

# AP Human Geography Syllabus

Scoring Component	Page(s)
SC 1 The course provides a systematic study of the nature of geography.	5, 6
SC 2 The course provides a systematic study of perspectives of geography.	5, 6
SC 3 The course provides a systematic study of population geography.	6, 7
SC 4 The course provides a systematic study of cultural patterns and processes.	7, 8, 9
SC 5 The course provides a systematic study of political organization of space.	9, 10
SC 6 The course provides a systematic study of agriculture and rural land use.	11, 12
SC 7 The course provides a systematic study of industrialization and economic development.	12, 13
SC 8 The course provides a systematic study of cities and urban land use.	14, 15
SC 9 The course teaches the use of landscape analysis to examine human organization of space.	5, 6
SC 10 The course teaches spatial relationships at different scales ranging from the local to the global	6, 9, 10, 12, 13
SC 11 The course teaches students how to use and interpret maps and spatial data.	5, 6, 8, 9, 15
SC 12 The course teaches students how to use and interpret geographical models.	6, 11, 12, 14

Big Ideas and Course Skills	Page(s)
<p>Big Idea 1: Patterns and Spatial Organization (PSO)</p> <p>The course teaches that spatial patterns and organization of human society are arranged according to political, historical, cultural, and economic factors.</p>	7
<p>Big Idea 2: Impacts and Interactions (IMP)</p> <p>The course teaches that complex relationships of cause and effect exist among people, their environments, and historical and contemporary actions.</p>	6
<p>Big Idea 3: Spatial Process and Societal Change (SPS)</p> <p>The course teaches that a spatial perspective allows for a focus on the ways phenomena are related to one another in particular places, which in turn allows for the examination of human organization and its environmental consequences</p>	11

CS 1 The course teaches students how to analyze geographic theories, approaches, concepts, processes, or models in theoretical and applied contexts.	5, 6, 8, 11, 14
CS 2 The course teaches students how to analyze geographic patterns, relationships, and outcomes in applied contexts.	7, 9, 11
CS 3 The course teaches students how to analyze and interpret quantitative geographic data represented in maps, tables, charts, graphs, satellite images, and infographics.	5, 6, 11, 12, 15
CS 4 The course teaches students how to analyze and interpret qualitative geographic information represented in maps, images (e.g., satellite, photographs, cartoons), and landscapes.	5, 8, 9
CS 5 The course teaches students how to analyze geographic theories, approaches, concepts, processes, and models across geographic scales to explain spatial relationships.	6, 9, 12, 13

## Course Summary

The AP® Human Geography course will provide high school students with college-level instruction in using a spatial perspective to study how humans understand and use Earth's surface. Students will become skilled in interpreting maps and geospatial data in order to draw conclusions about what is revealed and hidden. Students will hone their analysis skills by learning to recognize, interpret, and assess patterns related to population, culture, and politics. Students will also consider how regions develop, including agriculture versus urban land use issues. This course is presented thematically by exam topic to reinforce that regions cannot be considered in isolation. This course will effectively prepare students for the AP exam by practicing the skills necessary to apply geographic concepts, interpret data, and synthesize information in both multiple choice and constructed response formats.

## Course Units

<b>Semester A</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unit 1: Course Overview</li><li>• Unit 2: This Is Geography</li><li>• Unit 3: Population and Health</li><li>• Unit 4: Migration</li><li>• Unit 5: Folk and Popular Culture</li><li>• Unit 6: Mid-Semester Check</li><li>• Unit 7: Language and Religion</li><li>• Unit 8: Ethnicities</li><li>• Unit 9: Political Geography</li><li>• Unit 10: Semester Exam</li></ul>	<b>Semester B</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unit 1: Course Overview</li><li>• Unit 2: Food and Agriculture</li><li>• Unit 3: Development</li><li>• Unit 4: Industry and Energy</li><li>• Unit 5: Mid-Semester Check</li><li>• Unit 6: Services and Settlements</li><li>• Unit 7: Urban Patterns</li><li>• Unit 8: Review and Full-Length Practice Exam</li><li>• Unit 9: Semester Project</li><li>• Unit 10: Semester Exam</li></ul>
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## Resource Requirements

Rubenstein, James M. *The Cultural Landscape: An Introduction to Human Geography*. 13th ed., Pearson Education, Inc., 2019.

The course and online textbook provides a collection of maps, atlases, and other resource materials for use by students. Each chapter includes an Explore feature using Google Earth to aid students in analyzing and interpreting maps.

## Online Resources

EBSCOhost Research Database <https://www.ebsco.com/products/research-databases>

Google Earth <https://www.google.com/earth/>

Khan Academy <https://www.khanacademy.org>

Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov>

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration <https://www.noaa.gov>

## Writing Assignments

In each lesson, students respond to questions about the textbook readings and other resources in a notebook. Students also complete longer portfolio writing assignments that require them to synthesize lesson content from across lessons and resources to analyze certain exam topics in-depth.

## Assessments

Throughout the course, a variety of formative and summative assessments are used to assess student learning and prepare students for the expectations of the AP Human Geography exam. Students are provided with ample opportunity for skill practice, engagement in meaningful discourse with their peers, and application of their understanding via tasks that are representative of real-world scenarios. Summative assessment types lend themselves to a deeper level of rigor and include portfolios and discussions. Formative assessments are designed to be auto-graded to give students and teachers instant feedback for targeted instruction.

Most lessons contain a quick check assessment that covers the objectives in the lesson, and most units have at least one cumulative quiz that also assesses lesson objectives. Each instructional unit culminates in an online practice to help students review unit concepts and skills, followed by a unit test that consists of multiple choice and short answer and/or essay questions. To aid students in retaining content throughout the course of a semester, a mid-semester check unit appears in the middle of each semester, featuring a low-risk practice assessment covering the objectives learned up to that point during the semester.

A graded full-length practice exam in the style of the Human Geography exam is given at the end of Semester B. Each semester ends with a semester exam.

Most units feature a discussion or portfolio that promotes critical thinking by expanding on topics students have learned. Each semester ends with a semester project and a semester exam. Graded assessments and participation all count toward the student's final grade.

## Course Outline

### Semester A

#### Unit 1: Course Overview

In this unit, students will do the following:

- Acquaint themselves with the goals and expectations of the course.
- Ensure they have the required materials for the course.
- Learn about the types of activities that will appear in the course.

## Unit 2: This Is Geography

In this unit, students will do the following:

- Evaluate the nature of geography and what it means to examine the world from a spatial perspective. [SC 1]
- Apply major geographical perspectives and concepts to examine issues. [SC 2, CS 1.A]
- Apply landscape analysis and spatial thinking to describe how humans organize space. [SC 9]
- Interpret maps and geospatial data. [SC 11, CS 3, CS 4]
- Interpret quantitative and qualitative data. [CS 3, CS 4]
- Apply quantitative and qualitative data to explain geographic patterns and processes. [CS 3, CS 4]

Sample activities in this unit:

- Students will apply what they have learned about the perspectives of geography shown in different representations of Earth. In an activity, students will conduct research to analyze how the representation of Earth as a globe as opposed to a flat map (Mercator projection) affects their perception of the size of countries and continents. Using their research, they will describe what it means to examine the world from a spatial perspective. [SC 1 and SC 11, CS 1.A]
- Students will practice interpreting maps presented in *The Cultural Landscape* and geospatial data by applying what they have learned about the elements of maps and geographic information science. [CS 3.A, CS 4.A, CS 4.F] In an activity, students will draw a mental map depicting the route between two familiar places and labeling prominent features. They will examine the map to identify which features could be identified using remote sensing and which would require ground truthing. Then, they will compare their mental map with an online mapping service to determine the role of geographic information science in the online map and how accurate their mental map is. [SC 1 and SC 11, CS 1.C]
- Students will evaluate the geographic concept of globalization. In a discussion, students will consider the connections between globalization and local diversity, using examples from their local hometown or region, in order to take a stance on whether globalization is good or bad and to support their opinion with evidence. [SC 2]
- Students will use landscape analysis on a familiar location. In an activity, students will describe how the landscape of their hometown is organized through cultural features and examine any instances of economic inequality or unequal access in the organization. [SC 9]

- Students will use spatial thinking to consider maps at a variety of scales. In a series of activities, students will examine maps of Dubai and use each map's scale to interpret the information shown in the map. Then, they will use a list of geographic coordinates as geospatial data to identify the cities found in those locations. [SC 9, SC 10, and SC 11, CS 5.A, CS 5.B, CS 5.C]

Required reading: *The Cultural Landscape*, Chapter 1: This is Geography [SC 1 and SC 2, CS 1, CS 3, CS 4, CS 5]

### Unit 3: Population and Health

In this unit, students will do the following:

- Describe physical and human factors that influence population geography. [SC 3]
- Evaluate the influence of geographic patterns and characteristics on cultural, political, economic, and urban systems.
- Analyze the growth and decline of populations over time and space. [CS 3]

Sample activities in this unit:

- Students will analyze population composition. In an activity, students will conduct research online, using sites such as the U.S. Census Bureau, to create a modified population pyramid using data from their state or city. The population pyramid will represent three groups: people over 65, people under 18, and the remaining population. Students will use the data and pyramid to calculate the elderly support ratio. [SC 3, CS 3.C, CS 3.E]
- Students will apply what they learned about the demographic transition model to the history of the United States. In a series of activities, students will explain when the United States shifted to stage 2 and stage 3. Then, students will compare their explanations to graphs showing the demographic transition for three other countries and describe the patterns and relationships they observe. [SC 3 and SC 12, CS 1.D, CS 3.B]
- Big Idea 2: Students will explain contemporary and historical trends in population growth and decline. In a portfolio, students will write an essay that analyzes Japan's population changes, including the causes, and compares its situation to that of other countries. Using evidence gathered from the internet and reference books about Japan and other countries, they will analyze how overall population changes affect health and sustainable practices. [SC 3, CS 3.D]

Required reading: *The Cultural Landscape*, Chapter 2: Population and Health [SC 3, CS 1, CS 3]

## Unit 4: Migration

In this unit, students will do the following:

- Analyze the cultural and demographic causes and effects of migration. [SC 3, CS 2]
- Evaluate the economic push and pull factors that result in migration. [CS 2]
- Assess how much political and environmental factors influence migration. [CS 2]

Sample activity in this unit:

- Big Idea 1: Students will explain how push and pull factors contribute to migration, and analyze the cultural, economic, environmental, and political consequences of migration. [CS 2.A] In an activity, students will read a fictional scenario about a family's migration, identify the push and pull factors that influence the choice to leave a homeland, and analyze the obstacles that might prevent the family's efforts to leave. [SC 3, CS 2.B]

Required reading: *The Cultural Landscape*, Chapter 3: Migration [SC 3, CS 2]

## Unit 5: Folk and Popular Culture

In this unit, students will do the following:

- Examine the various definitions of culture.
- Examine cultural differences and regional patterns. [CS 2]
- Describe cultural patterns and processes. [SC 4]

Sample activities in this unit:

- Students will compare and contrast popular and folk culture and the geographic processes associated with each. In an activity, students will design a logo for a new social media company whose main objective is to resurrect or preserve folk cultures. Students will describe the symbol's design, how it represents the company mission, and how it will spread company values, as well as how the company may impact the existing popular or folk cultures, and possible consequences. [SC 4]
- Students will explain how culture is expressed in landscapes and how land and resource use represent cultural identity. In an activity, students will synthesize information from the unit and cite examples from various cultures or time periods to write an explanation of how geography impacts the ways in which culture develops. [SC 4, CS 2.D]

Required reading: *The Cultural Landscape*, Chapter 4: Folk and Population Culture [SC 4, CS 2]

## Unit 6: Mid-Semester Check

In this unit, students will do the following:

- Demonstrate knowledge that they have learned from the beginning of the course by completing a graded mid-semester check in the style of the AP Human Geography exam.

## Unit 7: Language and Religion

In this unit, students will do the following:

- Analyze how languages affect culture.
- Evaluate how languages vary by place and region. [SC 4, CS 1, CS 4]
- Analyze how religions affect culture.
- Evaluate how religions vary by place and region. [SC 4]

Sample activities in this unit:

- Students will explain the cultural patterns and landscapes related to languages, and evaluate hypotheses of language distribution. [CS 1.E] In an activity, students will research the origin of a language, such as Esperanto, Cornish, or Ket. Students will trace the origin of the language and explain whether the language migrated with its people to or from other parts of the world, and whether it is still spoken today. [SC 4]
- Students will explain the cultural patterns and landscapes related to religion. In an activity, student will examine a map from *The Cultural Landscape* illustrating the most numerous religions by country and world region. Students will use evidence from this map to explain how religions spread, including the ideas of diffusion and distribution. [SC 4 and SC 11, CS 4.B, CS 4.C, CS 4.D, CS 4.E]

Required reading: *The Cultural Landscape*, Chapter 5: Languages and Chapter 6: Religions [SC 4, CS 1, CS 4]

## Unit 8: Ethnicities

In this unit, students will do the following:

- Analyze how ethnic differences affect culture.
- Evaluate how ethnicities vary by place and region. [SC 4, CS 4]



Sample activities in this unit:

- Students will use maps and cartograms from *The Cultural Landscape* to assess the spatial and place dimensions of cultural groups in the past and present. [CS 4.E] In a series of activities, students will conduct research on a selected ethnicity in order to describe what makes this ethnicity unique and where it is distributed. Then, students will extend their research by describing any conflicts this ethnicity has had with others and why. They will also explain how geographic analytic tools can provide evidence in ethnic conflicts, noting any limitations to the tool's use. [SC 4, SC 2.E]
- Students will analyze the impacts of diffusion as related to ethnicities. In an activity, students will write an analysis of articles from the United Nations related to ethnic separation, ethnic cleansing, and diversity. [SC 4]

Required reading: *The Cultural Landscape*, Chapter 7: Ethnicities [SC 4, CS 2, CS 4]

## Unit 9: Political Geography

In this unit, students will do the following:

- Evaluate how the contemporary political map has been shaped by events of the past. [SC 5 and SC 11]
- Examine how spatial political patterns reflect ideas of territoriality and power at a variety of scales. [SC 10, CS 2, CS 5]
- Analyze how the forces of globalization challenge contemporary political-territorial arrangements.

Sample activities in this unit:

- Students will analyze the spatial relationships between political systems and patterns of culture and economy. In a series of activities, students will analyze the current situations regarding the Northern Ireland border and Brexit negotiations as well as Cyprus. They will compare and contrast the effect of the cultural borders in these two regions. [SC 5, CS 2.B]
- Students will evaluate the role and efficacy of political boundaries on different scales. [CS 5.C] In a portfolio, students will write an argumentative essay about who should create political boundaries and how disputes should be solved. Students will include specific examples and describe problematic situations regarding border disputes as well as situations in which problems were successfully resolved. Students will use evidence from independent research to support their thesis statements. [SC 5 and SC 10]

- Students will explain how the political, economic, cultural, and technological elements of globalization challenge state sovereignty. In a series of activities, students will read an article about Qatar’s position on United Nations peacekeeping efforts. Then, students will research how the UN Charter is being (or has been) implemented in another country they select. Finally, students will compare the UN Charter in these two countries (Qatar and the other country they selected). [SC 5]

Required reading: *The Cultural Landscape*, Chapter 8: Political Geography [SC 5]

## **Unit 10: Semester Exam**

In this unit, students will do the following:

- Review all topics covered this semester.
- Demonstrate knowledge by completing a graded semester exam written in the style of the AP Human Geography exam.

## Semester B

### Unit 1: Course Overview

In this unit, students will do the following:

- Acquaint themselves with the goals and expectations of the course.
- Ensure they have the required materials for the course.
- Learn about the types of activities that will appear in the course.

### Unit 2: Food and Agriculture

In this unit, students will do the following:

- Evaluate the effects of agricultural development on the natural environment.
- Analyze how major agricultural regions reflect physical geography and economic factors. [SC 6]
- Analyze how settlement patterns and rural land use are reflected in the cultural landscape. [SC 6]
- Evaluate the societal effects of changes in food production and consumption.

Sample activities in this unit:

- Big Idea 3: Students will analyze agricultural production and rural land use as well as the interdependence among regions. In an activity, students will read an article about rice growers in the United States and compare the agricultural processes in this country with those in developing Asian countries. They will describe the challenges and benefits of producing rice in California for export to Japan, how cultivation differs in low-density areas compared to high-density areas, how a region affects the agricultural practices there, and potential consequences due to population changes. [SC 6]
- Students will analyze the application of von Thünen’s land use model to agricultural production. In an activity, students will apply what they have learned about agribusiness and commercial agriculture to explain the guiding principle of von Thünen’s model and what other factors a farmer might consider in addition to the model when selecting a type of agriculture to practice. [SC 6 and SC 12, CS 1.B, CS 1.D, CS 1.E]
- Students will use the EBSCOhost research databases and other sources to analyze issues related to the changing nature of contemporary agriculture, and predict how current trends will affect agriculture. [CS 2.C, CS.3.F] In a portfolio, students will write an essay in which they take a stance on the role of biotechnology in agriculture. In their essay, students will clearly state a

position in a thesis statement, describe how biotechnology is used in agriculture, support their position with specific examples and evidence, and present and refute important arguments against their position. [SC 6]

Required reading: *The Cultural Landscape*, Chapter 9: Food and Agriculture [SC 6, CS 1, CS 2, CS 3]

## Unit 3: Development

In this unit, students will do the following:

- Assess how the Industrial Revolution facilitated improvements in standards of living.
- Apply measures of development to understand patterns of social and economic differences at a variety of scales. [SC 10, SC 5]
- Explain why development is a process that varies across space and time. [SC 7]

Sample activities in this unit:

- Students will assess the availability of inequality-adjusted human development data gathered from the United Nations. [CS 3.F]
- Students will apply measures of development and the standard of living to understand the difference between “developed” and “developing” countries. In a series of activities, students will choose one developed country and one developing country from a list. Students will conduct research and explain why each is considered developed or developing. Then, students will choose one of the measures of standard of living, conduct research to find the current measurement for the two countries, and explain the factors that have impacted each measurement. [SC 7 and SC 10]
- Students will study Rostow’s economic development model and apply it to a local area. During instruction, students will read about this model, study an image of a festival in Chichicastenango in Guatemala and explain which of Rostow’s stages of development is shown. [SC 7 and SC 12]
- Students will study Weber’s industrial location model and apply it to a local industry. During instruction, students will read about Weber’s “least-cost” theory and use a local industry to explain whether it matches Weber’s model of industrialization. [CS 5.D] Then, students will explain what factors other than access to raw materials may determine the particular location of an industry.[SC 7 and SC 12]

- Students will analyze the causes and consequences of international trade and growing interdependence in the world economy. In a discussion, students will consider the benefits to fair trade and weigh them against the costs.
- Students will cite evidence to support their opinion and explain how they will address any counterarguments. [SC 7]

Required reading: *The Cultural Landscape*, Chapter 10: Development [SC 7, CS 3, CS 5]

## Unit 4: Industry and Energy

In this unit, students will do the following:

- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of sustainable development.
- Apply the strategy of sustainable development to address resource depletion and environmental degradation.
- Evaluate how factors like situation and site affect how and where industry develops. [SC 7]

Sample activities in this unit:

- Students will analyze industrial location on a regional scale. In an activity, students will consider how weather conditions influence the choice of a factory site between the North and the South in the United States. Students will choose an industry and a corresponding factory site. Depending on the location, students will explain the impact of weather events, the transportation options available, and the benefits of choosing another location or multiple locations. [SC 7 and SC 10, CS 5.C]
- Students will analyze international trade and industrialization globally. In an activity, students will research the labels on their clothing for the countries of origin and production locations in those countries. Students will reflect on what they discovered about these industrial locations. [SC 7, CS 5.C]
- Students will analyze industrial locations on a local scale. In an activity, students will describe the industries located in their state, the factors that have attracted industries there, and the challenges these industries face. [SC 7 and SC 10, CS 5.C]
- Students will analyze sustainability issues related to industrialization and development. In a discussion, students will consider the benefits and costs of buying domestic versus foreign-made clothes. Students will select one role (American manufacturer, Canadian government, or Mexican worker) and present this role's perspective toward NAFTA. Then, students will take on the role of EPA agents and re-evaluate NAFTA from that role's perspective. [SC 7]

Required reading: *The Cultural Landscape*, Chapter 11: Industry and Energy [SC 7, SC 5]

## Unit 5: Mid-Semester Check

In this unit, students will do the following:

- Review the topics that they have learned from the beginning of this semester.
- Demonstrate knowledge by completing a graded mid-semester check in the style of the AP Human Geography exam.

## Unit 6: Services and Settlements

In this unit, students will do the following:

- Explain how the form, function, and size of urban settlements are constantly changing. [SC 8]
- Apply models to understand the distribution and size of cities. [SC 12]
- Analyze how models of internal city structure and urban development provide a framework for urban analysis. [SC 8, CS 1.A, CS 1.B, CS 1.D, CS 1.E]

Sample activities in this unit:

- Students will explain the factors that initiate and drive urbanization and suburbanization. In an activity, students will read an article about millennials and evaluate what effects millennials moving back home with their parents will have on urban settlements and their economic bases. [SC 8]
- Students will evaluate the infrastructure of cities and apply models to explain the hierarchy and interaction patterns of urban settlements. [CS 1.D, CS 1.E] In an activity, students will research a city in the world with a population of over 2 million. They will describe the infrastructure of the city and any sustainability efforts or initiatives—such as urban farming, pollution control measures, and even urban development—that involve reshaping the city’s landscape to be more vertical than horizontal. [SC 8 and SC 12]

Required reading: *The Cultural Landscape*, Chapter 12: Services and Settlements [SC 8, CS 1]

## Unit 7: Urban Patterns

In this unit, students will do the following:

- Analyze how built landscapes and social space reflect the attitudes and values of a population.
- Evaluate the economic, social, political, cultural, and environmental challenges facing urban areas. [SC 8]

Sample activities in this unit:

- Students will evaluate the geographic processes that impact business in urban areas. In an activity, students will analyze the business landscape of Montreal through photographs. They will apply what they have learned about urban patterns to propose solutions for businesses to encourage people to shop in the city during the winter. [SC 8]
- Students will analyze the demographic and population characteristics of cities using quantitative and qualitative data gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau. [CS 3.C] In an activity, students will conduct a social area analysis of a familiar area and use this data to reflect on how the built landscape reflects the population. [SC 8 and SC 11]
- Students will evaluate problems and propose possible solutions associated with urban issues. In a portfolio, students will conduct research on food deserts in urban zones and write a detailed report on what food deserts are, the challenges associated with them, and the possible solutions to reduce or eliminate them. [SC 8]

Required reading: *The Cultural Landscape*, Chapter 13: Urban Patterns [SC 8, CS 3]

## **Unit 8: Review and Full-Length Practice Exam**

In this unit, students will do the following:

- Review the entire course, using the results of the mid-semester check and unit tests to focus this review.
- Complete a full-length practice exam in the style of the AP Human Geography exam, over the course of three days.

## **Unit 9: Semester Project**

In the project unit, students will choose one topic (culture, economics, or politics) and create a multimedia presentation that connects this topic to human geography. Students will draw on what was learned in both semesters to develop a series of maps with supporting text that illustrates how this topic has shaped human geography over time. [SC 11]

## **Unit 10: Semester Exam**

In this unit, students will do the following:

- Demonstrate knowledge from this semester by completing a graded semester exam written in the style of AP Human Geography.