

# Skill Builder - Part E

## Reoccurring Course Themes

### Connection Point

AP Human Geography delves into a wide range of topics. However, interwoven into the complexity of the curriculum are a set of reoccurring themes. For success in the course, students need to understand each of these themes, or course threads, and be able to understand how they manifest in each unit.

Read and take notes on the following text in the 2 column style discussed in Skill Builder - Part D. For each theme, choose a color or create a simple symbol that will represent each theme. When you encounter each theme in the course, highlight that information or put the symbol in the margin of your notes. This will allow you to see as the course goes on how each theme develops and changes.

### Theme #1: Spatial Distribution - The “Where” Q

As of the early 21st century, all human life and human activity has taken place on planet earth. Thus, Human Geography seeks to understand the spatial distribution of human phenomena (human actions and behaviors) on planet earth. The term space refers to the amount of area or the specific location on earth. The word distribution means to share or spread out. Put together, spatial distribution refers understanding where on planet earth an action or activity has taken place.

Key Questions: Spatial distribution leads human geographers to ask the following questions:

- Where is the location of the phenomena on earth?
- What is the size of the phenomena?
- What is the pattern or design where the phenomena is taking place?
- Is the phenomena evenly or unevenly distributed?

Human Geography in Action: The following are examples of how the theme of Spatial Distribution may appear in the course:

- Where do people live on earth?
- What is the spatial distribution of wheat farming?
- Where are the illegal migrants entering the USA coming from?
- What is the spatial distribution of Muslim believers in Europe?

### Theme #2: Spatial Analysis - Processes & Impacts

Once the spatial distribution has been identified, Human Geographers perform a spatial analysis to gain a deeper understanding of the causes and effects of the phenomena. Spatial analysis means to break down or study a situation to understand (a) Who or what is involved? (b) What is the relationship or connection between them? (c) What caused the phenomena to happen? (d) What impact or result will happen because of the phenomena?

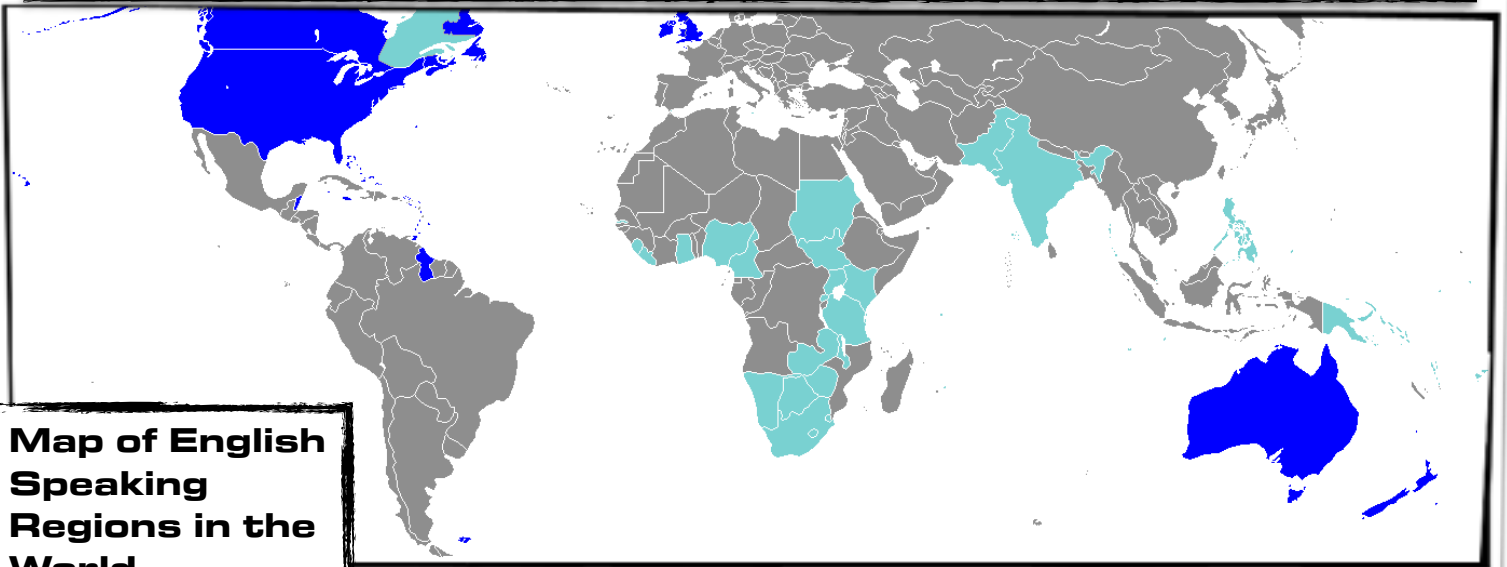
When studying human phenomena, Human Geographers seek to find the processes that create change. A process is a set or chain of actions that frequently appear together, creating common and predictable results. For example, when people burn fossil fuels (process) it results in pollution and climate change (result). When governments or gangs act violently (process), people will move or migrate away from that area (result). When a process occurs frequently, Human Geographers will create theories or models to try to better understand or explain the phenomena and its consequences.

Key Questions: Spatial analysis leads human geographers to ask the following questions:

- What process caused the phenomena to happen? What impact or effect will the phenomena?
- What is the relationship or connection between the effected areas...?



**Application #1.** Examine the map below. In your notebooks, describe the spatial distribution of the phenomena shown (where is it located? Size? Even/uneven distribution). Then, perform a spatial analysis (Why is it located here? Is there a connection or relationship between the effected areas? What caused it to happen? What would be a result or impact of this phenomena?)



**Map of English Speaking Regions in the World.**

### Theme #3: Change Over Scale

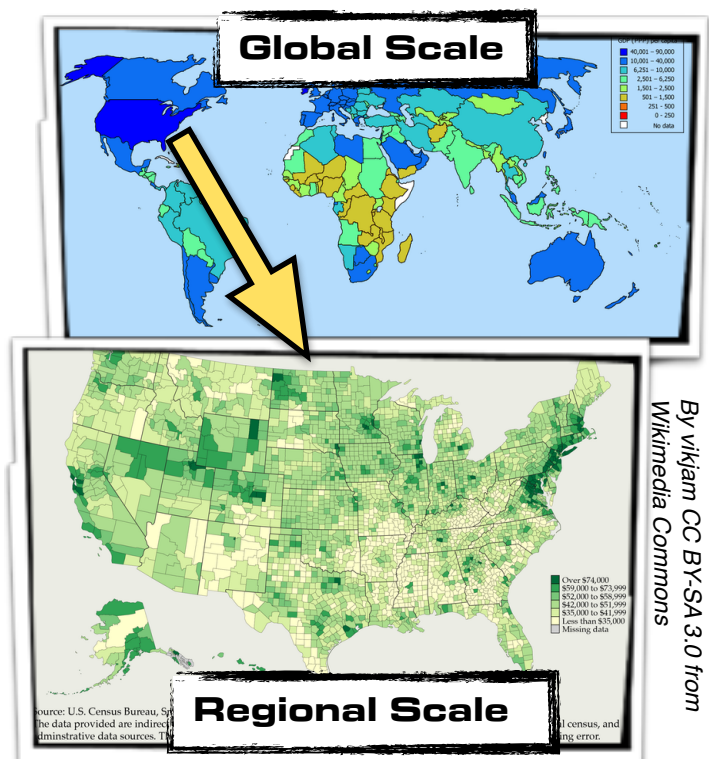
As Human Geographers analyze spatial distributions and relationships, they frequently must adjust the scale to gain a complete understanding of a situation. Scale refers to how much space or area is being displayed on a map. Global scale refers to when a map displays the entire world on one map. Regional scale “zooms in” and displays only part of the world - such as one continent or one country. Local scale is when the map zooms in to only display one city or a couple streets worth of a city. Each scale provides an important insight into understanding the causes, effects and relationships between phenomena.

When performing a spatial analysis of a phenomena, the scale of the map has a drastic impact on how the information is interpreted. If the data is displayed on maps showing a global scale, the information will be generalized, showing averages and larger trends. When the map “zooms” in to a more regional or local scale, the unique specificity in the details become visible, showing the variations that are undetectable on a global scale.

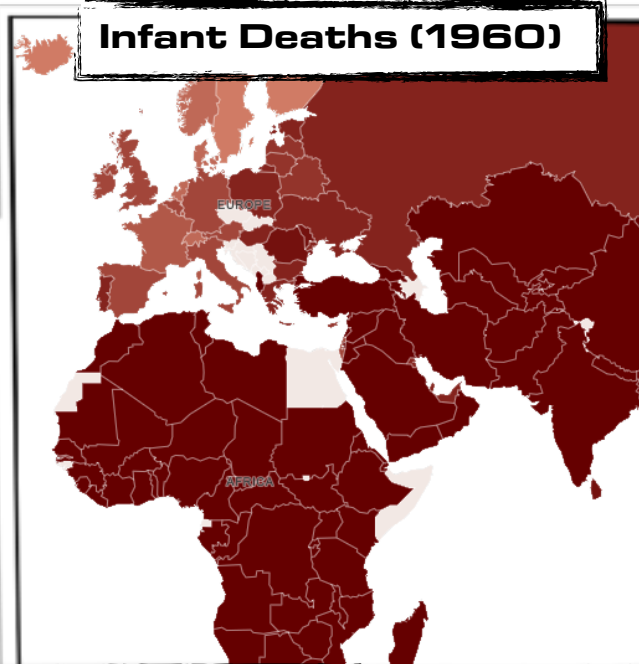
Human Geography in Action: For this example, look at a map displaying the spatial distribution of wealth on a global scale. According to this map, the USA is displayed as being generally wealthy, making \$40,000+ per person. From a global scale, it appears the wealth is evenly distributed across the country. However, when the map changes to a regional scale, greater specificity in the data appears. America does not have an even distribution of wealth, but an uneven distribution. The wealthiest county averages over \$119,000 per person, while the poorest county averages \$16,000 per person.

Key Questions:

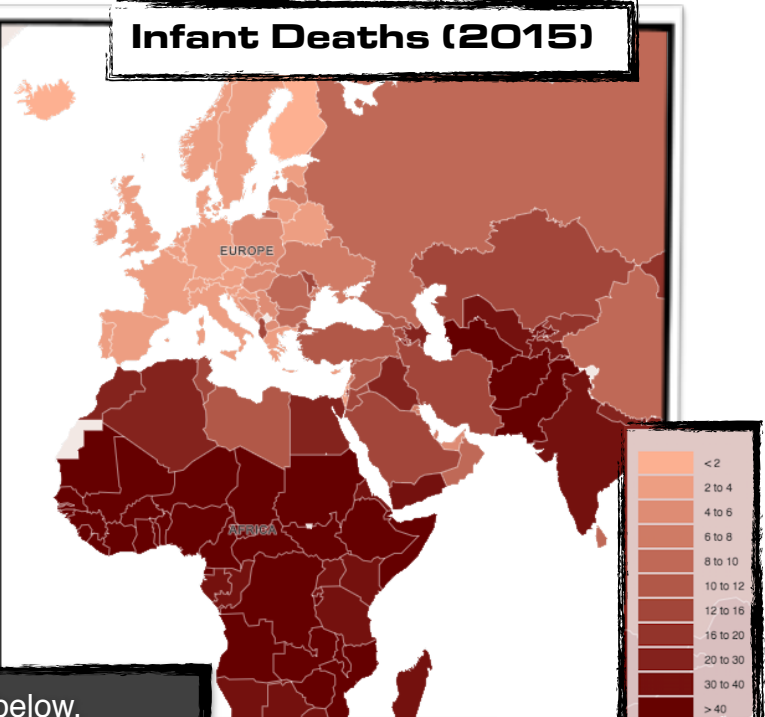
- What scale is the map currently displaying?
- How would the story about the data change if the scale changed?



## Infant Deaths (1960)



## Infant Deaths (2015)



**Application #2.** Examine the maps and charts below. In your notebooks, analyze the spatial infant deaths (per 1000 births). How has spatial distribution of infant deaths changed between 1960 and 2015? Look at the chart. Describe how the use of coal for power has changed between 1960 and 2015? What are potential effects or impacts if this trend in the consumption of coal continues?

### Theme #4: Change Over Time

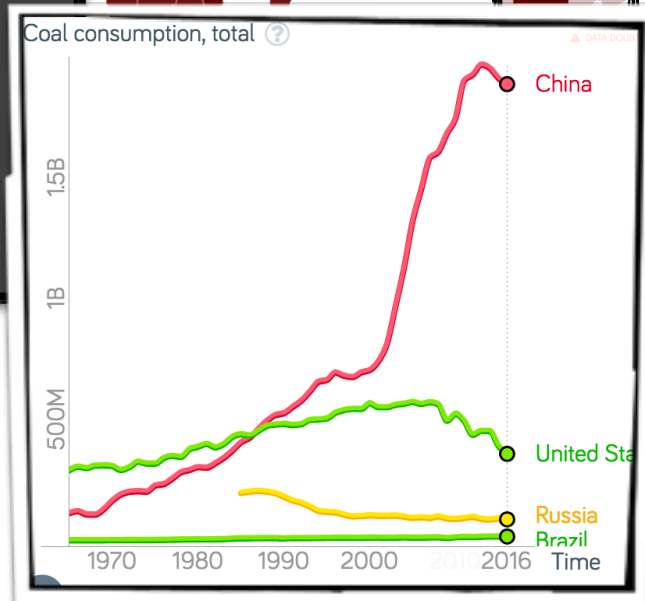
Human Geography analyzes the way trends change and evolve over time. Thanks to centuries of data collection by governments and academic institutions, Human Geographers can track trends and patterns across both space and time.

In Human Geography, the history of human society can be broken down into five key eras, or timeframes. These eras are different from normal history classes, but are highly important to this course:

- **Ancient:** Beginning of Time -> 1400 CE
  - **Exploration & Colonization:** 1450-1750 CE
  - **Industrialization & Imperialism:** 1750-1940 CE
  - **Decolonization & Cold War:** 1950-1990 CE
  - **Modernization & Globalization:** 1990-Now
- Note - Some consider 1950-Now as "Modern/Globalization"*

Key Questions:

- Which era is being analyzed? What is the spatial distribution or phenomena being displayed for this era?
- How has the phenomena changed over time? Has it increased or decreased?
- What process caused this change to happen? What will the effect be if this trend continues?
- What is positive/negative about this trend over time?



Graph from: GapMinder.com



**Application #3.** Examine the pictures below. Each of these toilets belongs to a family in India. How does the quality of life change as people reach more developed areas in India? What impact would that have to their: health? access to clean water? environmental impact?



Photos from: GapMinder.com

### Theme #5: Change Over Development

Human Geography explores how a phenomenon changes based on the regions level of development. Development refers to how advanced and industrialized a society has become in key areas: education, healthcare, access to utilities (electricity, clean water, sewers), transportation, etc. Human Geographers compare how a phenomenon is experienced differently when a location is in the Least Developed category compared to a region in the Most Developed category.

Key Questions:

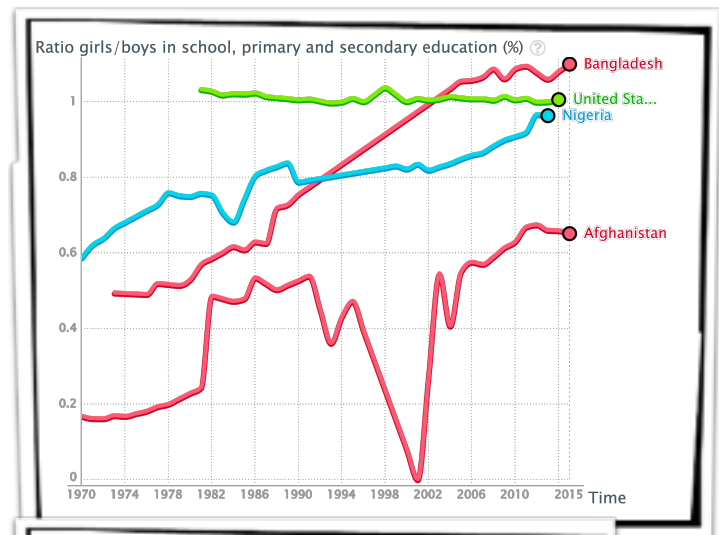
- How is the phenomenon similar/different in the Least Developed regions compared to the Most Developed regions?
- What other aspects of society are impacted by the quality of life at each stage of development?
- What causes the area to be Least Developed? What barriers is keeping it from developing?
- What can be done to improve or sustain certain levels of development (locally, regionally, etc)

### Theme #6: Change Over Gender

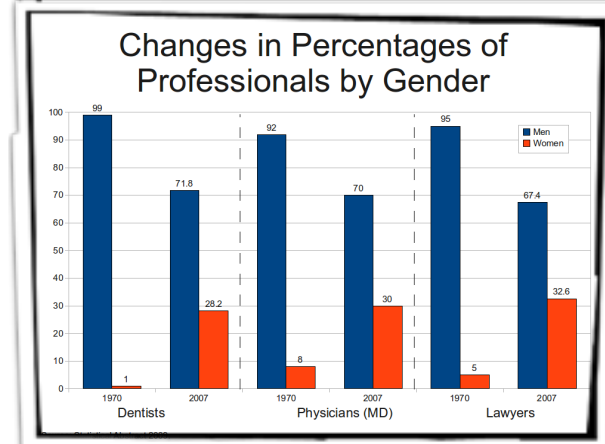
Around the world, men and women have vast differences in their life-experiences. From culture, language, and education to employment and political leadership opportunities - Human Geographers compare the role gender plays in each phenomena.

Key Questions:

- How is the experience of women different from that of men?
- What is causing these differences to exist?
- What effect or impact is resulting from these differences?
- What can be done to reduce these differences?



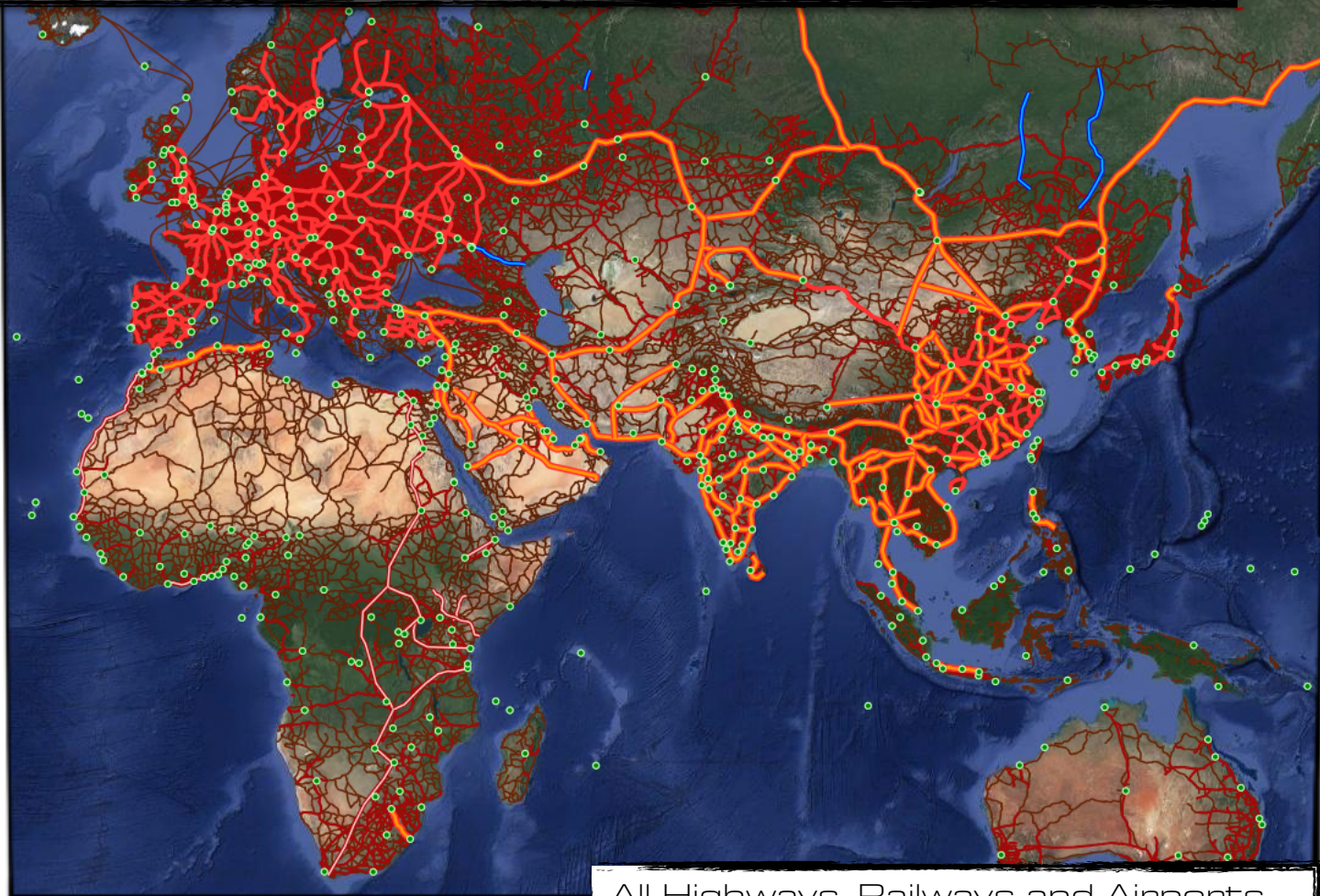
Graph from: GapMinder.com



By Reragun [CC BY 3.0], from Wikimedia Commons

**Application #3.** Examine the Map below. Each of these lines represents a highway and railway in Africa, Asia, and Europe. The dots represent airports. How would you describe the spatial distribution of these transportation networks? What would be the effect of a country being connected to these transportation networks? What would be the effect of NOT being connected to these networks?

Graph from: <https://worldmap.harvard.edu/>



### Theme #7: Impact of Networks/Interconnectivity

In the 21st century, humanity is experiencing an age of advanced interconnectivity. Interconnectivity is defined as the level of connection between individuals, cities or countries. These connections can be made by transportation networks (highways, railways, airports, seaports), communication (internet, telephone), pipelines, etc. Through these interconnected networks flow people, money, goods, information, services, and energy. The level to which a society is connected to these complex global networks has a drastic impact on every aspect of their society: jobs, wealth opportunity, cities, migration, culture, religion, language...

Key Questions:

- How connected is the location?
- What impact is their level of interconnectedness having upon the phenomena?
- What would be the cause/effect of greater interconnectedness?





## Theme #8: Relationship with the Environment

Human Geography explores the complex relationship between humans and their environment. Human Geography looks at this relationship through four lenses. The first lens is the impact of the environment on human society. Environmental determinists argue that, "Geography shapes destiny." Thus, to a determinist the natural resources and climate of a location determines the level of success and quality of life the people will face. The second lens is the role of technology to overcome the environmental challenges.

Possibilists argue that through industrialization and technological advancement, any environmental condition can be overcome.

Too hot outside? Develop air conditioning. No clean water? Create a water purification system. The third lens is humanity's impact on the environment. How has humanity's colonization of the planet impacted the quality of the earth's resources and other inhabitants? Finally, the fourth lens is sustainability. How can humanity change their actions to make have less impact on the environment. π



### Key Questions:

- What role has the environment played in causing the situation/phenomenon?
- What impact have humans had upon the environment in this situation?
- What is a more sustainable set of choices that could be made in this situation?

## Conclusion

Human Geography discusses a vast array of topics within the curriculum, as the course examines the spectrum of human life. These eight themes will weave their way each unit, each telling a unique and compelling story line. It would be wise to create a logo/image or assign a highlighter color for each theme. When taking notes on a chapter, put the logo or color in the margin next to the information. This will allow you easily identify these themes as you prepare for the unit tests and the AP Exam.