GENERAL

ap human geography chapter 2 study guide

Published: September 19, 2026 | Index ID: #-

AP Human Geography Chapter 2 Study Guide: Mastering Population and Migration

Welcome to the definitive study guide for **AP Human Geography Chapter 2**. Whether you're a high school student preparing for the AP exam, a teacher looking for a concise review, or a lifelong learner exploring human geography, this guide offers a clear, comprehensive roadmap to the concepts, theories, and data that define the second chapter of the curriculum: *Population and Migration*.

By the end of this article you will:

- Understand the core concepts of population dynamics, including growth, density, and distribution.
- Know the stages of the Demographic Transition Model and how they relate to real world examples.
- Grasp the drivers of migration—push, pull, and the concept of "migration corridors."
- Analyze how population trends influence urbanization, settlement patterns, and environmental stress.
- Apply your knowledge to practice exam questions and real world case studies.

Let's dive into the world of people, places, and the forces that move them.

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1. Chapter Overview

AP Human Geography's second chapter, **Population and Migration**, examines how humans shape, and are shaped by, the places they inhabit. It covers:

- Population concepts—size, growth, density, and distribution.
- The Demographic Transition Model (DTM) and its application to global regions.
- Factors that influence migration—economic, political, environmental, and social.
- How population pressures drive urbanization and alter settlement patterns.
- The environmental consequences of high population densities and rapid growth.

Because the AP exam emphasizes critical thinking, you'll need to connect these concepts, identify patterns, and evaluate their implications for the world.

2. Population Growth and Dynamics

2.1 Measuring Population

Population is measured in several key ways:

- Population size—the absolute number of people in a region.
- Population density—people per unit area (often per square kilometer).
- Population distribution—how people are spread across a landscape.

These metrics help geographers assess resource availability, infrastructure needs, and environmental pressures.

2.2 Growth Rates and the Birth Death Balance

Population growth depends on the difference between birth rates and death rates. The **natural increase rate** is calculated as:

Natural Increase Rate = (Birth Rate – Death Rate) / 10,000

When the birth rate exceeds the death rate, the population grows. Conversely, if deaths outnumber births, the population shrinks.

2.3 Migration's Role in Population Change

Migration—people moving from one place to another—can be:

- Internal (within a country)
- International (crossing national borders)

Net migration (inflow minus outflow) can significantly alter a region's population size and density, especially in areas experiencing rapid urbanization.

3. The Demographic Transition Model

3.1 The Five Stages Explained

The DTM provides a framework for understanding how societies evolve demographically:

1. Pre Industrial Stage – High birth and death rates, minimal growth.
2. Early Industrial Stage – Death rates fall due to better medicine and sanitation; birth rates remain high, leading to rapid growth.
3. Late Industrial Stage – Birth rates decline as families prefer fewer children; growth slows.
4. Post Industrial Stage – Both birth and death rates are low; population growth is minimal.
5. Declining Stage (Optional) – Birth rates fall below death rates, leading to a shrinking population.

3.2 Applying the DTM to Global Regions

Use the DTM to analyze countries or regions. For example:

- India is transitioning from Stage 3 to Stage 4, with decreasing fertility rates.
- Japan is in Stage 4, facing population decline.
- South Sudan remains in Stage 2, with high birth rates and unstable death rates.

Understanding a country's stage helps explain its urbanization patterns, economic challenges, and environmental impacts.

4. Migration: Causes, Patterns, and Consequences

4.1 Push and Pull Factors

Migration is driven by:

- Push factors—conditions that compel people to leave (e.g., war, famine, environmental degradation).
- Pull factors—attractions of a destination (e.g., job opportunities, political stability, better education).

These forces interact to create migration flows across continents.

4.2 Types of Migration

- Internal Migration – Often rural to urban, driven by industrialization.
- International Migration – Includes labor migration, refugees, and diaspora communities.
- Transnational Migration – Migrants maintain ties with their homeland while living abroad.

4.3 Migration Corridors and Networks

Migration often follows established **corridors**—routes that simplify movement through shared language, culture, or economic ties. For instance:

- The East African Corridor links Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.
- The European Union's Freedom of Movement creates a network across member states.

These corridors influence settlement patterns and economic integration.

4.4 Consequences of Migration

Migration can bring:

- Economic growth through labor supply.
- Cultural diversity and innovation.
- Social tensions and strain on public services.

Governments must balance integration policies with the needs of both migrants and host communities.

5. Urbanization and Settlement Systems

5.1 Defining Urbanization

Urbanization is the shift from rural to urban living. It is measured by:

- Population living in urban areas.
- Rate of growth of urban centers.

Rapid urbanization often accompanies industrialization and migration.

5.2 Settlement Patterns

Geographers classify settlement patterns into:

- Linear – Settlements along a transportation route.
- Grid – Regular street patterns.
- Radial – Settlements radiating from a central point.
- Cluster – Groups of settlements with shared economic ties.

Understanding these patterns helps explain how cities grow and integrate surrounding areas.

5.3 Megacities and Mega regions

Megacities—cities with over 10 million residents—are global phenomena. Examples include:

- Tokyo, Japan

- Delhi, India
- São /Paulo, Brazil

These urban hubs face unique challenges: infrastructure strain, environmental degradation, and social inequality.

6. Population and the Environment

6.1 Human Impact on Natural Systems

High population densities can lead to:

- Deforestation for agriculture and urban expansion.
- Water scarcity and pollution.
- Loss of biodiversity.

Human geography stresses the importance of sustainable development to mitigate these impacts.

6.2 Carrying Capacity and Sustainability

Carrying capacity is the maximum population a region can support without degrading its environment. Strategies to manage population pressure include:

- Population control policies (e.g., family planning).
- Urban planning and green infrastructure.
- Technological innovations in agriculture and energy.

7. Exam Ready Strategies

7.1 Master Key Vocabulary

AP exams reward precise terminology. Focus on:

- Population density, demographic transition, migration corridor, urban sprawl, carrying capacity.

7.2 Create Concept Maps

Visualizing relationships between concepts (e.g., how push factors lead to migration, which leads to urbanization) helps reinforce memory and facilitates essay responses.

7.3 Practice Data Interpretation

Charts, maps, and tables are common in the exam. Practice reading demographic data and translating it into concise explanations.

7.4 Time Management Techniques

Allocate specific time blocks for multiple choice questions (typically 20–30 minutes) and essay writing (30–40 minutes). Use the “5 minute rule” to quickly assess each question’s difficulty.

7.5 Review Past Exam Questions

AP Human Geography past exams are available online. Analyzing them reveals recurring themes and question styles.

8. Sample Practice Questions

Multiple Choice Example

Question: Which of the following best describes the primary cause of rural to urban migration in developing

countries?

1. High urban birth rates
2. Low urban death rates
3. Economic opportunities in cities
4. Environmental degradation in urban areas

Answer: C – Economic opportunities in cities (push/pull factor).

Short Answer Example

Prompt: Explain how the Demographic Transition Model helps us understand population trends in South Korea.

Answer Outline:

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