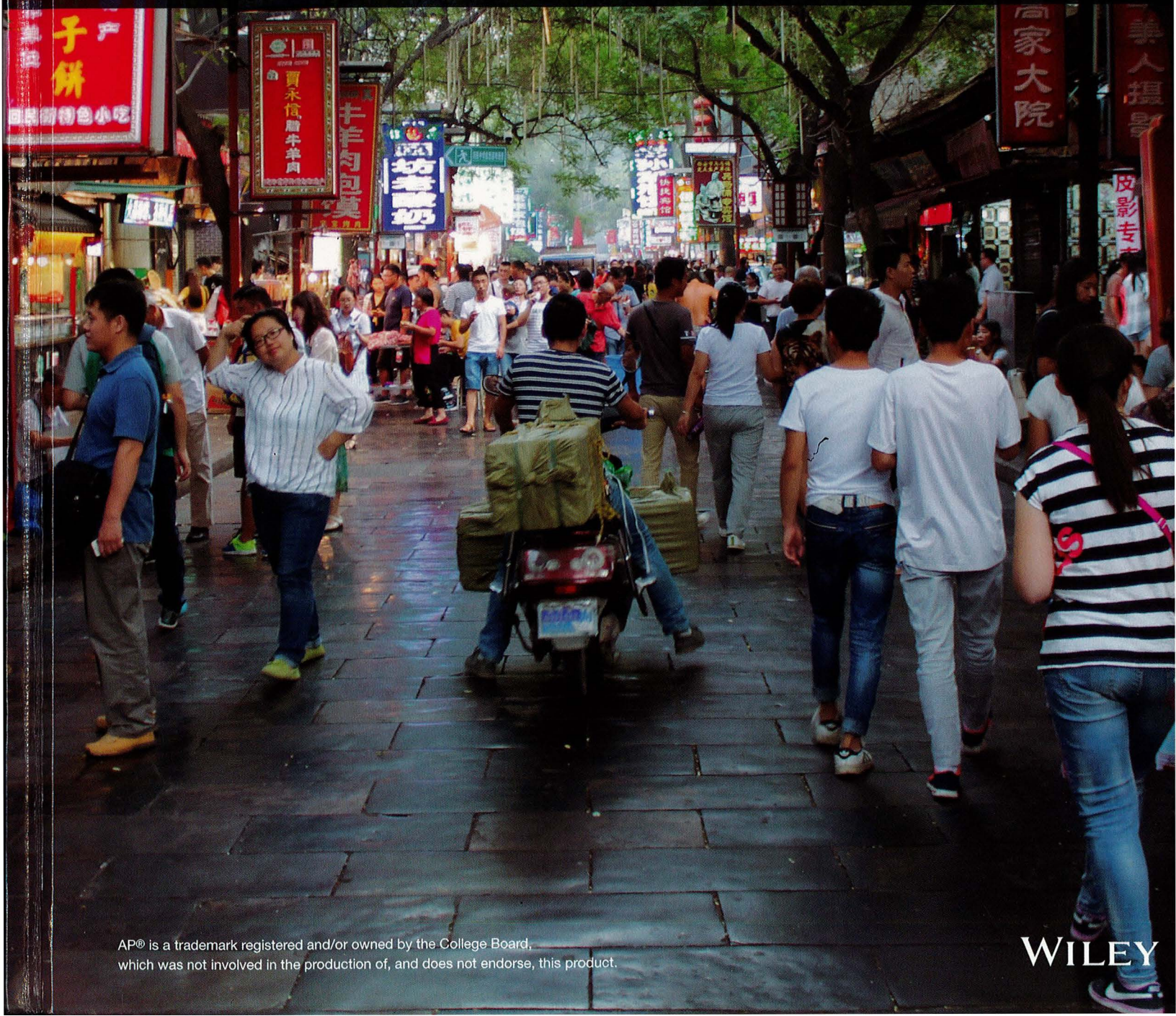


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# HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

**FOR THE AP® COURSE**

Adapted by Paul Gray and Gregory Sherwin from  
*Human Geography: People, Place, and Culture 12<sup>th</sup> Edition*






# Welcome to The World of AP<sup>®</sup> Human Geography

Every important journey should start with a map. The purpose of this introduction is to help students begin to navigate their way around the AP<sup>®</sup> Human Geography course. The introduction is a road map to the organization and goals of the course. It should help provide direction for students before they begin their exploration into AP<sup>®</sup> Human Geography.

For many students, AP<sup>®</sup> Human Geography will be their first venture into a college experience and the AP<sup>®</sup> environment. In addition to this challenge, AP<sup>®</sup> Human Geography may also be their first full yearlong course focused solely on geography. Therefore, it is imperative for students to have an idea of what to anticipate before the year starts.

This preface explores the following topics:

1. What does AP<sup>®</sup> mean? 
2. What is AP<sup>®</sup> Human Geography?
3. How are content and skills organized for AP<sup>®</sup> Human Geography?
4. How is the AP<sup>®</sup> Human Geography Exam administered?
5. How are students assessed on the AP<sup>®</sup> Human Geography Exam?
6. How do students prepare for the AP<sup>®</sup> exam?

## 1) What Does AP<sup>®</sup> Mean?

To understand AP<sup>®</sup> Human Geography, one must first understand what AP<sup>®</sup> means and how this course is connected to possible credit at numerous colleges and universities. AP<sup>®</sup> is shorthand for Advanced Placement, and there are currently 38 Advanced Placement subjects organized and overseen by the College Board.<sup>1</sup>

The College Board's mission started in the 1950s and its goal was to create college-level courses for high school students. Teams of college professors and high school teachers design the curriculum to ensure the course meets the content and goals of a first-year college course. Students who take AP<sup>®</sup> classes are evaluated in May by taking the Advanced Placement exam for their course.

Currently, AP<sup>®</sup> exams cost \$94. In 2019, the College Board moved registration for AP<sup>®</sup> exams to early fall. This means that students enrolled in AP<sup>®</sup> Human Geography classes must make the decision earlier than before to take the exam. Taking the AP<sup>®</sup>

exam is not necessarily a requirement for taking AP<sup>®</sup> Human Geography, but early registration makes it challenging not to sign up for the test. Regardless, it is strongly encouraged to sign up for the exam because it is the only way for students to receive potential credit at colleges and universities.

The College Board uses a 5-point system for all AP<sup>®</sup> exams as a way to recommend whether or not a student should receive credit at a college or university.

AP <sup>®</sup> Exam Score <sup>2</sup>	Recommendation	College Grade Equivalent
5	Extremely well qualified	A+ or A
4	Very well qualified	A-, B+, or B
3	Qualified	B-, C+, or C
2	Possibly qualified	
1	No recommendation	

According to the College Board, scoring a 3 or higher on the AP<sup>®</sup> Human Geography Exam is considered a passing grade. However, please note that colleges and universities establish their own specific rules and policies on what is accepted for credit at their schools. Therefore, the best advice for students is to search the AP<sup>®</sup> credit policy for colleges and universities on their own. Thankfully, the College Board has provided this resource for students online in the section "AP<sup>®</sup> Credit Policy."

Please note that many state governments across the United States have put into law that any student receiving a 3 or higher on an AP<sup>®</sup> exam will receive credit at the public institutions in those states regardless of where students currently live. For example, a student from Russellville, Arkansas, who receives a 3 on the AP<sup>®</sup> Human Geography Exam would receive 3 credit hours of course work at the University of Illinois if he or she was accepted and chose to attend the school. However, if a student wished to attend DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois, the standards would be different. DePaul University is a private institution and thus sets its own standards for AP<sup>®</sup> Human Geography credit. DePaul will not give credit for a 3 on the AP<sup>®</sup> exam, but it gives 4 credit hours for a 4 and 8 credit hours for a 5 on the AP<sup>®</sup> exam.

Further, some elite universities, notable the Ivy League schools, will not accept AP<sup>®</sup> Human Geography credit regardless of the score. Yet at the same time, these same universities demand that students take a challenging curriculum in high school to demonstrate their readiness for these top schools.

<sup>1</sup><https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/course-index-page>

<sup>2</sup><https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/about-ap-scores/ap-score-scale-table>



Therefore, taking AP® Human Geography and receiving a 5 on the exam may provide a student with one example to highlight in their application portfolio.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that there is no penalty for students who score poorly on the exam. Scores on AP® exams do not have to be shared with colleges or universities. Therefore, taking the exam can be beneficial for students because it will give them a sample of a challenging examination under a strict time limit, which should help prepare them for standardized tests in the future.

Regardless of the score on the AP® exam, most universities and colleges want to see students challenge themselves in high school. Taking the AP® Human Geography Exam serves notice to colleges and universities that a student is serious about future success. Therefore, it is recommended that all students enrolled in AP® Human Geography take the exam.

## 2) What is AP® Human Geography?

Oftentimes, students and parents struggle with understanding what the “human” part of AP® Human Geography is. Students feel like they have an elementary understanding of geography and geography skills. Therefore, it is important to break down each part of the course title to help students understand what they will be learning in class. Thus far, we have covered the “AP®” part of the title. Let’s move to the final word, “Geography,” next.

**Geography** is the systematic study of the spatial patterns of all phenomena on or near the Earth’s surface. Its primary methodology is spatial analysis, which asks two basic questions: *Where* are things located? (spatial), and *Why* are they located where they are? (analysis—*why there*). Historians use time as their foundation, think chronologically, and ask “when” and “why”; geographers use space as their foundation, think spatially, and ask “where” and “why there.”

Geography is not history, though both courses are related to each other and historical information “serves to enrich analysis of the impacts of phenomena such as globalization, colonialism, and human–environment relationships on places, regions, cultural landscapes, and patterns of interaction.”<sup>3</sup>

The primary tools of geography are maps, charts, and photographs due to geography’s focus on “where” and “why there.” However, geography is truly a twenty-first-century discipline, with geospatial technologies including geographic information systems (GIS), satellite navigation systems, remote sensing, and online mapping and visualization playing a major role in presenting data and displaying information. Remember, geography is a spatial discipline, which means it will look at different variables and how they are organized in space. Then geographers ask, “Where is it?” and “Why is it there?”

**Human geography** is one of the major divisions of geography; the spatial analysis of human population and its cultures, activities, and landscapes. Instead of presenting geography through a regional perspective, human geography covers thematic topics such as population growth, migration patterns, language distribution, and economic differences. Therefore, students in AP® Human Geography will analyze a theme such as population growth in the world and ask the two fundamental questions of the course “where is it” and “why is it there.”

According to the College Board, “The content is presented thematically rather than regionally and is organized around the discipline’s main subfields: economic geography, cultural geography, political geography, and urban geography. The approach is spatial and problem oriented. Case studies are drawn from all world regions, with an emphasis on understanding the world in which we live today.”<sup>4</sup>

Human geography thus provides the foundation for understanding fundamental similarities and differences between people culturally, politically, economically, and socially through a spatial perspective. Human geographers look at *where* something occurs, search for patterns, and span most of the other social studies disciplines to answer the *why there* question.

### Questions of Human Geography

- *Where* is population growing? *Where* are people migrating? *Why there*?
- *Where* are different languages spoken? *Why* are they spoken there?
- *Where* are different religions practiced? *Where* is there religious conflict? *Why there*?
- *Where* do people live in the United States? *Why* do so many people live in the suburbs? *Why* do more people live on the coasts throughout the world?
- *Where* are textile mills (clothing manufacturers) located in the world today? *Why* are they there? *Where* were textile mills in the United States? *Why* did they leave the United States? *Where* are new factories locating in the United States? *Why there*?

According to the College Board,

*The goal for the course is for students to become more geoliterate, more engaged in contemporary global issues, and more informed about multicultural*

<sup>3</sup>College Board AP® Human Geography Course and Exam Description, p. 11

<sup>4</sup>College Board AP® Human Geography Course and Exam Description, p. 11



viewpoints. They will develop skills in approaching problems geographically, using maps and geospatial technologies, thinking critically about texts and graphic images, interpreting cultural landscapes, and applying geographic concepts such as scale, region, diffusion, interdependence, and spatial interaction, among others. Students will see geography as a discipline relevant to the world in which they live; as a source of ideas for identifying, clarifying, and solving problems at various scales; and as a key component of building global citizenship and environmental stewardship.<sup>5</sup>

### 3) How are Content and Skills Organized For AP® Human Geography?

There are two different areas students must focus on in AP® Human Geography: content and skills. To be good at geography, students need to understand specific geography. Further, they need to know how to apply that knowledge by developing geography skills at the same time.

**The Content** AP® Human Geography covers seven major topics throughout the year. The following lists the topics in the order assigned by the College Board (please note that teachers sometimes will cover these topics in a different order):

	Content Area (Topic)	Percentage Goals for Exam
I.	Thinking Geographically	8–10%
II.	Population and Migration Patterns and Processes	12–17%
III.	Cultural Patterns and Processes	12–17%
IV.	Political Patterns and Processes	12–17%
V.	Agriculture and Rural Land-Use Patterns and Processes	12–17%
VI.	Cities and Urban Land-Use Patterns and Processes	12–17%
VII.	Industrialization and Economic Development Patterns and Processes	12–17%

The percentages mark the range of multiple-choice questions that will be on the AP® exam from each section.

This textbook covers the content in the following chapters:

Content Area (Topic)	Chapters in the Text
Thinking Geographically	Ch. 1
Population and Migration Patterns and Processes	Ch. 2–3
Cultural Patterns and Processes	Ch. 4–7
Political Patterns and Processes	Ch. 8
Agriculture and Rural Land-Use Patterns and Processes	Ch. 11
Cities and Urban Land-Use Patterns and Processes	Ch. 9
Industrialization and Economic Development Patterns and Processes	Ch. 10 and 12

Chapters 13 and 14 of the textbook cover important topics such as the environment and globalization that tie all the units neatly together.

In addition to the seven major topics, the College Board expects students to be able to weave in three big ideas into every unit. These three ideas are:

#### 1. Patterns and Spatial Organization

This course asks students to understand the patterns and spatial organization of people, places, and environments—where are they similar and where are they different, and why.

#### 2. Impacts and Interactions

This course asks students to look at the impacts of human decisions on the Earth's surface and the impacts of how different groups of humans have interacted over space and time—where are they similar and where are they different, and how have they changed over time, and why.

#### 3. Spatial Processes and Societal Change

This course asks students to explain the spatial movement of people and the impact of this movement while also looking at how change has occurred over time and space—where are they similar and where are they different, and why.

**The Course Skills** Finally, in addition to understanding the content and the big ideas, the College Board expects students to develop the following skills over the course of the school year:

1. Concepts and Processes
2. Spatial Relationships
3. Data Analysis
4. Source Analysis
5. Scale Analysis

The following chart from the College Board details these skills more specifically.

<sup>5</sup>College Board AP® Human Geography Course and Exam Description, p. 11



AP® Human Geography Course Skill<sup>6</sup>

Skill Category 1	Skill Category 2	Skill Category 3	Skill Category 4	Skill Category 5
<b>Concepts and Processes 1</b> Analyze geographic theories, approaches, concepts, processes, or models in theoretical and applied contexts.	<b>Spatial Relationships 2</b> Analyze geographic patterns, relationships, and outcomes in applied contexts.	<b>Data Analysis 3</b> Analyze and interpret quantitative geographic data represented in maps, tables, charts, graphs, satellite images, and infographics.	<b>Source Analysis 4</b> Analyze and interpret qualitative geographic information represented in maps, images (e.g., satellite, photographs, cartoons), and landscapes.	<b>Scale Analysis 5</b> Analyze geographic theories, approaches, concepts, processes, and models across geographic scales to explain spatial relationships.
<b>Skills</b>				
<b>1.A</b> Describe geographic concepts, processes, models, and theories. <b>1.B</b> Explain geographic concepts, processes, models, and theories. <b>1.C</b> Compare geographic concepts, processes, models, and theories. <b>1.D</b> Describe a relevant geographic concept, process, model, or theory in a specified context. <b>1.E</b> Explain the strengths, weaknesses, and limitations of different geographic models and theories in a specified context.	<b>2.A</b> Describe spatial patterns, networks, and relationships. <b>2.B</b> Explain spatial relationships in a specified context or region of the world, using geographic concepts, processes, models, or theories. <b>2.C</b> Explain a likely outcome in a geographic scenario using geographic concepts, processes, models, or theories. <b>2.D</b> Explain the significance of geographic similarities and differences among different locations and/or at different times. <b>2.E</b> Explain the degree to which a geographic concept, process, model, or theory effectively explains geographic effects in different contexts and regions of the world.	<b>3.A</b> Identify the different types of data presented in maps and in quantitative and geospatial data. <b>3.B</b> Describe spatial patterns presented in maps and in quantitative and geospatial data. <b>3.C</b> Explain patterns and trends in maps and in quantitative and geospatial data to draw conclusions. <b>3.D</b> Compare patterns and trends in maps and in quantitative and geospatial data to draw conclusions. <b>3.E</b> Explain what maps or data imply or illustrate about geographic principles, processes, and outcomes. <b>3.F</b> Explain possible limitations of the data provided.	<b>4.A</b> Identify the different types of information presented in visual sources. <b>4.B</b> Describe the spatial patterns presented in visual sources. <b>4.C</b> Explain patterns and trends in visual sources to draw conclusions. <b>4.D</b> Compare patterns and trends in sources to draw conclusions. <b>4.E</b> Explain how maps, images, and landscapes illustrate or relate to geographic principles, processes, and outcomes. <b>4.F</b> Explain possible limitations of visual sources provided.	<b>5.A</b> Identify the scales of analysis presented by maps, quantitative and geospatial data, images, and landscapes. <b>5.B</b> Explain spatial relationships across various geographic scales using geographic concepts, processes, models, or theories. <b>5.C</b> Compare geographic characteristics and processes at various scales. <b>5.D</b> Explain the degree to which a geographic concept, process, model, or theory effectively explains geographic effects across various geographic scales.

**Summary** Because this is a college-level course, there is a lot expected, and all the previous lists can appear overwhelming at first. However, it is best to think of each of three parts (content, big ideas, skills) as working together throughout the course and not necessarily all at the same time. For instance, a student might be studying a topic like population distribution. Clearly, the student will be studying geographic content. Further, in order to truly understand population distribution, one must work through each of the three big ideas to master the content. However, it might not be necessary to go through all five skills directly to work with population distribution. The five skills are developed holistically over the course of the

school year. The best advice for students is to learn the content and practice the skills as one goes along.

## 4) How is the AP® Human Geography Exam Administered?

The AP® Human Geography Exam is administered to students across the world on the same day, sometime during the first two weeks of May. The day changes from year to year; therefore, it is essential to check the College Board's website (AP® Central) for information about the dates and times for the AP® Human Geography Exam.

The purpose of the AP® Human Geography Exam is to assess how well the student has mastered the content, big ideas, and

<sup>6</sup>College Board AP® Human Geography Course and Exam Description



skills addressed in the previous section. The exam is 2 hours and 15 minutes and has two main components: 60 multiple-choice questions followed by 3 free-response questions.

Section	Question Type	Number of Questions	Exam Weight	Time
1	Multiple-choice	60	50%	60 minutes
2	Free-response	3	50%	75 minutes

It is important to note that each portion of the exam is administered fully with a break in between for students. Students are not allowed to start the free-response section until after the break.

Here are some basic facts about the multiple-choice questions on the AP® exam:

- All multiple-choice questions will have five choices (A–E).
- Fifty percent of the multiple-choice questions will have a stimulus (map, chart, data table, etc.) with the question.
- There will be six to eight item sets with two to three questions included using the same stimulus.

Here are some basic facts about the free-response questions (FRQs) on the AP® exam:

- Each free-response question will be scored as a 7-point question.
- Each free-response question will have five to seven task verbs for the student to answer (A–G).
- The first free-response question will NOT have a stimulus.
- The second free-response question will have one stimulus (map, chart, data table, etc.) with the question.
- The final free-response question will have two stimuli (map, chart, data table, etc.) with the question.
- Below are the task verbs that will be used on the AP® exam:

FRQ Task Verbs	Meaning
Compare	Provide a description or explanation of similarities and/or differences.
Define	Provide a specific meaning for a word or concept.
Describe	Provide the relevant characteristics of a specified topic.
Explain	Provide information about how or why a relationship, process, pattern, position, or outcome occurs, using evidence and/or reasoning.
Identify	Indicate or provide information about a specified topic, without elaboration or explanation.

## 5) How are Students Assessed on the AP® Human Geography Exam?

### SECTION 1: Multiple-choice questions (60 questions in 60 minutes)

The AP® exam will assess student learning in the multiple-choice portion with the following weighting in content areas:

Content Area (Topic)	Percentage Goals for Exam
I. Thinking Geographically	8–10%
II. Population and Migration Patterns and Processes	12–17%
III. Cultural Patterns and Processes	12–17%
IV. Political Patterns and Processes	12–17%
V. Agriculture and Rural Land-Use Patterns and Processes	12–17%
VI. Cities and Urban Land-Use Patterns and Processes	12–17%
VII. Industrialization and Economic Development Patterns and Processes	12–17%

In addition, students will also be assessed on the following skills in the multiple-choice portion with the following weighting:

Skill Category	Weighting
1. Concepts and Processes	25–36%
2. Spatial Relationships	16–25%
3. Data Analysis	13–20%
4. Source Analysis	13–20%
5. Scale Analysis	13–20%

### SECTION 2: Free-response questions (3 questions in 75 minutes)

The AP® exam will assess student learning in content areas in the free-response portion by including at least two different units in each question. These combinations will vary from year to year and question to question.

There is no way to predict which units the FRQs will cover in any year. Below are the 7 units for potential questions.

#### Content Area (Topic)

- Thinking Geographically
- Population and Migration Patterns and Processes
- Cultural Patterns and Processes
- Political Patterns and Processes
- Agriculture and Rural Land-Use Patterns and Processes
- Cities and Urban Land-Use Patterns and Processes
- Industrialization and Economic Development Patterns and Processes

In addition, students will also be assessed on the following skills in the free-response portion with the following weighting:

Skill Category	Weighting
1. Concepts and Processes	23–29%
2. Spatial Relationships	33–43%
3. Data Analysis	10–19%
4. Source Analysis	10–19%
5. Scale Analysis	10–14%

## 6) How Do Students Prepare for the AP® Exam?

The goal in this introduction is to make sure students understand how AP® classes like AP® Human Geography work. In the appendix to this book, students will find access to strategies on

how to prepare for the AP® exam. The strategies will focus on how to prepare for both the multiple-choice and free-response portions of the exam. In addition, there are online resources for this book such as an AP® practice exam available to students.

Finally, there is a test prep app designed by AP® Human Geography teachers called iScore5. The app is available for both Apple and Google devices and costs \$4.99. The app includes hundreds of practice multiple-choice questions for each specific unit, designed from easy to hard. In addition, it has free-response questions and a full practice exam for students.