

## KEY ISSUE 2

### Why Is Each Point on Earth Unique?

**Learning Outcome 1.2.1:** Identify geographic characteristics of places, including toponym, site, and situation.

Location is the position something occupies on Earth. Geographers identify a place's location using place names, site, and situation.

**Learning Outcome 1.2.2:** Identify the three types of regions.

A formal region is an area within which everyone shares distinctive characteristics. A functional region is an area organized around a node. A vernacular region is an area that people believe exists.

**Learning Outcome 1.2.3:** Describe two geographic definitions of culture.

Culture can refer to cultural values such as language and religion, or to material culture such as food, clothing, and shelter.

A **region** is generally defined as an area larger than a single city that contains unifying cultural and/or physical characteristics. Regions are sometimes referred to as a "world within a world" because geographers are trying to categorize and make sense of a large area, thus they are looking for common characteristics found within each. The concept is controversial because geographers will debate what exactly makes a region. However it is important as a basic unit of geographic research and a necessary simplification of the world for geographic examination. Geographers have identified three types of regions: formal, functional, and vernacular.

A **formal region** is also called a **uniform region** or a **homogeneous region** because it has specific characteristics that are fairly uniform throughout that region. For example South Korea is a political region, easily identified on a map and also with a very homogenous culture, Korean. The Rocky Mountains constitute a physical region stretching through the United States and Canada. North Africa and the Middle East constitute a formal region characterized by a desert climate as well as an Arab/Islamic culture.

A **functional region** is also called a **nodal region** because it is defined by a social or economic function that occurs between a node or focal point and the surrounding areas. For example the circulation area of the *New York Times* is a functional region and New York is the node.

A **vernacular region** or **perceptual region** is one that exists in people's minds such as the American "South." When individuals are asked to draw a boundary around this region, their boundary will probably be based on stereotypes they associate with the South such as climate, accent, cuisine, and religious practices such as Southern Baptist. It would be difficult to determine the precise boundary of the South. One's attachment to a region perceived as home is sometimes called a **sense of place**. Sometimes people can identify their perceptual region by envisioning or drawing a **mental map**. A mental map is an internal representation of a place on Earth's surface.

## Key Issues Revisited

### 1.2. Why is each point on Earth unique?

- Every place in the world has a unique location on Earth's surface
- Geographers identify regions as areas distinguished by a distinctive combination of cultural, economic, and environmental features which helps us to understand why every region and place is unique

## Review Questions

1.2.1. When giving directions to a person, if we say "my house is down past the firehouse" we are describing

- A. site.
- B. distance.
- C. situation.
- D. toponym.
- E. absolute location.

1.2.2. A mental map is a good way to represent what type of region?

- A. formal region
- B. functional region
- C. vernacular region
- D. economic region
- E. political region

## **KEY ISSUE 3**

### **Why Are Different Places Similar?**

**Learning Outcome 1.3.1:** Give examples of changes in economy and culture occurring at global and local scales.

Globalization means that the scale of the world is shrinking in terms of economy and culture.

**Learning Outcome 1.3.2:** Identify the three properties of distribution across space.

Density is the frequency with which something occurs, concentration is the extent of spread, and pattern is the geometric arrangement.

**Learning Outcome 1.3.3:** Describe different ways in which geographers approach aspects of cultural identity such as gender, ethnicity, and sexuality.

Males and females, whites and minorities, heterosexuals and homosexuals occupy different places and move across space differently.

Critical geographers have developed different approaches to studying how different cultural groups perceive, experience, organize, and move through space.

**Learning Outcome 1.3.4:** Describe how characteristics can spread across space over time through diffusion.

Something originates at a hearth and diffuses through either relocation diffusion (physical movement) or expansion diffusion (additive processes).

**Learning Outcome 1.3.5:** Explain how places are connected through networks and how inequality can hinder connections.

Electronic communications have removed many physical barriers to interaction for those with access to them.

Spatial interaction and interdependence have become increasingly important concepts in geography because of **globalization**, which is the process through which the world is becoming interdependent on a global scale to the extent that smaller scales are becoming less important. It produces a more uniform world. Some might argue that through globalization we are entering a monoculture, where everyone eats at McDonald's, wears the same brand of jeans, and speaks the same language. Globalization ties the world together.

Economic globalization has led to an increase in **transnational corporations** (sometimes called multinational corporations) that invest and operate in many countries. Modern communication and transportation systems have made it much easier to move economic assets around the world. Economically some places are more connected than others because they can supply specialized goods or services within their location. **Complementarity** is the degree to which one place can supply something that another place needs. The concept of **intervening opportunities** also helps to explain connectivity. It is the idea that if one place has a demand for something and there are two potential suppliers, the closer supplier will represent an intervening opportunity because transportation costs will be less. Thus **accessibility** is an important factor in costs and interaction between places. **Transferability** refers to the costs involved in moving goods from one place to another.

There will generally be more interaction between things that are closer than those that are further away. This is **Tobler's First Law of Geography** or the **friction of distance**. Contact will diminish with increasing distance until it ultimately disappears. This is called **distance decay**.

As a result of globalization, there are now greater communications between distant places. **Time-space compression** describes the reduction in time that it takes to diffuse something to a distant place. Think about an Internet video that goes viral or a text message you receive from a friend studying abroad—these illustrate time-space compression in today's world.

**Spatial diffusion** describes the way that phenomena, such as technological ideas, cultural innovations, disease, or economic goods travel over space. The place from which an innovation originates and

diffuses is called a **hearth**. **Relocation diffusion** or **migration diffusion** refers to the physical movement of people from one place to another. It will be discussed later in the context of migration.

**Expansion diffusion** is the spread of something in a snowballing process. There are three types of expansion diffusion. **Hierarchical diffusion** is the spread of an idea from one node of power and authority to another. For example trends in music, fashion, and art are more likely to diffuse hierarchically from one key city to another (such as from New York to Los Angeles). **Contagious diffusion** is the rapid and widespread diffusion of something throughout a population because of proximity, such as a contagious disease like influenza. **Stimulus diffusion** is the spread of a principle rather than a specific characteristic, such as the certain features of an iPad that are now common on competitors' products.

## **Key Issues Revisited**

### **1.3. Why are different places similar?**

- Geographers work at all scales, from local to global, and the global scale is becoming increasingly important because few places in today's world are completely isolated
- Places display similarities because they are connected to each other
- Geographers study the interactions of people and human activities across space, and they identify the different processes by which people and ideas diffuse from one place to another over time

## **Review Questions**

### **1.3.1. Globalization means that the scale of the world is**

- A. increasing.
- B. not affected.
- C. shrinking.
- D. status quo.
- E. the same.

1.3.2. The extent of a feature's spread over space is

- A. density.
- B. distribution.
- C. concentration.
- D. area.
- E. conformity.

## KEY ISSUE 4

### Why Are Some Human Actions Not Sustainable?

**Learning Outcome 1.4.1:** Describe the three pillars of sustainability.

Sustainability is the use of Earth's natural resources in ways that ensure availability in the future. This is accomplished through a combination of environmental, economic, and social action.

**Learning Outcome 1.4.2:** Describe the three abiotic physical systems.

Earth comprises four physical systems: the atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, and biosphere.

**Learning Outcome 1.4.3:** Explain how the biosphere interacts with Earth's abiotic systems.

An ecosystem comprises a group of living organisms in the biosphere and their interaction with the atmosphere, lithosphere, and biosphere.

**Learning Outcome 1.4.4:** Compare ecosystems in the Netherlands and southern Louisiana.

The Dutch have modified the ecosystem of their land in a more sustainable manner than has been the case in southern Louisiana.

Human geographers must focus on the relationship between the physical environment and the humans that live there. Most human geographers focus on the concept of **sustainability**, using Earth's resources (**both renewable and nonrenewable**) in ways that ensure their availability for future generations. The United Nations recognizes the need for **sustainable development** and has embraced the idea of bridging together the environment, the economy, and society.

Through environmental notions, such as **conservation and alternative resources**, the environment will be sustained for future generations to use. The marketplace is where geographers believe that

with new technologies we may be able to extract substances that are out of our reach today. The global economy will adjust with the market for natural resources and will allow resources to be more affordable to the majority of people in the world. Although all humans need food, shelter, and clothing, the choices consumers make will aid in sustainable development. If people choose recycled items, or clothes made of natural products, their choices might slow down the resource depletion that is currently happening due to consumerism around the globe.

Geographers focus on the physical systems of Earth: atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, and biosphere, however, in terms of sustainability the biosphere becomes a focal point. Human activity is now the most important agent of change on the Earth. **Erosion and soil depletion** become exacerbated by human activity. Natural disasters today seem to affect more people due to human activity, such as the breach of the levees in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina, or the tidal erosion that has taken place due to Superstorm Sandy. Today, more than ever geographers are focusing much of their attention on the long-term affects of human activity on the environment.

## **Key Issues Revisited**

### **1.4. Why are some human actions not sustainable?**

- Geographers are concerned with human interaction on Earth, especially with regard to sustainability
- Geographers believe that you must look at the merging of the environment, the economy, and society to achieve sustainable development
- Human actions on Earth have, in many cases, led to most of the environmental degradation that we now see on Earth

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

Score \_\_\_\_\_/40

*\*1 point per question*

1. What is a region?
2. What are the three types of regions?
  - A.
  - B.
  - C.
3. A formal region is also called a \_\_\_\_\_ region or a \_\_\_\_\_ region.
4. Why is a formal region called this?
5. Provide an example of a formal region:
6. What is a functional region and what is it also known as?

Definition:

AKA:
7. Provide an example of a functional region and its node:
8. What is a vernacular region and what is it also known as?

Definition:

AKA:
9. One's sense of attachment to a region perceived as home is sometimes called what?
10. What can people sometimes do to help identify their perceptual region?
11. What is a mental map?



12. For key issue 1.2, provide two reasons why each point on Earth is unique:

A.

B.

13. Review Question 1.2.1. When giving directions to a person, if we say "my house is down past the firehouse" we are describing

A. site

B. distance

C. situation

D. homonym

E. absolute location

14. Review Question 1.2.2. A mental map is a good way to represent what type of region?

A. formal region

B. functional region

C. vernacular region

D. economic region

E. political region

15. What is globalization?

16. Why are some people cautious about globalization?

17. What has economic globalization let to an increase in?

18. What has made it easier to move economic assets around the world?

19. Define:

A. Complementarity:

B. Intervening opportunities:

C. Accessibility:

D. Transferability:

20. Explain Tobler's first law of Geography and what it is also known as?

A. Definition:

B. AKA:

21. What is distance decay?

22. What is time-space compression? What an example of this is in today's world?

23. What is spatial diffusion?

24. Define hearth:

25. Define relocation diffusion and what is it also known as?

A. Definition:

B. AKA:

26. What is Expansion diffusion?

27. Describe the THREE types of expansion diffusion and provide examples of each:

A.

Example:

B.

Example:

C.

Example:

28. For key issue 1.3, provide three reasons why different places are similar:

A.

B.

C.

29. Review Question 1.3.1. Globalization means that the scale of the world is

- A. increasing
- B. not affected
- C. shrinking
- D. status quo (staying the same)

30. Review Question 1.3.2. The extent of a feature's spread over space is

- A. density
- B. distribution
- C. concentration
- D. area
- E. conformity

31. What is sustainability?

32. What two environmental notions will help sustain the environment for future generations to use?

- A.
- B.

33. How will resources become more affordable to the majority of people in the world in the future?

34. How can consumers aid in sustainable development?

35. What are the four physical systems of the Earth?

- A.
- B.
- C.
- D.

36. What is the most important agent of change on the earth?

37. What seems to affect more people today due to human activity?

38. For key issue 1.4, provide three reasons why some human actions are not sustainable:

- A.
- B.
- C.

39. Review Question 1.4.1. All living systems on Earth would be found in the

- A. lithosphere
- B. atmosphere
- C. hydrosphere
- D. biosphere
- E. climosphere

40. Review Question 1.4.2. The belief that the environment causes social development is known as

- A. psychology
- B. ecology
- C. environmental determinism
- D. possibilism
- E. sustainability