Explanation: The transformation of production through machines, factories, and fossil fuels (coal, steam) in 18th-19th century Britain, then Europe, the US, and Japan.

AP Human Geo Tip: *The Industrial Revolution = steam, factories, urbanization; it created the modern industrial map.*

Example: Steam engines powered mills and railways, reshaping British cities.

159 Weber's Least Cost Theory

Explanation: Alfred Weber's model: industries locate where transport, labor, and agglomeration costs are minimized. Heavy raw materials pull factories to material sites; fragile goods to markets.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Weber = locate at lowest total cost; weight-gaining processes locate at market, weight-losing at materials.*

Example: A paper mill locates near timber (weight-losing); bottling near customers (weight-gaining).

160 Weight-Gaining vs Weight-Losing Industry

Explanation: Weight-gaining industries (bottling, autos) add bulk and locate near markets; weight-losing industries (smelting, lumber) shed mass and locate near materials.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Weight-gaining -> market; weight-losing -> material source. This is Weber in one line.*

Example: Soda bottlers sit near cities; copper smelters near mines.

161 Footloose Industry

Explanation: An industry with no strong pull to materials or markets, locating wherever labor, taxes, or amenities are best, such as software or call centers.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Footloose = free to locate anywhere; cheap skilled labor and quality of life attract them.*

Example: Software firms cluster in Austin and Bangalore -- footloose industries.

162 Agglomeration

Explanation: The clustering of related industries in one place, sharing infrastructure, suppliers, and labor pools, reducing costs and spurring innovation.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Agglomeration = cluster benefits; Silicon Valley and Detroit's auto row are examples.*

Example: Hollywood's film cluster shares crews, studios, and talent.

163 Deglomeration

Explanation: The dispersal of industry when a cluster becomes too costly -- congestion, high rents, labor shortages -- pushing firms to cheaper locations.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Deglomeration = cluster costs push firms out; rust belt decline and outsourcing follow.*

Example: Auto plants moved from Detroit to the US South for lower costs.

164 Economies of Scale

Explanation: Falling average costs as production volume rises, favoring large factories and consolidated firms.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Scale economies = bigger is cheaper per unit; they drive mergers and global supply chains.*

Example: One giant steel plant outcompetes many small ones on cost.

165 Division of Labor

Explanation: Breaking production into specialized tasks performed by different workers, raising efficiency and productivity.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Division of labor = specialization; it raises output per worker.*

Example: Ford's assembly line divided car making into hundreds of tasks.

166 Comparative Advantage

Explanation: A country should specialize in producing what it makes most efficiently relative to others, and trade for the rest, raising total output.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Comparative advantage = specialize and trade; the basis of free-trade theory.*

Example: Bangladesh makes garments; Germany makes machinery -- each trades for the other.

167 Core-Periphery Model

Explanation: The world economy divides into an industrialized core (US, Europe, Japan), a semi-periphery (China, Brazil, India), and a periphery (much of Africa, South Asia), with wealth flowing to the core.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Core = rich industrialized; semi-periphery = industrializing; periphery = poor, raw materials.*

Example: Under the model, cotton from the periphery feeds textile factories in the core.

168 World Systems Theory

Explanation: Wallerstein's theory that the capitalist world economy creates and maintains core-periphery inequality through exploitative trade and labor.

AP Human Geo Tip: *World systems = core exploits periphery through the global economy; semi-periphery buffers the system.*

Example: Peripheral countries export raw materials and import expensive manufactured goods.

169 Dependency Theory

Explanation: The argument that poor countries stay poor because their economies are structured to serve rich countries -- debt, commodity exports, and unequal terms of trade.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Dependency = the system keeps the periphery dependent; contrast with modernization theory's optimism.*

Example: A coffee exporter trapped by falling prices and rising debt illustrates dependency.

170 Modernization Theory

Explanation: Rostow's argument that all countries develop through five stages -- traditional, preconditions, takeoff, drive to maturity, high mass consumption -- with the West as the model.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Rostow = linear stages of development; critics say it ignores colonial exploitation.*

Example: Rostow saw South Korea's 1960s takeoff as proof of the model.

171 Rostow's Stages of Development

Explanation: The five stages: (1) traditional society, (2) preconditions for takeoff, (3) takeoff, (4) drive to maturity, (5) high mass consumption. Progress depends on investment and industry.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Memorize the five stages in order; the takeoff stage is where growth accelerates.*

Example: Britain reached takeoff in the late 1700s; China in the late 1900s.

172 Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Explanation: The total value of goods and services produced within a country in a year. GDP per capita is a crude measure of average income.

AP Human Geo Tip: *GDP = production inside borders; GNI = income of citizens abroad too. Per capita divides by population.*

Example: China's huge GDP per capita is still far below Norway's.

173 Gross National Income (GNI)

Explanation: The total income earned by a country's residents, including earnings abroad, minus income earned by foreigners inside. GNI per capita at purchasing power parity (PPP) is the standard comparison.

AP Human Geo Tip: *GNI per capita PPP is the best simple income comparison; it adjusts for cost of living.*

Example: India's GNI per capita PPP is several times its nominal figure.

174 Purchasing Power Parity (PPP)

Explanation: Adjusting income measures for differences in the cost of living, so a dollar buys comparable goods across countries.

AP Human Geo Tip: *PPP = cost-of-living adjustment; without it, comparisons mislead.*

Example: A \$2,000 monthly salary in Bangkok goes further than the same in New York -- PPP captures that.

175 Human Development Index (HDI)

Explanation: A UN composite measure combining life expectancy, education (years of schooling), and income (GNI per capita). HDI ranks 0-1, capturing well-being beyond money.

AP Human Geo Tip: *HDI = health + education + income; it beats GDP alone as a development measure.*

Example: Norway and Switzerland top the HDI; South Sudan ranks near the bottom.

176 Gender Inequality Index (GII)

Explanation: A UN measure of gender disparities in reproductive health, empowerment, and labor force participation. Lower is better.

AP Human Geo Tip: *GII = gender gaps; compare it to HDI for a fuller development picture.*

Example: Countries with high GII have large gaps in female education and work.

177 Gini Coefficient

Explanation: A measure of income inequality within a country, from 0 (perfect equality) to 1 (one person holds everything).

AP Human Geo Tip: *Gini = inequality; South Africa and Brazil rank high (unequal); Nordic countries low.*

Example: A Gini of 0.63 (South Africa) signals extreme inequality.

178 Literacy Rate

Explanation: The percentage of adults who can read and write. A basic indicator of human capital and development.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Literacy feeds HDI and development; female literacy correlates with lower fertility.*

Example: Raising girls' literacy lowers birth rates and raises child health.

179 Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs)

Explanation: Countries that industrialized rapidly from the 1960s: the Asian Tigers (South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore), then Brazil, Mexico, and now China, India, Thailand.

AP Human Geo Tip: *NICs = rapid late industrialization; export-led growth is their signature.*

Example: South Korea went from aid recipient to car and chip exporter in 50 years.

180 Export Processing Zones (EPZs)

Explanation: Special zones offering tax breaks and infrastructure to attract foreign factories producing for export, such as Mexico's maquiladoras.

AP Human Geo Tip: *EPZs = export factories with tax incentives; maquiladoras line the US-Mexico border.*

Example: Juarez maquiladoras assemble goods for the US market.

181 Maquiladoras

Explanation: Foreign-owned factories in northern Mexico importing materials duty-free, assembling products for export, especially to the US.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Maquiladoras = border assembly plants; NAFTA/USMCA expanded them.*

Example: TVs assembled in Tijuana ship to US stores.

182 Outsourcing & Offshoring

Explanation: Outsourcing = contracting work to another firm; offshoring = moving production to another country for cheaper labor or taxes.

AP Human Geo Tip: *Outsourcing = another firm; offshoring = another country. Both spread the commodity chain.*

Example: A US firm offshores call centers to the Philippines.

183 New International Division of Labor

Explanation: The global split where developed countries keep design and finance while developing countries do manufacturing and assembly, reversing the old colonial division.

AP Human Geo Tip: *NIDL = design in core, assembly in periphery; the smartphone is its symbol.*

Example: iPhones are designed in California and assembled in China.

What's Next?

You have now reviewed every unit of the AP Human Geography course, including all the key models (DTM, von Thunen, Christaller, Weber, Rostow) and the vocabulary that carries the multiple-choice section. Go back to the Table of Contents, find the units you marked, and reread just those tip lines. Two weeks out, do a rapid pass over the entire guide; the day before, review only the tip lines. On the FRQs, define your terms, name the model being tested, and connect every fact to a concept -- model identification is where most students gain or lose points.

Pair it with the Study Mastery Cheat Sheet (\$19) -- how to actually retain all of it

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