

AP HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

UNIT 1

Thinking Geographically



8–10%

AP EXAM WEIGHTING



~9–10

CLASS PERIODS



Remember to go to [AP Classroom](#) to assign students the online **Personal Progress Check** for this unit.

Whether assigned as homework or completed in class, the **Personal Progress Check** provides each student with immediate feedback related to this unit's topics and skills.

Personal Progress Check 1

Multiple-choice: ~20 questions

Free-response: 1 question

- 1 stimulus

Thinking Geographically



Developing Understanding

BIG IDEA 1

Patterns and Spatial Organization **PSO**

- Why do geographers study relationships and patterns among and between places?

BIG IDEA 2

Impacts and Interactions **IMP**

- How do geographers use maps to help them discover patterns and relationships in the world?

BIG IDEA 3

Spatial Processes and Societal Change **SPS**


- How do geographers use a spatial perspective to analyze complex issues and relationships?

This first unit sets the foundation for the course by teaching students how geographers approach the study of places. Students are encouraged to reflect on the “why of where” to better understand geographic perspectives. Many other high school courses ask students to read and analyze data, but for this course, students also apply a spatial perspective when reading and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data.

Students learn the ways information from data sources such as maps, tables, charts, satellite images, and infographics informs policy decisions such as voting redistricting or expanding transportation networks. They also learn about how people influence and are influenced by their environment; the resulting impact on topography, natural resources, and climate; and the differences between and consequences of environmental determinism and possibilism.

Finally, students are introduced to the language of geography, learning discipline-specific terminology and applying that language to contemporary, real-world scenarios so they can better study population processes and patterns in the next unit.

UNIT AT A GLANCE

Enduring Understanding	Topic	Suggested Skill	Class Periods
			~9–10 CLASS PERIODS
IMP-1	1.1 Introduction to Maps	3.A Identify the different types of data presented in maps and in quantitative and geospatial data.	
	1.2 Geographic Data	3.A Identify the different types of data presented in maps and in quantitative and geospatial data.	
	1.3 The Power of Geographic Data	3.B Describe spatial patterns presented in maps and in quantitative and geospatial data.	
PSO-1	1.4 Spatial Concepts	3.B Describe spatial patterns presented in maps and in quantitative and geospatial data.	
	1.5 Human–Environmental Interaction	1.B Explain geographic concepts, processes, models, and theories.	
	1.6 Scales of Analysis	5.A Identify the scales of analysis presented by maps, quantitative and geospatial data, images, and landscapes.	
SPS-1	1.7 Regional Analysis	1.A Describe geographic concepts, processes, models, and theories.	
 Go to AP Classroom to assign the Personal Progress Check for Unit 1. Review the results in class to identify and address any student misunderstandings.			

SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The sample activities on this page provide ways to integrate the teaching of skills and content from the unit into your classroom instruction. They are completely optional and may be altered to suit the needs of your class. Please refer to the Instructional Approaches section beginning on page 133 for more examples of activities and strategies.

Activity	Topic	Sample Activity
1	1.1	<p>Quickwrite</p> <p>Set aside a short, specific amount of time during a class period for students to perform a quickwrite on the power of maps. As preparation for answering free-response questions later in the course, have students identify two different types of map projections and explain why different map projections exist.</p>
2	1.5	<p>Critique Reasoning</p> <p>Using the two major schools of thought regarding human–environmental interaction—environmental determinism and possibilism—have students identify the claims of each, explain the reasoning behind each, and find current real-world examples supporting and/or refuting each. Allow for collaborative discussion at multiple levels—pairs, small groups, and whole group—to achieve understanding.</p>
3	1.6	<p>Debriefing</p> <p>Scales of analysis is a challenging topic for students. They tend to struggle with understanding the significance of examining issues at multiple scales. For complex issues, leading a facilitated discussion of data that illustrate scale concepts can help solidify and deepen understanding of content. For example, you can take a set of data and show what the global patterns are, zoom in to illustrate the national level, then zoom in again to show the difference in the local level analysis. Finish by leading a discussion on the significance of the differences in patterns.</p>



Unit Planning Notes

Use the space below to plan your approach to the unit. Consider how you want to pace your course and your methods of instruction and assessment.

SUGGESTED SKILL *Data Analysis***3.A**

Identify the different types of data presented in maps and in quantitative and geospatial data.

**AVAILABLE RESOURCES**

- Classroom Resources > **Maps and Spatial Thinking Skills in the AP Human Geography Classroom**
- Classroom Resources > **Defining Geography: What Is Where, Why There, and Why Care?**
- Classroom Resources > **Scale**

TOPIC 1.1

Introduction to Maps

Required Course Content

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

IMP-1

Geographers use maps and data to depict relationships of time, space, and scale.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

IMP-1.A

Identify types of maps, the types of information presented in maps, and different kinds of spatial patterns and relationships portrayed in maps.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

IMP-1.A.1

Types of maps include reference maps and thematic maps.

IMP-1.A.2

Types of spatial patterns represented on maps include absolute and relative distance and direction, clustering, dispersal, and elevation.

IMP-1.A.3

All maps are selective in information; map projections inevitably distort spatial relationships in shape, area, distance, and direction.

TOPIC 1.2

Geographic Data

Required Course Content

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

IMP-1

Geographers use maps and data to depict relationships of time, space, and scale.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

IMP-1.B

Identify different methods of geographic data collection.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

IMP-1.B.1

Data may be gathered in the field by organizations or by individuals.

IMP-1.B.2

Geospatial technologies include geographic information systems (GIS), satellite navigation systems, remote sensing, and online mapping and visualization.

IMP-1.B.3

Spatial information can come from written accounts in the form of field observations, media reports, travel narratives, policy documents, personal interviews, landscape analysis, and photographic interpretation.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Data Analysis*

3.A

Identify the different types of data presented in maps and in quantitative and geospatial data.



AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- Classroom Resources > [Maps and Spatial Thinking Skills in the AP Human Geography Classroom](#)
- Classroom Resources > [Defining Geography: What is Where, Why There, and Why Care?](#)

SUGGESTED SKILL *Data Analysis***3.B**

Describe spatial patterns presented in maps and in quantitative and geospatial data.

**AVAILABLE RESOURCES**

- Classroom Resources > [Maps and Spatial Thinking Skills in the AP Human Geography Classroom](#)
- Classroom Resources > [Defining Geography: What Is Where, Why There, and Why Care?](#)
- Classroom Resources > [Scale](#)

TOPIC 1.3

The Power of Geographic Data

Required Course Content

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING**IMP-1**

Geographers use maps and data to depict relationships of time, space, and scale.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE**IMP-1.C**

Explain the geographical effects of decisions made using geographical information.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**IMP-1.C.1**

Geospatial and geographical data, including census data and satellite imagery, are used at all scales for personal, business and organizational, and governmental decision-making purposes.

TOPIC 1.4

Spatial Concepts

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Data Analysis*

3.B

Describe spatial patterns presented in maps and in quantitative and geospatial data.



AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- Classroom Resources > [Maps and Spatial Thinking Skills in the AP Human Geography Classroom](#)
- Classroom Resources > [Defining Geography: What Is Where, Why There, and Why Care?](#)

Required Course Content

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

PSO-1

Geographers analyze relationships among and between places to reveal important spatial patterns.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

PSO-1.A

Define major geographic concepts that illustrate spatial relationships.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

PSO-1.A.1

Spatial concepts include absolute and relative location, space, place, flows, distance decay, time-space compression, and pattern.

SUGGESTED SKILL *Concepts and Processes***1.B**

Explain geographic concepts, processes, models, and theories.

**AVAILABLE RESOURCES**

- Classroom Resources > [Understanding Land Use Patterns](#)

TOPIC 1.5**Human–Environmental Interaction****Required Course Content****ENDURING UNDERSTANDING****PSO-1**

Geographers analyze relationships among and between places to reveal important spatial patterns.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE**PSO-1.B**

Explain how major geographic concepts illustrate spatial relationships.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**PSO-1.B.1**

Concepts of nature and society include sustainability, natural resources, and land use.

PSO-1.B.2

Theories regarding the interaction of the natural environment with human societies have evolved from environmental determinism to possibilism.

TOPIC 1.6

Scales of Analysis

Required Course Content

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

PSO-1

Geographers analyze relationships among and between places to reveal important spatial patterns.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

PSO-1.C

Define scales of analysis used by geographers.

PSO-1.D

Explain what scales of analysis reveal.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

PSO-1.C.1

Scales of analysis include global, regional, national, and local.

PSO-1.D.1

Patterns and processes at different scales reveal variations in, and different interpretations of, data.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Scale Analysis*

5.A

Identify the scales of analysis presented by maps, quantitative and geospatial data, images, and landscapes.



AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- Classroom Resources > [Scale](#)

SUGGESTED SKILL *Concepts and Processes***1.A**

Describe geographic concepts, processes, models, and theories.

TOPIC 1.7

Regional Analysis

Required Course Content

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

SPS-1

Geographers analyze complex issues and relationships with a distinctively spatial perspective.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

SPS-1.A

Describe different ways that geographers define regions.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

SPS-1.A.1

Regions are defined on the basis of one or more unifying characteristics or on patterns of activity.

SPS-1.A.2

Types of regions include formal, functional, and perceptual/vernacular.

SPS-1.A.3

Regional boundaries are transitional and often contested and overlapping.

SPS-1.A.4

Geographers apply regional analysis at local, national, and global scales.