

FRQ: Introducing Geography

KEY ISSUE

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Why Is Geography a Science?

- ▶ **Introducing Geography**
- ▶ **Cartography: The Science of Mapmaking**
- ▶ **Contemporary Geographic Tools**
- ▶ **Interpreting Maps**
- ▶ **The Geographic Grid**

LEARNING OUTCOME 1.1.1

Summarize differences between geography and history.

Thinking geographically is one of the oldest human activities. Perhaps the first geographer was a prehistoric human who crossed a river or climbed a hill, observed what was on the other side, returned home to tell about it, and scratched the route in the dirt. The second geographer may have been a friend or relative who followed the dirt drawing to reach the other side.

The word *geography*, invented by the ancient Greek scholar Eratosthenes, is based on two Greek words. *Geo* means “Earth,” and *graphy* means “to write.” Geography is the study of where things are found on Earth’s surface and the reasons for the locations. Human geographers ask two simple questions: Where are people and activities found on Earth? Why are they found there?

History and geography differ in one especially important manner: A geographer can drive or fly to another place to study Earth’s surface, whereas a historian cannot travel to another time to study other eras firsthand. This ability to reach other places lends excitement to the discipline of geography—and geographic training raises the understanding of other spaces to a level above that of casual sightseeing.

Introducing Geography

To introduce human geography, we will concentrate on two main features of human behavior: culture and economy. The first half of the book explains why the most important cultural features, such as major languages, religions, and ethnicities, are arranged as they are across Earth. The second half of the book looks at the locations of the most important economic activities, including agriculture, manufacturing, and services.

This chapter introduces basic concepts that geographers employ to address their “where” and “why” questions. To explain where things are, one of geography’s most important tools is a map. Ancient and medieval geographers created maps to describe what they knew about Earth. Today, accurate maps are generated from electronic data.

Geographers employ several basic concepts to explain why every place on Earth is in some ways unique and in other ways related to other locations. Many of these concepts are commonly used English words, but they are given particular meaning by geographers.

To explain why every place is unique, geographers have two basic concepts:

- A **place** is a specific point on Earth, distinguished by a particular characteristic. Every place occupies a unique location, or position, on Earth’s surface.
- A **region** is an area of Earth defined by one or more distinctive characteristics. Geographers divide the world into a number of regions, such as North America and Latin America.

To explain why different places are interrelated, geographers have three basic concepts:

- **Scale** is the relationship between the portion of Earth being studied and Earth as a whole. Geographers study a variety of scales, from local to global. Many processes that affect humanity’s occupation of Earth are global in scale, such as climate change and depletion of energy supplies. At the same time, local-scale processes—such as preservation of distinctive cultural and economic activities—are increasingly important.
- **Space** refers to the physical gap or interval between two objects. Geographers observe that many objects are distributed across space in a regular manner, for discernible reasons.
- **Connection** refers to relationships among people and objects across the barrier of space. Geographers are concerned with the various means by which connections occur.

Luxembourg can be used to illustrate the five concepts. The City of Luxembourg is a place located on a hillside perched above the Alzette River (Figure 1-1). The City of Luxembourg is the capital of the country of Luxembourg, located in the world region of Europe (Figure 1-2). Luxembourg plays a major role at a global scale, as one of the principal headquarters of the European Union, which unites 28 countries (Figure 1-3a). At the same time, Luxembourg, like other places, has a distinctive local scale; one example is the availability of distinctive local products not available elsewhere (Figure 1-3b). The space occupied by Luxembourg has distinctive features; for example, most people live in the south of the country, whereas the north is sparsely inhabited (Figure 1-4). Connections between Luxembourg and other places are provided by road, rail, and river (Figure 1-5).

Name: _____

Date: _____

Period: _____

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AP® HUMAN GEOGRAPHY -- SECTION II -- Time—25 minutes --- Percent of total score—100

Directions: You have 25 minutes to answer the free response portion. It is suggested that you take 5 minutes of this time to plan and outline each answer. While a formal essay is not required, it is not enough to answer a question by merely listing facts. Illustrate your answers with substantive geographic examples where appropriate. Be sure to number each of your answers, including individual parts, in this booklet as the questions are numbered below

1. Geography is considered a science in large part because of the use of tools in order to prepare and interpret maps.
 - A. **Define** geography.
 - B. **Identify** one of Geography's most important tools.
 - C. **Identify** the five basic concepts geographers use to explain the why every place is unique and why different places are interrelated.
 - D. **Describe** one of the five basic geography concepts.
 - E. **Explain** how the city of Luxembourg can be used to illustrate the five concepts of geography.