

## Discussion Questions

### Chapter 3: People, Places, and Patterns

#### **What Is Geography?**

1. Where does our English word “geography” come from—what is the etymology, and what does that tell us about what the discipline studies?
2. Name three elements that geographers use to define the discipline of geography—how do they describe the field they study? What specifically are they looking at?
3. Geography studies human activity, but other disciplines (such as history or anthropology) do, too. What does geography study about human behavior that differentiates it from the other social sciences?

#### **History of Geography**

1. Which ancient civilizations had scholars of geography, according to the chapter?
2. When the Roman Empire fell, much knowledge was lost, including geographical scholarship, but some was preserved. Who preserved it?

#### **Modern Geography**

1. How did the teaching of geography change in the late twentieth century?
2. What are the National Geography Standards? List three of the six standards and describe their application within geographical study.

#### **Space**

1. What is the difference between the geographical concept of “space” and the concept of “region”?
2. When we are speaking of something’s location, there are three different types of location we could be speaking of. List the three types, and describe how they work.
3. What is the difference between spatial interaction and spatial organization? Define the two terms, then provide an original example of each concept (i.e., an example that was not given in the book).

#### **Region**

1. What is meant by the statement, “A region is a human mental construct?” Explain this in your own words.
2. There are two kinds of regions: formal and functional. Define each of the two types, then give two brief examples of each.
3. What are some of the regions that you’ve lived in, or traveled through, in the U.S.? How would you categorize them: as functional or as formal regions? Why?
4. Are there regions we could name in Oxford, OH? What about at Miami—are there regions of campus? Give a region, its type, and why you choose to see it as a region separate from the whole.

#### **Environment**

1. How is the environment important in geography?

2. What is the difference between environmental determinism and human determinism? How does the 20<sup>th</sup>-century concept of environmental possibilism draw from, yet diverge from, both?
3. Discuss some of the environmental issues facing the world in the 21st century. Which do you think is the globe's most pressing concern? Defend your choice.

### **Tools for Geography—Maps**

1. How can we use maps in international studies?
2. How are the following elements used in a map: map design, color, projection, symbol, centering. [Might be helpful here to use an actual map to have this discussion, if the classroom you're in has one up front.]
3. If we remember that maps are only representations of a space, what can we say is usually not included in the representation of an average national map? An average street map of a city?
4. If you were going to draw a map of your hometown, what would you want to put in it? What would be necessary, what would be unnecessary? (What about Oxford? Would it matter who you were making the map for—your parents, new first-year students, or an old friend of yours from another university?)

### **Lying with Maps**

1. Can maps be used as propaganda? How, and why?
2. Give a historical example of a map that was used for political misinformation or persuasive anxiety-provoking. How was the map being used to shape public or political opinion?

### **Directions in Geography for International Studies**

1. How does international studies use geography?
2. How can we employ a geographic analysis of space, region, and environment in international studies?