**Help with Free Response Questions**

In the free-response section of the AP Human Geography exam, students are asked to answer three questions. Free Response Questions are usually based on some type of stimulus material such as a verbal description, map, graph, photograph, or diagram. Students are expected to use their analytical and organization skills to formulate answers in writing their responses. The intent of the question is to ask students to reveal their geographic understanding and thinking in an extended, free-response, well-written prose.

**Steps to Success**

1. Make sure to answer the question being asked. Carefully study the language of the question; the following are common terms utilized on the AP exam.

***Identify (and support)*** *–* Identification request that students give a clear, concise, and specific answer. The task is typically to identify a factor, a trend, a type, a reason, an advantage, an effect, etc. This can often be done with a single word or a very short phrase. You are expected to provide support though for your reasoning.

***Define (and elaborate)*** – When defining, students are expected to provide the precise meaning or basic qualities of the term. This may require several sentences. If the first sentence provides the most basic element of the definition, several following sentences can clarify language used in the definition.

Tip: when the suffix “-azation” is part of the word, then the term is a process

***Describe*** – Students are expected to provide a representation in words of the basic attributes of the term or concept being described.

***Explanation*** – Students are expected to give a detailed account, offering reasons and adding details to make something plain.

***Discuss*** – Students are expected to offer a considered review which may include explanations, verbal illustrations, arguments, factors, and evidence. This may take several short paragraphs or one long one. When discussing, it is important to support one’s position with evidence drawn from the body of geographic knowledge by using real-world examples or illustrations.

1. Underline key words/phrases in the question itself. Circle specific requirements of the question.
2. Check to see if the FRQ calls for a specific type of example. If it says give a country, then don’t provide a region.
3. If there is a stimulus (chart, map, graph), then be sure that you integrate this into your response.
4. Jot down key term/people/examples/etc. that will be part of your response in a short outline.
5. Answer the question in the order it is asked. If the question is organized “A.,B.,C.”, answer it “A.,B.,C.”
6. Answer each section of the question COMPLETELY. When you have answered part of the question, cross it off.
7. A formal introduction is NOT needed; launch right into your answer.
8. Give real examples from case studies, categorillas, readings, maps.
9. Be specific. Avoid vague statements. Do NOT assume the reader is an expert in the topic
10. Do NOT give your opinion. State the obvious right answer. Be concise.
11. A formal conclusion is not needed.