

AP Human Geography Summer Assignment
2019

Welcome to AP Human Geography! To help you prepare for the course, you will be completing your very first fieldwork as a geographer in your own neighborhood. As you work, you are welcome to get in touch with Dr. Kallman for any questions you might have at pkallman@strakjesuit.org. Be safe and have fun!

Part 1: Mental Maps

We each have our own mental map. We create a visual in our heads that typically includes important places we visit often or that carry meaning to us.

- Grab a piece of paper and draw a mental map of your neighborhood. Select four streets (or natural borders like bayous) as boundaries for your neighborhood. It would be good if they are major streets, but if not that's ok. **Each of the four boundaries should be less than a mile for the purpose of this assignment.**
Mental maps should not be perfect. There will be holes in your map, areas you aren't quite sure about. That's okay.
- Get an accurate measurement of your borders and adjust as needed
Use Google Maps. Right mouse click on one of the corners of your neighborhood and select the measurement tool. If your street has a lot of twists and turns to it, you can always use Google maps directions from one corner to the next.
If you're the sum of your street lengths are greater than 4 miles, see if you can shorten one or more of them.
- Then walk it with paper and pencil. As you walk draw a rough map and make notes about the following:
 - Number of houses on an average street.
 - Number of cars and kinds of cars on an average street.
 - Presence or absence of toys and bicycles.
 - Decide what you think the average number of people is living in an average house. (Think about the average age, income and marital status in your neighborhood. Are their few or many children? Think about how many kids show up on Halloween.)
 - Age of the houses (ask someone like your parents or a neighbor if you can't estimate) Is there new construction? What is the condition of the houses? Are there large mature trees and shrubs or is the landscaping young? What are the construction materials? 1 or 2 stories? How many garages?
 - Is there any multifamily housing within your boundaries? (Apartments, condominiums)
 - Are there any gated communities?
 - Note the location on your map of any commercial property, government property, green space, places of worship, parks, community recreation (pools) apartments, condominiums, gated communities.
 - Is there any fencing? What kind? Cyclone? Wood? Brick? Stucco?
 - Are there curbs and gutters?
 - Do you see any businesses or signs that indicate the presence of an ethnic community?
 - Were there any train tracks, bridges, bodies of water (bayou) ditches?
 - What sounds do you hear as you walk? Ethnic music, trains? Other languages?
- Take your rough map and produce a nice neat one. Use a pencil and a ruler and write in print. Make a key at the bottom and an estimated scale. Use symbols and colors to help provide information. Include:
 - Your house
 - Compass rose
 - At least 8 streets, including the 4 boundary streets
 - How the land is used - residential, commercial, houses of worship, parks, government buildings, water, and anything unique to your neighborhood

Field Observation Questions

What is your address? _____

How would you describe the location to a friend who was visiting from Austin? Draw a little map of part of the city that you live in.

List your four boundaries and the length of each segment.

1. _____ mile(s)

2. _____ mile(s)

3. _____ mile(s)

4. _____ mile(s)

(Your neighborhood will be different so you may have to modify. You may have more streets. Your streets may curve. There may be features like railroad tracks or fields or ponds. Indicate those on your map)

Estimate the population that lives in your neighborhood. Explain how you arrived at that number.

_____ approximate estimate of population

You do not need to count every house. Take an average street and multiply. Estimate the number of units in an apartment complex.

What evidence did you find of an ethnic community in your area?

Is your neighborhood all single family housing? What do you think that suggests about the ages of people living in your neighborhood?

Is there a gated community? What do you think that says about a place?

Are there apartments in the neighborhood? What do you think that says about a place?

For the single family homes, if any, are the lots small are large? _____

Are the houses sitting on the lots near the street (small front yard) or far back from the street (large front yard)?

What kind of fencing did you observe and condition? What do you think that says about a place?

12. Does the neighborhood have curbs and gutters? What does this tell us about your neighborhood?

13. What other land use do you observe in your area – if any?

Commercial _____

Recreational _____

Public _____

Religious _____

Did you notice any other religious or patriotic symbols? What do you think that says about a place?

Were there any signs for political candidates or that might suggest a political leaning? What do you think that says about a place?

Were cars parked on the street, in driveways or out of sight? What do you think that says about a place?

How much traffic is there? What kinds of vehicles? What might this tell us about the population that lives in your neighborhood?

Is it easy to walk around in your neighborhood? What aspects either encourage or discourage walking or driving?

Did you notice signs in languages other than English? If so, could you tell what the signs were for?

Did you see people on bicycles, jogging, walking, and pushing strollers or not? What do you think that says about a place?

Describe the housing. Do all the houses look very similar, or are there major differences in building materials and architecture? 1 or 2 stories? _____

What do you think is the average number of people per dwelling? And from what age group? _____

What do you think is an average square footage per dwelling or is the range very large? (If need be, ask a parent or check out har.com or Zillow)

Are there few or many children (under the age of 18) in your neighborhood? What do you think that says about a place? What conclusions might you make about schools and the future of the neighborhood?

Are all the houses original or is there tear down activity? _____

Does your area have a name? If so, what? _____

Are there large mature trees or newly planted? (indicates age of neighborhood) What do you think that says about a place?

Finally, note some of the less obvious things. What sounds do you hear? Smells? How busy is your neighborhood? Does this change at certain times? What is your neighborhood “busy” with? Cars? Kids?

BONUS: Gather qualitative data. If you have any neighbors that have been around for more than 15 years or for the life of the neighborhood, for younger places, ask them:

How has the neighborhood changed since they first arrived?

Have the types of houses changed? (single family to apartments or ranch houses to mansions, for example)

How has the population changed in age? Ethnicity?

What about places like restaurants or shops, if applicable?

Do they perceive these changes to be positive or negative?
