Advanced Placement (AP) Human Geography Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide

BY EXAMZIFY

Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

• Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
• Improve accuracy and speed,
• Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
• Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 – 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

1. **What does the life course theory of migration emphasize?**

   A. The impact of economic factors on migration

   B. The influence of family events on migration decisions

   C. The political implications of migration

   D. The role of culture in migration trends

2. **How is gross national product (GNP) calculated?**

   A. GDP plus income earned from abroad

   B. The total value of domestic goods only

   C. GNP does not include income from abroad

   D. GDP including taxes and subsidies

3. **What major shift is characterized by the domestication of plants and animals?**

   A. Industrial Revolution

   B. First Agricultural Revolution

   C. Digital Revolution

   D. Urban Revolution

4. **What is the primary focus of the sector model in urban land use?**

   A. To illustrate vertical growth in cities

   B. To describe urban growth in concentric circles

   C. To represent urban growth in pie-shaped wedges based on transportation improvements

   D. To analyze suburban expansion patterns

5. **What is a primary characteristic of the practice of specialty farming?**

   A. Emphasis on producing staples for the local market

   B. Focus on high-quality, niche products for targeted consumers

   C. Reliance on large-scale commercial farms

   D. Utilization of conventional farming techniques

6. What does deindustrialization refer to?

   A. An increase in industrial activity

   B. A reduction in industrial activity

   C. The establishment of new industries

   D. The growth of sustainable markets

7. What is a characteristic of a primate city?

   A. A city that is equally significant in size and influence

   B. A city that is the smallest in a country

   C. A city that significantly oversizes the next largest city and holds more importance

   D. A city that is only significant in cultural aspects

8. What model shows the link between population growth and economic development?

   A. Population pyramid model

   B. Demographic transition model

   C. Cultural diffusion model

   D. Economic growth model

9. What does the term cultural landscape refer to?

   A. The physical geography of an area

   B. The unique landscape made up of both material and nonmaterial culture

   C. Land that has been set aside for cultural festivals

   D. A region defined by its natural features alone

10. What field of study focuses on the characteristics of human populations?

   A. Ecology

   B. Climatology

   C. Demography

   D. Geography

Answers

1. B
2. A
3. B
4. C
5. B
6. B
7. C
8. B
9. B
10. C

Explanations

1. What does the life course theory of migration emphasize?

    A. The impact of economic factors on migration

    B. The influence of family events on migration decisions

    C. The political implications of migration

    D. The role of culture in migration trends

The life course theory of migration emphasizes the influence of family events on migration decisions. This theory suggests that individuals' migration patterns are significantly shaped by their life stages and the various milestones they encounter, such as marriage, parenthood, or the loss of a loved one. These life events can serve as pivotal moments that prompt individuals or families to relocate for a variety of reasons, including seeking better economic opportunities, reuniting with family, or finding a more supportive environment for raising children. In essence, the theory connects personal experiences and transitions within an individual's or family's lifecycle to broader migration trends, highlighting how social, emotional, and familial considerations can drive decisions about where to live. This perspective aids in understanding migration as a dynamic process that is influenced by personal circumstances, rather than merely economic or political factors alone.

2. How is gross national product (GNP) calculated?

    A. GDP plus income earned from abroad

    B. The total value of domestic goods only

    C. GNP does not include income from abroad

    D. GDP including taxes and subsidies

Gross National Product (GNP) is calculated as the total market value of all final goods and services produced by the residents of a country in a given time period, plus the income earned by its residents from investments abroad, minus the income earned by foreign residents from domestic investments. This means that GNP accounts for both the domestic production and the net income from abroad, effectively distinguishing it from other measures like Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which only considers production within the nation's borders regardless of who generates the income. By including income earned from abroad, GNP provides a broader perspective on the economic performance and wealth of a nation's residents, reflecting their overall economic engagement in the global market. This distinguishes GNP from merely tallying the domestic output, as it recognizes the importance of international investments and returns.

3. What major shift is characterized by the domestication of plants and animals?

A. Industrial Revolution

B. First Agricultural Revolution

C. Digital Revolution

D. Urban Revolution

The major shift characterized by the domestication of plants and animals is known as the First Agricultural Revolution. This period marked a significant transition in human history from nomadic hunting and gathering societies to established agricultural practices. During this revolution, which began approximately 10,000 years ago, early humans learned to cultivate crops and raise livestock, which allowed them to settle in one place and develop stable communities.   This change was pivotal because it enabled population growth, the formation of surplus food, and the development of more complex social structures. The establishment of agriculture facilitated the rise of civilizations, as people could focus on tasks beyond mere survival, such as trade, governance, and cultural development.   In contrast, the Industrial Revolution refers to the period of technological advancement and industrialization in the 18th and 19th centuries, the Digital Revolution involves the shift to digital technology starting in the late 20th century, and the Urban Revolution pertains to the increasing movement from rural to urban areas, which is primarily a phenomenon associated with industrialization. Each of these revolutions represents different transformative periods of human development but does not center on the foundational agricultural practices that were established during the First Agricultural Revolution.

4. What is the primary focus of the sector model in urban land use?

A. To illustrate vertical growth in cities

B. To describe urban growth in concentric circles

C. To represent urban growth in pie-shaped wedges based on transportation improvements

D. To analyze suburban expansion patterns

The sector model fundamentally emphasizes how urban land use is organized around transportation corridors, creating distinct sectors or wedges that extend outward from the city center. Developed by economist Homer Hoyt in the 1930s, this model illustrates that as cities expand, they do so in specific directions determined largely by the development of transportation routes, such as highways and railroads.   Each wedge in the sector model typically represents a different type of land use, including residential, industrial, and commercial activities, with transportation infrastructure acting as a significant influence on the evolution and growth patterns of these areas. This approach highlights the importance of accessibility and the socio-economic factors that influence the spatial distribution of communities and businesses within an urban environment, making it a significant perspective for understanding urban planning and development. Other models, such as the concentric zone model, depict growth in circular patterns around a central point, which does not account for the impact of transportation in the same way. The sector model's focus on transportation as a guiding force in urban growth sets it apart from other theories of urban land use.

5. What is a primary characteristic of the practice of specialty farming?

A. Emphasis on producing staples for the local market

B. Focus on high-quality, niche products for targeted consumers

C. Reliance on large-scale commercial farms

D. Utilization of conventional farming techniques

A primary characteristic of specialty farming is the focus on high-quality, niche products that are intended for targeted consumers. This approach involves cultivating specific crops or products that cater to particular market demands or preferences, often with an emphasis on unique flavors, organic practices, or local heritage. Specialty farming typically targets gourmet markets, local restaurants, or direct-to-consumer sales, distinguishing it from general agriculture, which often aims for mass production of staple crops. This model allows farmers to charge a premium for their unique offerings, and it often encourages sustainable farming practices tailored to the specific needs of the crop or market. This contrasts significantly with practices that emphasize large-scale production or conventional farming methods, which tend to focus on efficiency and volume rather than quality or niche appeal.

6. What does deindustrialization refer to?

A. An increase in industrial activity

B. A reduction in industrial activity

C. The establishment of new industries

D. The growth of sustainable markets

Deindustrialization refers to a process where there is a significant decline in the industrial sector of an economy. This typically involves a reduction in manufacturing jobs and production, often accompanied by a shift towards a more service-oriented economy. Factors contributing to deindustrialization can include globalization, technological advances, and changes in consumer preferences, which may lead to industries moving to regions with cheaper labor or varying operational costs. This understanding contrasts sharply with the other options. An increase in industrial activity would denote growth and expansion in that sector, while the establishment of new industries suggests a rising industrial base. The growth of sustainable markets typically refers to a focus on environmentally friendly practices rather than a reduction in industrial activities. Thus, recognizing deindustrialization specifically as a decline in industrial activity aligns with economic trends observed in many developed nations.

7. What is a characteristic of a primate city?

    A. A city that is equally significant in size and influence

    B. A city that is the smallest in a country

    C. A city that significantly oversizes the next largest city and holds more importance

    D. A city that is only significant in cultural aspects

A primate city is defined as a city that not only has a larger population than any other city in the country but also possesses a significant degree of economic, political, and cultural influence. This city typically overshadows all other urban areas in its nation, creating a clear hierarchy within the urban system. The characteristic of significantly exceeding the size and influence of the next largest city emphasizes its role as a focal point for services, infrastructure, and decision-making processes.   For example, countries like France with Paris, and Thailand with Bangkok illustrate how a primate city can dominate both in terms of population and in providing essential services and cultural resources that benefit the entire country. The prominence of a primate city often leads to a concentration of resources and opportunities, which can impact migration patterns, economic development, and social dynamics within the nation. This hierarchical structure is what underscores the distinctiveness of a primate city compared to other urban centers.

8. What model shows the link between population growth and economic development?

    A. Population pyramid model

    B. Demographic transition model

    C. Cultural diffusion model

    D. Economic growth model

The demographic transition model (DTM) effectively illustrates the relationship between population growth and economic development. This model describes the transition of a country's population over time through distinct stages, each characterized by varying birth and death rates, which correlate with the levels of economic development.   In the initial stages of the DTM, typically associated with less economically developed regions, both birth and death rates are high, leading to slow population growth. As a country advances economically, it enters subsequent stages where death rates begin to decline significantly due to improvements in healthcare, sanitation, and nutrition, resulting in rapid population growth. Eventually, as economic development continues, birth rates also decline, leading to a stabilization of the population.   This trajectory reflects the industrialization and urbanization aspects of economic development, making the DTM a valuable tool for understanding how demographic changes accompany and support economic progress.

9. What does the term cultural landscape refer to?

A. The physical geography of an area

B. The unique landscape made up of both material and nonmaterial culture

C. Land that has been set aside for cultural festivals

D. A region defined by its natural features alone

The term cultural landscape refers specifically to the unique landscape that arises from the interaction of both material and nonmaterial culture in a given area. This concept emphasizes how human activity and cultural practices shape and modify the environment, blending physical characteristics with cultural significance. For example, a cultural landscape can include urban settings characterized by architectural styles, parks, agricultural fields that reflect farming traditions, or areas dedicated to particular cultural practices.   Material culture encompasses physical items such as buildings, monuments, and artifacts that humans create, while nonmaterial culture includes ideas, values, traditions, and beliefs. The interplay between these elements creates a distinct identity for a place and illustrates how culture influences spatial organization and human behavior within that landscape.   The other options do not capture the full essence of the cultural landscape. The physical geography of an area does not consider cultural influences, while land set aside for cultural festivals is too specific and limited in scope. Defining a region solely by its natural features ignores the significant role that human culture plays in shaping landscapes.

10. What field of study focuses on the characteristics of human populations?

A. Ecology

B. Climatology

C. Demography

D. Geography

Demography is the field of study that specifically focuses on the characteristics of human populations. It examines various aspects such as population size, distribution, density, age structure, gender ratios, birth and death rates, as well as migration patterns. By analyzing these factors, demographers can gain insights into trends over time and make predictions about future population changes. This information is crucial in understanding societal dynamics, planning for resources, and addressing issues related to public health, urban development, and social services. In contrast, while ecology investigates relationships between living organisms and their environment, and climatology studies weather patterns and climate change, neither of these disciplines centers on the intricacies of human populations. Geography, although it includes population studies as part of its broader examination of the Earth's features and human activity, covers a wider array of topics beyond just human populations. Thus, demography distinctly stands out as the most precise field regarding the study of population characteristics.

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

https://ap-humangeography.examzify.com

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!