

Seven Keys to Success on the AP Human Geography Exam

AP Human Geography is definitely one of the most empowering courses you can take in high school. So many students walk out of their AP Human Geo experience feeling as if they learned more about the world—and themselves—than they ever expected. However, for many students, preparing for the AP exam can seem like a steep mountain to climb and can feel overwhelming. But it doesn't have to overwhelm you—preparing for the AP Human Geography exam can be greatly improved by studying strategically and efficiently. In order to succeed on the exam, you should focus your preparation by gaining an understanding of the structure of the AP Human Geography exam itself and reviewing the key topics that are tested.

This *Crash Course* book contains the essential information for you to target in your preparation for the exam. This book is written specifically to help you focus your preparation for exam success—containing key topics and concepts you need to know in order to score well on the exam. This book is designed with you, the student, in mind. It will show you what you already know and how to succeed on the AP Human Geography exam.

Specifically, this first chapter gives you an overview of keys to success on the exam and analysis of key patterns and data from previous exams that will help you study more strategically. Chapters 2 through 12 provide you with a targeted review of the AP Human Geography topics assessed on the exam—key models, terms, concepts, and facts. The final chapters review strategies for success on the AP exam questions, offering you tools for navigating both the multiple-choice and free-response sections of the AP Human Geography exam. Also, you will find “test tips” to enrich your exam preparations throughout this book. Remember: Succeeding

on the AP Human Geography exam is definitely within your reach, especially if you study strategically with this *Crash Course* book!

KEY 1: Understanding the Structure of the AP Human Geography Exam

1. The AP Human Geography exam is given each May and is approximately two hours and 15 minutes long.
2. The exam is divided into two sections: a 60-minute multiple-choice section and a 75-minute free-response section.

Test Section	Task	Time	Percent of Exam Score
Multiple Choice	About 75 questions	60 minutes	50%
Short Break		10–15 minutes	
Free Response	3 free-response questions	75 minutes	50%

3. Each section of the exam is completed separately, and each counts for half of the student's score.
4. The College Board, which creates and administers the AP Human Geography exam, creates a formula (which changes slightly every year) to convert a student's exam performance into an AP Human Geography exam score ranging from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). In general, an exam score of 3, 4, or 5 is considered "passing" and compares roughly to the following grades in an introductory Human Geography course in college:

AP Human Geography Exam Score	Grade in a College Human Geography Course
5	A
4	B
3	C
2	D

5. Some colleges and universities accept scores of 3, 4, or 5 for college credit, but some only accept 4s and 5s. Some colleges do not award credit for the AP test, so it is important for you to research a college's policy. Remember, however, that even if a college does not award credit for an AP test, it usually still strengthens your college application to have risen to the "AP challenge."

KEY 2: Understanding How the AP Human Geography Exam Is Scored

1. The exact formula that will be used to calculate your exam score varies from year to year. The College Board has, however, released its scoring formula for the 2006 AP Human Geography exam (the most recently released AP Human Geography exam).
2. The score-setting equation for the 2006 Released AP Human Geography exam was:

Section I—Multiple-Choice Raw Score:

$$\frac{\text{Number multiple-choice questions correct (out of 74)}}{0.8108} = \frac{\text{Weighted Section I Score}}{\text{Section I Score}}$$

Section II—Free-Response Section Raw Score:

$$\text{FRQ 1 Score} \frac{\text{(out of 9)}}{\text{}} \times 2.2222 = \text{A}$$

$$\text{FRQ 2 Score} \frac{\text{(out of 8)}}{\text{}} \times 2.5000 = \text{B}$$

$$\text{FRQ 3 Score} \frac{\text{(out of 6)}}{\text{}} \times 3.33 = \text{C}$$

$$\text{A} + \text{B} + \text{C} = \text{Weighted Section II Score}$$



Test Tip
Be aware that the order in which the free-response questions are presented has little to do with the level of difficulty or the topic. Each FRQ is equally important, and each counts as a significant portion of your exam grade.

2006 Composite Score Calculation and Conversion Table:

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{Weighted} \\ \text{Section I} \end{array} + \begin{array}{c} \text{Weighted} \\ \text{Section II} \end{array} = \begin{array}{c} \text{Composite} \\ \text{Score} \end{array}$$

2006 AP Human Geography Composite Score Range	2006 AP Exam Grade
74–120	5
59–73	4
45–58	3
35–44	2
0–34	1

Notice that for the 2006 exam, a student only needed about 1/3 the total possible points to earn a score of a 3. To earn a 4, you only needed about half the total possible points on the AP exam (59/120). This is very good news! You only need to earn *half* the total possible points to earn a 4 and get college credit!

KEY 3: Understanding the Distribution of Previous Exam Scores

Year	% of Students Earning AP Human Geography Exam Score of		
	5	4	3
2010	9.7	16.5	20.6
2009	11.6	16.7	21.9
2008	12.1	17.9	21.5
			18.3
			30.2

(Data obtained from College Board Student Grade Distribution Reports)

1. Analysis of score distributions from 2008–2010 indicates that about 1 in 2 test takers (50 percent) earned a 3, 4, or 5 on the AP Human Geography exam.
2. About 1 in 10 students (10 percent) earned the highest score of a 5, whereas about 1 in 3 earned the lowest score of a 1.

3. The number of AP Human Geography test-takers has been increasing each year, as the course is gaining popularity across the nation.

KEY 4: Understanding the Multiple-Choice Section of the Exam

1. The multiple-choice section of the exam has approximately 75 questions, each with five possible answer choices.
2. As of 2011, each multiple-choice question counts equally towards a student's score, and points are not deducted for an incorrect answer. This means that it is in your best interest to answer every multiple-choice question on the exam.
3. Many students think that AP exams ask multiple-choice questions that are random, but the test writers of the AP Human Geography exam actually follow a pattern. Here is an approximate breakdown of the topics covered in the multiple-choice questions on the exam:

AP Human Geography Topic	Approximate Percentage of MC questions on the exam
Geography: Its Nature and Perspectives	5–10%
Population (and Migration)	13–17%
Cultural Patterns and Processes	13–17%
Political Organization of Space	13–17%
Agriculture and Rural Land Use	13–17%
Industrialization and Economic Development	13–17%
Cities and Urban Land Use	13–17%

4. Analysis of the 2006 Released AP Human Geography exam provides insight into how many questions you should aim to answer correctly in order to pass:

Range of Multiple-Choice Questions Correct on 2006 exam (out of 74)	2006 AP Human Geography Exam Scores
53–60	Most of these test-takers scored a 5
45–52	Most of these test-takers scored 4s and 5s
36–44	Most of these test-takers scored 3s and 4s
28–35	Most of these test-takers scored 2s and 3s
19–27	Most of these test-takers scored 1s and 2s
0–18	Most of these test-takers scored a 1

(Source: Released test data for 2006 AP Human Geography exam from the College Board)

- Nearly 99% of the 2006 test-takers who answered between 53 and 60 of the 74 multiple-choice questions correctly scored a 5 on the AP Human Geography exam.
- Nearly 50% of the test-takers who got 36 to 44 of the multiple-choice questions correct scored a 4 on the exam.
- Most of the test-takers who got between 28–44 multiple-choice questions correct out of the 74 questions (about half of the multiple-choice questions) scored a 3.
- **Remember** that your AP test score will depend on your performance on the multiple-choice section *and* on the free-response section. The weighted scores are combined to give you your overall exam score.

KEY 5: Understanding the Free-Response Section of the Exam

1. After completing the multiple-choice section of the exam, students will be given a short 10- to 15-minute break. Once the break ends, the free-response section begins.
2. In the free-response section, students are asked to answer three constructed-response questions in the allotted 75 minutes.
3. Often, free-response questions (called FRQs) ask students to respond to or analyze a graph, photo, diagram, etc.
4. Students are expected to use their analytical and organizational skills in writing their responses.
5. While writing a formal essay is not required, simply listing facts is not likely to receive a high score.



AP readers (educators who score the FRQs) advise that a key strategy for doing well on the FRQ section of the exam is to keep focused, be succinct, and don't distract the reader with extraneous, non-related information. Make sure everything you write down is directly in response to the question.

6. All three FRQs are required to be answered. Leaving an FRQ blank or writing a completely unrelated response to an FRQ has a very negative impact on your chances of earning a 3, 4, or 5 on the exam.
7. The AP readers use a “points awarded” system, which means that they only give points for correct elements in your responses—they do not take points away. The AP Readers look for key words and phrases in your answer that are tied to the rubrics they use to score the FRQs. When they see those key words and phrases, they mark a point for you and move on.

KEY 6: Understanding Previous AP Exam FRQ topics, 2002–2010

Year	Topics tested in FRQ 1	Topics tested in FRQ 2	Topics tested in FRQ 3
2002	Nation, state, nation-state	Religion and cultural landscape	Gender and space
2003	Core-periphery model and development, central place theory	Tourism and regional landscape distinctiveness, time-space compression	Demographic transition model and international migration in Europe
2004	Maquiladoras, international division of labor, core-periphery	Rural space, agribusiness, U.S. poultry	Bid-rent, population pyramids, North American urban space (central business district)
2005	Supranationalism/devolution	US migration streams and push/pull factors	Gentrification, North American urban space
2006	International migration streams, core-periphery, distance decay, chain migration	Footloose industry, outsourcing, industrialization, US tertiary-transition	Centripetal/Centrifugal forces
2007	Von Thünen model	Lingua franca, language diffusion	New international division of labor
2008	Von Thünen model vs. Burgess Concentric Zone Model	U.S. migration streams (net in, net out migration)	Education, gender gap, human development index, and development in the periphery

Year	Topics tested in FRQ 1	Topics tested in FRQ 2	Topics tested in FRQ 3
2009	Map reading skills, folk/ethnic religions	Urban space and development in global periphery (squatter settlements)	Agribusiness in U.S. (dairy farming vs. organic farming)
2010	Weber theory of industrial location	National identity and economic, political (forward capital) centripetal and ethnic and infrastructural centrifugal forces	Demographic transition model and economic development
2011	Urban geography—private city vs. rank-size rule	Thomas Mahthus's theory on population growth	Industrial location models

This table provides some important insights into FRQs:

1. The FRQ questions often probe your knowledge from different topics in the AP Human Geography curriculum.
2. Both geographic models and key concepts are often tested in the questions.
3. Even if the topics were tested on an FRQ in a prior year, they are still fair game—notice that in 2007 and in 2008, an FRQ related to the von Thünen model.
4. The FRQs have never yet asked students to write from memory every piece of a geographic model, but they often ask you to use a particular geographic model in analyzing an issue or pattern. Applying the lessons of the geographic model is a vital skill.
5. While an FRQ question addresses, for example, Weber and industrial location, it is not a good idea to prepare by simply

memorizing what Weber said. The question will probably ask you to apply your knowledge of Weber and industrial location and how those principles influence the industrial landscape.

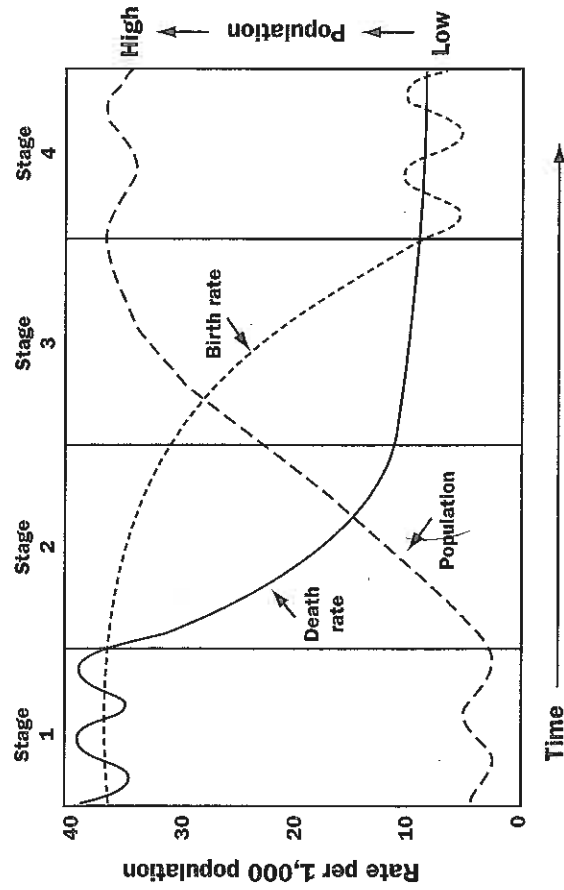
KEY 7: Using College Board and REA Materials to Supplement Your Crash Course

1. Your Crash Course contains *essential* information for the AP Human Geography exam. You should, however, supplement this book with materials from your course and the College Board.
2. The AP Human Geography Course Description Booklet and the 2001 and 2006 AP Human Geography Released Exams can be ordered from the College Board's online store.
3. Additionally, the College Board's AP Central website contains outstanding review materials, including all of the free-response questions ever asked on the past AP Human Geography exams and practice multiple-choice questions.
4. Also, REA's *AP Human Geography* full-length test preparation review book by Christian Sawyer (author of this *Crash Course*) contains outstanding review chapters, practice tests, and review drills to further your preparation for the exam.

Key Geographic Models and Theories

1. Demographic Transition Model (DTM)

In the four stages of transition from an agricultural subsistence economy to an industrialized country, demographic patterns move from extremely high birth and death rates to low birth and death rates. In the process, population growth rates skyrocket and then fall again. The crude death rate first falls because of the influx of better health technology, and then the birth rate gradually falls to match the new social structure.



Demographic Transition Model

2. Epidemiologic Transition Model

Disease vulnerability shifts in patterns similar to the DTM. In the early stages, plague and pestilence spread as a result of poor medical technology. As industrialization proceeds, diseases related to urban life spread. In later stages, diseases once thought eradicated reappear as more-developed societies come into easier contact with less-developed regions struggling with the more primitive diseases, such as smallpox and the bubonic plague. Leading causes of death in later stages are related to diseases associated with aging, such as heart disease.

3. Gravity Model of Spatial Interaction

When applied to migration, larger places attract more migrants than do smaller places. Additionally, destinations that are more distant have a weaker pull effect than do closer opportunities of the same caliber.

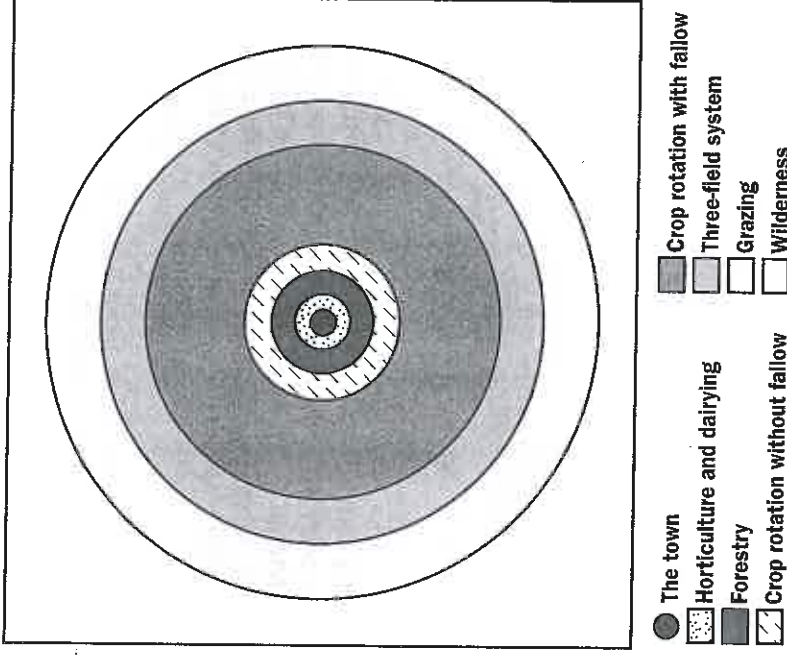
4. Zelinsky Model of Migration Transition

Migration trends follow demographic transition stages. People become increasingly mobile as industrialization develops. More international migration is seen in stage 2 as migrants search for more space and opportunities in countries in stages 3 and 4. Stage 4 countries show less emigration and more intraregional migration.

5. Ravenstein's Laws of Migration

In the 19th century, E.G. Ravenstein used data from England to outline a series of "laws" explaining patterns of migration. His laws state that migration is impacted by push and pull factors. Unfavorable conditions, such as oppression and high taxes, push people out of a place, whereas attractive opportunities, called pull factors, cause them to migrate into regions. Ravenstein's laws state that better economic opportunities are the chief cause for migration; that migration occurs in multiple stages, rather than one move; that the majority of people move short distances and that those who migrate longer distances choose big-city destinations; that urban residents are less migratory than rural residents; that for every migration stream, there is a counterstream; and factors such as gender, age, and socio-

economic level influence a person's likelihood to migrate. Keep in mind that his "laws" applied to the timeframe and context of his analysis.



Von Thünen's Model of Agricultural Land Use

6. Von Thünen Model

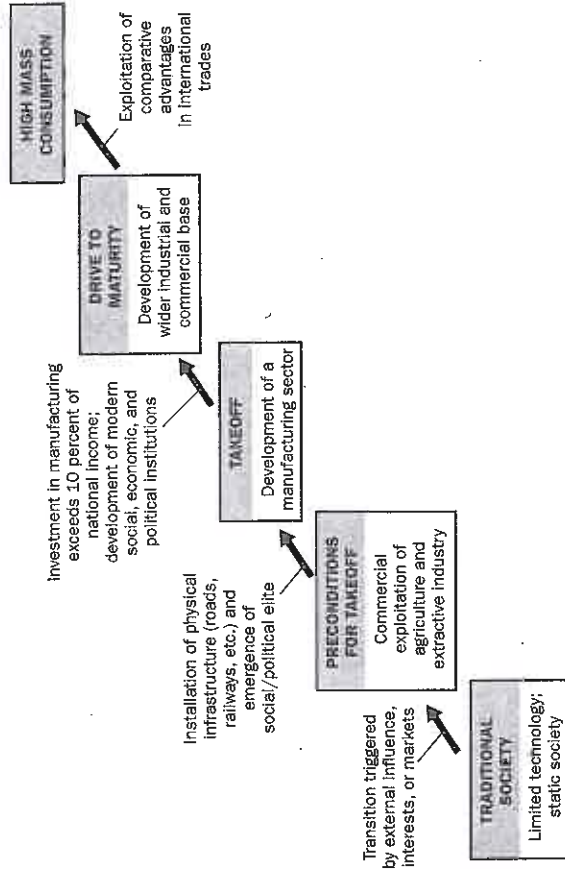
Developed by German geographer Johann Heinrich von Thünen, this model explains and predicts agricultural land use patterns in a theoretical state by varying transportation cost. Given the model's assumptions, the pattern that emerges predicts more-intensive rural land uses closer to the marketplace, and more-extensive rural land uses farther from the city's marketplace. These rural land use zones are divided in the model into concentric rings.

7. Least Cost Theory

This is Alfred Weber's theory of industrial location, explaining and predicting where industries will locate based on cost analysis of transportation, labor, and agglomeration factors. Weber assumes an industry will choose its location based on the desire to minimize production costs and thus maximize profits. Drawbacks to the model include its assumption of an immobile and equal labor force.

8. Locational Interdependence

Hottelings theory of locational interdependence asserts that an industry's locational choices are heavily influenced by the location of their chief competitors and related industries. In other words, industries do not make isolated decisions on locations without considering where other, related industries exist.



Rostow's Stages of Economic Development

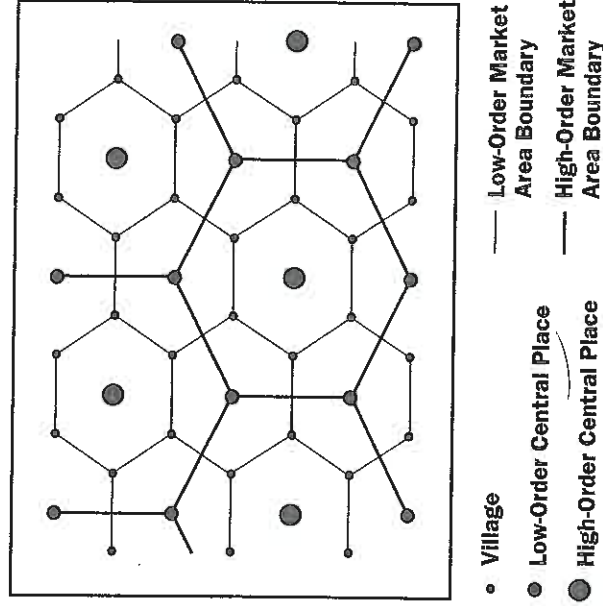
9. Rostow's Modernization Model

Developed in the 1950s, this model exemplifies the liberal development ideology, as opposed to structuralist theory.

Under this model, all countries develop in a five-stage process. The development cycle is initiated by investment in a takeoff industry that allows the country to grow a comparative advantage, which sparks greater economic gain that eventually diffuses throughout the country's economy. Drawbacks to this model include its not identifying cultural and historic differences in development trajectories because it is based on North American and western European development histories.

10. Borchert's Model of Urban Evolution

Borchert created this model in the 1960s to predict and explain the growth of cities in four phases of transportation history: stage 1, the "sail wagon" era of 1790-1830; stage 2, the "iron horse" era of 1830-1870; stage 3, the "steel rail" epoch of 1870-1920; and stage 4, the current era of car and air travel that began after 1920.

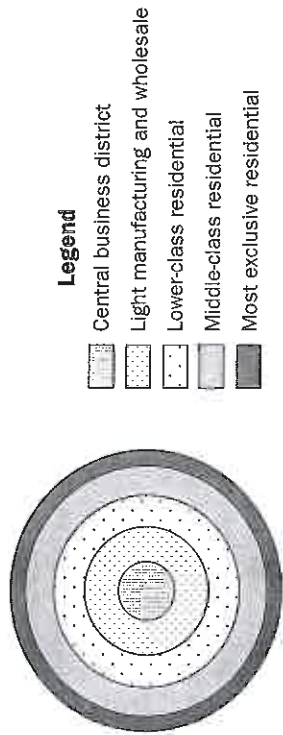


Hexagonal Market Areas Predicted by Christaller's Central Place Theory

11. Central Place Theory

Developed in the 1930s by Walter Christaller, this model explains and predicts patterns of urban places across the

map. In his model, Christaller analyzed the hexagonal, hierarchical pattern of cities, villages, towns, and hamlets arranged according to their varying degrees of centrality, determined by the central place functions existing in urban places and the hinterlands they serve.



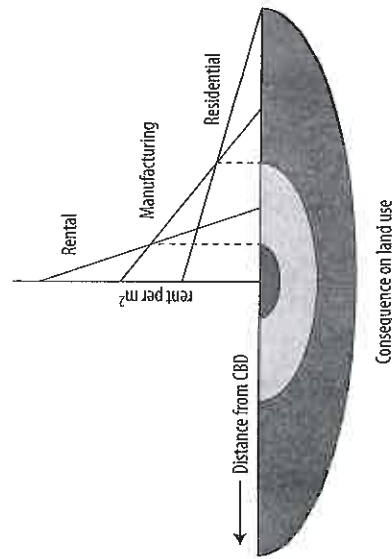
Legend

- Central business district
- Light manufacturing and wholesale
- Lower-class residential
- Middle-class residential
- Most exclusive residential

Concentric Zone Urban Land Use Model

12. Concentric Zone Model

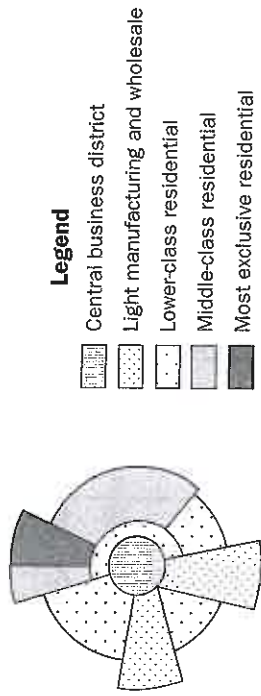
This model was devised in the 1920s by Ernest Burgess to predict and explain the growth patterns of North American urban spaces. Its main principle is that cities can be viewed from above as a series of concentric rings; as the city grows and expands, new rings are added and old ones change character. Key elements of the model are the central business district and the peak land value intersection.



Bid-Rent Curve

13. Bid-Rent Curve

Bid-ent curves show the variations in rent different users are willing to pay for land at different distances from some peak point of accessibility and visibility in the market, often the CBD. Because transportation costs increase as you move away from the market (often the CBD), rents usually decrease as distance increases from the market. Importantly, different types of land use (commercial retail, industrial, agriculture, housing) generate different bid-rent curves. Bid-rent curves explain the series of concentric rings of land use found in the concentric zone model.



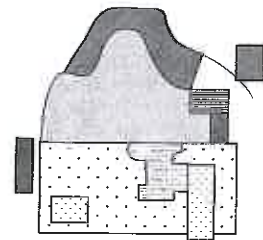
Legend

- Central business district
- Light manufacturing and wholesale
- Lower-class residential
- Middle-class residential
- Most exclusive residential

Sector Model of Urban Land Use

14. Sector Model

This model, conceived by Homer Hoyt, predicts and explains North American urban growth patterns in the 1930s in a pattern in which similar land uses and socioeconomic groups clustered in linear sectors radiating outward from a central business district, usually along transportation corridors.



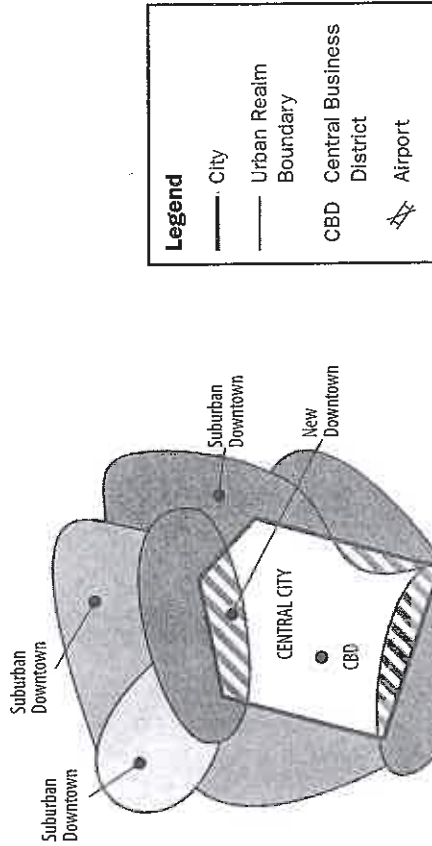
Legend

- Central business district
- Light manufacturing and wholesale
- Lower-class residential
- Middle-class residential
- Most exclusive residential
- Industrial park
- Heavy industry

Multiple-Nuclei Model of Urban Land Use

15. Multiple-Nuclei Model

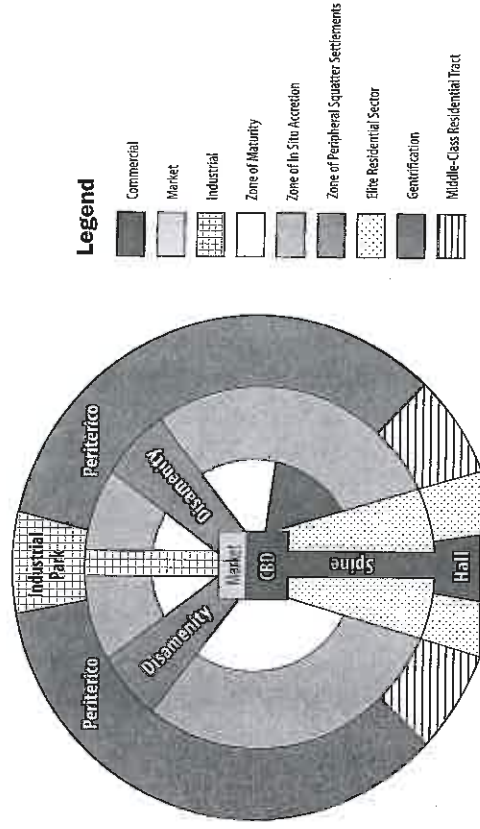
Developed in the 1950s by Chauncy Harris and Edward Ullman, this model explains the changing growth pattern of urban spaces based on the assumption that growth occurred independently around several major foci (or nodes), many of which are far away from the central business district and only marginally connected to it.



Urban Realms Model

16. Urban Realms Model

James Vance developed this model in the 1970s to explain and predict changing urban growth patterns as the automobile became increasingly prevalent and large suburban "realms" emerged. The suburban regions were functionally tied to a mixed-use suburban downtown, or mini-CBD, with relative independence from the original CBD.



Latin American City Model (Griffin-Ford Model)

17. Latin American City Model

Larry Ford and Ernest Griffin created a model of the pattern of urban growth in Latin America. Their model contains elements of Latin American culture and imprints of colonization and globalization, such as a prominent plaza and heavy growth around the CBD. However, in the Latin American pattern shown in their model, residential quality decreases with distance from the CBD. The model also presents a zone of maturity, populated with services and a wealthier population; a zone of squatter settlements, where recent urban migrants set up makeshift housing; and a zone of *in situ* accretion, which is a transitional zone that shows signs of transition to a zone of maturity.



Check out REA's AP Human Geography test prep book for practice drills to quiz your memory of key terms and models in AP Human Geography. There are also many practice FRQs and multiple-choice questions, categorized by test theme and similar to questions you will face on the actual AP Human Geography exam. When using the practice-exam questions, be sure to read the explanations for each question. The explanations will help train your thinking and improve your performance on the exam.

Strategies for Success with Multiple-Choice Questions

A. Understanding Types of Multiple-Choice Questions

1. If you take the time to review released exams, you'll see that the AP Human Geography exam often uses different types of multiple-choice questions.
2. The following are some broad categories and examples of AP Human Geography multiple-choice questions similar to those seen on released exams:
 - (A) Questions that directly test your knowledge of a key concept.

For example:

Subsistence agriculture

- (A) only includes the herding of animals
- (B) is aimed at producing surplus crops for sale in the market
- (C) is becoming increasingly dominant in the world
- (D) is characterized by production of food for consumption by the farmers and their families
- (E) is most practiced in South America

The correct answer is (D) since subsistence agriculture is most often practiced in under-developed regions where people can only farm enough food to feed themselves and their families.

This sample question tests knowledge of the key concept of subsistence agriculture. Chapters in this book

will help you acquire knowledge of key concepts needed to answer questions like this.

(B) *Questions that ask you to apply your knowledge of a key concept.*

For example:

Which of the following is the best example of a non-basic employment sector function?

- (A) An assembly-line worker in a car factory
- (B) A video game software engineer
- (C) An international public relations agent
- (D) A university medical researcher
- (E) A police officer

The correct answer is (E), since non-basic sector jobs cause a shift in money within a city, whereas the other jobs create an exchange of money between the city and another place.

If you notice, this question asks you to apply your knowledge of this key concept to examples and choose the best match between non-basic functions and the examples provided. Sometimes, these types of questions will ask you to use a map, table, graph, or image to answer the question.

(C) *Questions that test your knowledge of a specific geographic issue or example.*

For example:

By 2050, which country is projected to have the highest population in the world?

- (A) China
- (B) Indonesia
- (C) Russia
- (D) India
- (E) United States

The correct answer is (D), since India's population growth rate is exceeding China's.

Notice that this type of question is probing your knowledge of this specific demographic trend. While many of these questions seem highly specific, your knowledge of key concepts can often guide you to eliminate options and select from the remaining choices.

B. Ten Strategies for Success on the Multiple-Choice Questions

1. *Underline key words in the question.* Underline all the key terms, concepts, or places. This will help you focus on the key issues in the question.

For example, if the question asks you,

“Which place has the highest percentage of urban residents?”

Mark it up as follows:

“Which place has the highest percentage of urban residents?”

2. *Circle key command words in a question, such as EXCEPT, ALL, NOT, or BEST.* Students often miss questions that use negative logic, such as “All of the following EXCEPT,” because they get confused. Be sure you focus your mind on the logic of the question.

3. *Use the process of elimination.* Success is as much about finding the correct answer as it is about getting rid of the wrong answers!

One of the most powerful strategies is to cross out as many of the wrong answer choices as possible. Many students greatly improve their scores by using this strategy and then selecting their “best educated guess” after ruling out one or two choices that are clearly wrong.

4. *Answer every multiple-choice question.* There is no longer a “guessing penalty,” on AP exams, so it is to your advantage to answer every multiple-choice question.

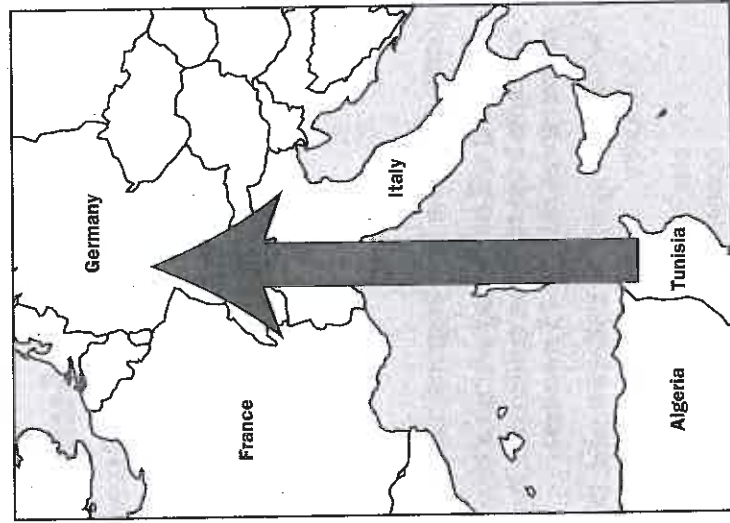
5. *Multiple-choice questions are equally weighted.* Since every multiple-choice question is equally weighted, no question counts for more points than another. Therefore, if you are stumped on a question, do not waste too much time on it—but be sure to answer it. Guess—remember there’s no guessing penalty!
6. *Fill in your answer sheet as you go.* Remember, you only have 60 minutes to answer 75 questions, which means you have less than one minute to answer a question. It is best to fill in your bubble sheet for each question as you go. Do NOT wait until the end to go back and fill-in the bubbles for all of the questions. If you run out of time and haven’t completed filling in your answers on the bubble sheet, you could ruin your score.
7. *Pay attention to your bubble sheet.* Make sure that you have entered your answers correctly on the bubble sheet. As you fill in the bubble sheet, be sure you’re filling in the bubble for question 4 when you’re working on question 4. If you lose your place and put the answer for question 4 in the bubble for question 5, it will throw off your entire answer sheet and thus your score! Some teachers recommend that, as you work through the multiple-choice section, you write your answers next to the multiple-choice question so that you can transfer your answers accurately from the multiple-choice booklet onto the bubble form and check your bubble sheet easily for a match. If you choose to do this, that’s fine, but be aware of your time. You don’t want to run out of time while transferring your answers.
8. *Look carefully at any image, graph, chart, or map provided with a multiple-choice question.* Feel free to annotate or draw on these items to help you focus and make sense of them.
9. *Read the question and think of your answer before you read the answer choices given.* This can help your brain select the best choice, rather than falling into distracting traps presented by the wrong answer choices.
10. *Half equals three.* Remember that, based on previous exam scores, you’ll need to answer about half of the multiple-

choice questions correctly in order to earn a 3! This, of course, also depends on your FRQ performance . . . so let’s move on to strategies for the FRQs. . . .

Strategies for Success with the Free-Response Questions

Chapter 14

- A. Understanding the Free-Response Questions
1. Each FRQ will be testing you on a key concept or group of concepts from the core curriculum. You will be required to answer three FRQs in 75 minutes.
 - According to the College Board, the FRQ section usually includes
 - one question that tests a specific geographic concept and how it applies to a real-world situation;
 - one question that tests how you synthesize your knowledge of Human Geography across the course's topic;
 - one question that tests the depth of your knowledge of a geographic topic and how you can apply this across geographic contexts.
 2. Most FRQs will have multiple-part questions. In the past, FRQs have asked students to answer questions similar to this example (note that the following example would be considered one FRQ):



- a. Define net in-migration and describe the stream identified in the map above.
- b. Define push and pull factors in migration. Give an example of and explain one push and one pull factor that a migrant in the stream shown in the above map may have experienced.
- c. Relate the immigration pattern noted on the map to Germany's negative rate of natural increase.

Notice that in the example above, the question prompts you to:

 - i. Define key concepts (net in migration, push/pull factors)
 - ii. Apply key concepts to maps and a relevant example (applying the concepts to the map depicting a migration stream from North Africa into Germany)

iii. Interrelate key concepts (immigration and rate of natural increase)

B. Important Tips for Success on Free-Response Questions

1. *Distribute your time wisely*

- Since you only have 75 minutes to answer three FRQs, you should spend approximately 25 minutes on each FRQ.
- You must answer all three questions and all of the multiple parts of each question.
- Some questions may be very straightforward and will not require much time at all. Don't feel as if you need to spend 25 minutes on every question in order to get it right. If you know it, answer it thoroughly, and move on.
- The best way to approach this section is to spend a few minutes previewing all of the questions to make yourself aware of all of the FRQs.
- Begin by outlining your response to your first FRQ or "pre-writing" your initial thoughts for three to five minutes.
- After "pre-writing," spend about 20 minutes on the question formulating your official response in the answer booklet.
- The proctor will probably not warn you until the very end of the 75 minutes, so it will be your responsibility to pace yourself in order to answer each of the three FRQs in the allotted time.

2. *Bring multiple pens*

- You will need a pen for this section, so bring three of your favorite black- or blue-ink pens (no markers or jelly pens).
- Handwriting is important. If something is illegible—if the AP reader can't read your response—it does not count, even if it is a correct response.

3. Formatting logistics

- Be sure that you write the number of the FRQ that you are answering at the top of each of the answer-booklet pages.
- It is a good idea to start each of your answers to the FRQs on a new page in the answer booklet. You've got the whole booklet to use—don't cram your answers onto one page.

4. FRQs are *not* essays!

- Many AP exams require formal essays that involve developing a strong thesis statement and then proving your thesis in well written, supporting paragraphs and ending your essay with a conclusion. AP Human Geo is different: a formal essay is *not* required for this section. (Hooray!) Instead, think of the FRQs as short-answer questions.
- Get right to the point. Don't bother with a thesis paragraph or a conclusion. You get no points for either. Jump right into your response. There's no need to restate the question or start with a thesis statement. *AP readers are only looking for content*, and will not be judging the quality of your writing.
- Official AP exam instructions given in previous years recommend that you label and number each part of your response in the margins of your answer booklet to keep your reader aware of where you are in your response to the FRQ. For example, when you are answering FRQ 1, part A, you might want to label your response in the margin "1A." Then, "1B," and so forth.
- Keep in mind that the easier it is for the AP reader to identify the main points of the question, the easier it is for them to award points to your response. Make it as easy as possible for the AP reader to navigate your response.

5. Formulate a logical response

- While a formal essay with a thesis is not required (and not really wanted), simply listing facts is *not* enough.

You need to write in complete sentences with coherent, supported thoughts.

- Support your responses with accurate geographic examples whenever possible.
- If the FRQ asks for examples from a particular region, be certain you use examples from that region and link your examples to the question's prompt.

6. Review your regions

- AP readers have commented that students often confuse geographic regions. Therefore, while studying for the exam, take time to review geographic regions: East Asia, Southwest Asia, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, North America, etc.
- While you familiarize yourself with each region, look for examples and situations that you could use in your responses.

C. Scoring the FRQs

- Each of your FRQ responses will be scored by a different reader who is either a college professor or an AP Human Geography teacher. The scoring will be done at an AP-grading convention held during the summer.
- Each FRQ response is graded separately from the others.
- Every AP reader uses a scoring rubric that spells out *exactly* how to give points while grading each FRQ. Therefore, AP readers don't have much flexibility in scoring your response: they have to follow the rubric created by the AP program.
- Remember AP readers *award* points—they don't take points off. You must answer each specific part of each question. You will not be awarded points for any part that you skip. It's that simple. Even well written responses that show some understanding of the FRQ may still earn no points if the response does not include information directly related to the answers the AP readers are looking for based on the rubric they need to follow.

- The three FRQs are weighted equally, so each FRQ is important to your score.
- D. How to Score Well on the FRQs**
- *Answer the question being asked.* Carefully study the language used in the question. Circle the key words. If it asks you to “define” a term, write a definition. If it asks you to “evaluate,” analyze all the parts of the issue. Be direct, don’t restate what you are defining—define it and move on.
 - *Answer all parts of the question.* If the question asks you to define a term and then give an example, be sure you address both parts of that multi-part question.
 - *Be careful if the FRQ calls for a specific type of example.* The question might ask you for an example from a particular time period in history or for a particular region. The FRQ may ask you to give an example of a *country* or it may call for you to cite a *region*, so be careful to use an appropriate example. Don’t use an example that doesn’t fit. Choose your example carefully and integrate it into your response.
 - *Be geographically analytical in your response.* Avoid injecting personal opinions and side comments that distract from your response. Try to draw together appropriate relationships from across different parts of the course. For example, if the FRQ asks you to discuss how globalization is threatening linguistic diversity, you might include treatment of time-space compression and the friction of distance. You might address assimilation, cultural diffusion, or other related concepts. The more you can support your response with substantive geographic examples, the better your response will be scored.
- However, you should not write in random and unrelated ideas just to impress the reader with your geographic vocabulary! Instead, only integrate concepts directly related to the FRQ’s focus. Again, the object is to get right to the point and to support your point. There’s no need for flowery language or Shakespearean prose.
- *If there is a “stimulus” in the FRQ, such as a chart, map, or graph, be sure that you use and reference it in your response.*

Use specifics from the “stimulus” in formulating your response to the FRQ. It’s there for a reason—so use it! Take some time to analyze what the item shows you and how it relates to the FRQ. Feel free to draw on it and mark it up! You don’t get points for marking up the question. AP readers only grade the written content in the response booklets.

E. Commonly Asked Questions

Here are some commonly asked questions about the FRQ section:

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

Yes, you can include a diagram or sketch in your FRQ. However, it is highly recommended that you do not include this as the only piece in your response. If you choose to use a diagram or sketch, link it to your overall response and be sure to describe what it means and how it relates to your response. A diagram shows AP readers that you know what you’re talking about, but it is not a sufficient answer on its own.

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

This could happen and the most important thing for you to do is to not panic. More than likely, you can offer some geographic analysis of the issue, even if you are truly stumped. Start writing something related to the course and an issue you think might be tied to the FRQ.

For example, in a past administration of the exam, some students were stumped by an FRQ calling for an analysis of the distribution of chicken farming in the U.S. Several stumped students started writing about agricultural change: in the U.S., the movement towards agribusiness, and the decline of family-owned farms in the U.S. They were successful because they offered somewhat of a related idea.

Do not leave an FRQ blank. Many well-prepared students find that one of the FRQs is their “challenge FRQ,” meaning the one that really gave them a run for their money. If you don’t know the answer right away, go with your gut

and keep it simple. Don't panic and try to make it sound complicated to cover your tracks. Be simple, direct, and stay in your comfort range and you'll probably be pleasantly surprised with your score.

Note that if you write material that is graphic or can potentially be taken as disturbing or threatening, AP will likely respond and contact your school. Pictures of guns and violence are taken seriously and could lead to real consequences. Know that you will be responsible for what you say and the consequences could be immediate.

- **How long should my FRQ response be?**

There is no right or wrong length for an FRQ response. Long, unfocused responses can confuse and distract the AP reader. If your response fully answers the FRQ, then it is the right length. Be sure you do not spend too much time on one FRQ and lose time to address the remaining FRQs adequately.

- **Will I have enough time to write my answers?**

The AP test is designed not to push you on time constraints, so students generally have just enough time to write their responses. Remember, though, that it is your responsibility to keep an eye on the time and your progress.

- **Do I have to know names of geographers?**

Yes, you should know the names of geographers associated with the major geographic models they invented or major concepts they are credited with studying. On a past exam, students were asked about the "Burgess model," which confused students who did not know that Burgess was the name of the geographer who invented the concentric zone model.

- **How much do I need to know about the world map?**

You need to know the major regions of the world and some key issues going on in these regions. As you review for the exam, note specific examples or concepts tied to particular regions in the world, such as demographic trends or places where religions started or diffused. A recent exam question

asked students to look at a map of Europe and a map of the Middle East and name examples of states, nations, and nation-states.

You might want to find an online world map review game to practice identifying countries and regions in the world. There are many great, free map practice sites on the Internet. As you practice with them, think about the human patterns and issues associated with the different regions and countries you are identifying.

You also need to remember that Africa, Europe, and Asia are continents, not countries! Also, for purposes of this exam, do not refer to the United States just as "America." Always refer to it as the "United States," though you certainly can state that it is in North America, if necessary.



Be sure to check out the official AP Human Geography webpage on the College Board's website. There you'll find released FRQs, scoring rubrics, and sample student responses for every year that the AP Human Geography exam has been administered. Many students who are successful on the AP exam use these critical resources as practice questions and to see how the FRQs are scored. You should practice these questions under timed conditions to prepare yourself for the actual exam.