
AP Human Geography

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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AP[®] HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

2018 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 3

8 points (1 + 3 + 4)

A. Identify TWO specific means of global diffusion from the following. 1 point

Internet, email, social media (Twitter, Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram, etc.), celebrities, television, radio, movies, computers, phones, newspapers, streaming services (YouTube, Netflix, Hulu, etc.), music, plays, books, comic books, manga, anime, magazines, podcasts, language learning programs, graphic t-shirts with terms.

Note: “Media” or “technology” are not acceptable.

B. Explain how terms diffuse spatially through EACH of the following processes. 3 points (1 + 1 + 1)

Note: Definitions alone are not acceptable; response must explain spread of the term(s):

1. Relocation: a person who uses a term moves to a new location and continues to use the term in the new location, OR a form of media, in which a term is used, is relocated to a new place and the term is used in the new location.

2. Contagious: an individual uses, or individuals use, the new word and then acquaintances (or those in close proximity to them) begin to use the word as well.

3. Hierarchical: celebrities start to use the new word and then it spreads to others down the social hierarchy OR people in large cities start to use the word and then the word eventually gets to smaller places or media markets, OR **Reverse Hierarchical:** minority use of the term spreads up the social ladder to majority group(s).

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Question 3 (continued)

C. Identify and explain TWO barriers to diffusion from the following. 4 points (2 identifications + 2 explanations) Answers must be from the following, and explanations must match identifications.

Identification	Explanation
C1. Distance or physical barriers	Geographical separation or isolation may limit diffusion between innovators and receivers of new words or terms.
C2. Age barriers	Generation gap; older people may be more resistant to adopt new words or terms.
C3. Linguistic barriers	Popular words or terms don't translate readily to other languages; people act to preserve or protect their language from external influence.
C4. Religious barriers	Religious rules or laws may prevent the use of foreign language or popular culture words or terms; rules or law that restrict behaviors described by the words or terms.
C5. Political barriers	Internet or media censorship in some countries, language protection laws to ban foreign-language media that use new words or terms.
C6. Folk or local culture	Desire to cling to traditions, or reject new forms of language, media, or technology that include new words or terms.
C7. Ethnic culture	The desire to maintain distinctiveness, or identities may insulate groups from certain media that include new words or terms.
C8. Social class barriers	Those with limited access to a form of media or technology will be less likely to have exposure to certain new words; a rejection of another group's words or terms.
C9. Economic barriers	May limit access to media, celebrities, movies, and expensive media, which use new words or terms.
C10. Regulatory barriers	Import laws (customs), trade agreements, media contracts, or media providers delay the diffusion of popular culture, which includes new words or terms.

ANSWER PAGE FOR QUESTION 3

A.) One way new expressions are diffused is through technology. Social media has cut the time it takes to communicate drastically. No longer does someone across the world have to wait for news. Another way terms are diffused is through celebrities. Because these people are so well known, one thing that they say can influence a wide span of the population.

B.) When someone from the south uses slang when they are in the north, it can influence the population to use the slang. This is an example of relocation diffusion because they are moving to a different area and diffusing the slang and vocabulary to others. Another example of terms diffusing is through viral social media videos. If a video online had someone using slang, everyone would know about it and start using the term. That is an example of contagious diffusion. When a celebrity uses a new term and people follow, it is an example of hierarchical diffusion. A person with strong influence is impacting others and then a new population is now knowledgeable of a term.

C.) One barrier faced when diffusing terms is folk culture resistant to change. Cultures who deny technology are most likely not going to speak like others in pop culture. The Amish use different words because of their religion and denial of new ways. Another obstacle is politics. Some countries, like ~~and~~ North Korea, ban technology. Others believe the United States is dominating world culture and ban access to news and television from the US. When both of these things happen, the terms do not diffuse as quickly or at all.

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ANSWER PAGE FOR QUESTION 3

- A- One mean by which new expressions in popular culture are diffused globally is through the Internet, more specifically social media and online articles. Another mean by which pop culture is diffused is by television shows that are broadcast globally.
- B- Relocation diffusion is when a term or other idea is moved from one place to another totally different place. For example, if there was a girl who moved from 1980s America to 1980s China, they would bring the word "rad" along with them. Once they started using the word in China, people in China would also start saying "rad." The girl who moved relocated the word to a new place across the globe. Contagious diffusion can be thought of like a disease. It starts in one place, then quickly spreads to a neighboring place, and so on and so on until it has reached all over. It's as if someone dropped a blot of ink in the middle of a piece of paper, and the ink quickly spread throughout the whole paper. Finally, hierarchical diffusion is when a popular person or place utilizes a term or idea, and suddenly everyone else wants to do the same thing. For example, if Kim Kardashian decides to start a new trend by wearing bright green lipstick, soon a lot of people will also be wearing bright green lipstick, since they look up to her and she is very well-known. The same goes for terms - if she were to say "groovy," so would the rest of the world.
- C- One barrier for diffusion is folk cultures. If a term is spreading quickly around the world, it may stop in its tracks when it hits a folk culture area. Folk cultures stay true to their customs and traditions, and it is unlikely that they will accept the popular culture - it is unable to diffuse into that area. Another barrier of diffusion is language. There aren't many Chinese trends diffusing into America, and there is good reason for that. The language barrier makes it too difficult for terms and ideas to diffuse.

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ANSWER PAGE FOR QUESTION 3

3A. Some specific means by which new expressions in popular culture are diffused include: being spread by the internet, people in power using them, people migrating somewhere else and using the expressions there.

3b1. Popular culture can spread through relocation diffusion by ~~some~~ a group of people ~~so~~ migrating to another area and sharing that popular culture in the new area.

3b2. Popular culture can be spread through ~~re~~ contagious diffusion by a group of people demonstrating a habit of that culture, such as terms/slang, then others around them hearing it & using it.

3b3. Popular culture can be spread through hierarchical diffusion by a person in power, like a famous celebrity, demonstrating a trait, such as terms/slang, then their followers doing the same.

3C. One barrier that is encountered is the rejection of the new terms by some individuals.

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2018 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 3

Overview

This question hits multiple parts of Unit III., Cultural Patterns and Processes. Students were expected to “explain the diffusion of culture and cultural traits through time and space,” especially language. They need to be able to differentiate between the different “types of diffusion [that] include expansion (contagious, hierarchical, stimulus) and relocation.” They learn to “compare and contrast popular and folk culture and the geographic patterns associated with each.” The AP Human Geography course prepares students to “explain how globalization is influencing cultural interactions and change.”

This was not the “diffusion question,” just like it was not the “pop culture question” or the “language question.” Part A asked students to identify two specific means by which new expressions in popular culture are diffused globally. Part B asked students to explain how expressions diffuse via three specific processes. Part C asked students to explain two barriers to diffusions of expressions. This was an applied question that dealt with various topics in Unit III. Skill-wise, this question had the students (1) apply knowledge from one part of Unit III to another and (2) think critically about linguistic diffusion in a new globalized context, which is quite different from the way that it is discussed in the textbooks.

Overall there were three types of student responses: (1) those that demonstrated very little knowledge about diffusion; (2) those that demonstrated knowledge of diffusion but failed to apply that knowledge to answer the question that was asked; and (3) those that demonstrated knowledge and applied that knowledge to answer the question.

Sample: 3A

Score: 8

In part A the response earned 1 point for correctly identifying social media and celebrities as two specific means of the global diffusion of new words or terms in popular culture.

In part B the response earned 1 point for describing the relocation diffusion processes of words or terms by explaining that slang terms may be diffused by someone who uses the terms moving from one area to another different area and “diffusing the slang and vocabulary to others.” The response earned 1 point in part B for describing the spread of words or terms through the processes of contagious diffusion as many people may adopt slang words or terms from other people through online viral videos. The response earned an additional 1 point in part B for describing that hierarchical diffusion may occur as celebrities use a new word or term and that using that word or term influences other people who then adopt that same word or term.

In part C the response earned 2 points for correctly identifying folk or local culture as a barrier to diffusion and explaining that folk and local cultures may avoid using technologies that deliver popular culture. The response earned 2 additional points for correctly identifying political issues as a barrier to diffusion and explaining that “some countries, like North Korea, ban technology” and “others believe the United States is dominating world culture and ban access to news and television from the US.”

Sample: 3B

Score: 6

In part A the response earned 1 point for correctly identifying the internet and social media as two means for diffusing terms in popular culture.

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Question 3 (continued)

In part B the response earned 1 point for describing the relocation diffusion process as words or terms move via people moving from one country to another. The response earned 1 point in part B for describing hierarchical diffusion as a process by which a popular person, such as a celebrity, uses a word or term, and then others begin to use the same word or term. The description for the process of contagious diffusion did not earn a point because the description is about diseases and not words or terms.

In part C the response earned 2 points for correctly identifying folk or local culture as a barrier to diffusion and for explaining that folk and local cultures may not accept new words or terms as they may not fit with their customs or traditions. The response earned 1 point by correctly identifying a linguistic barrier to diffusion. The response did not earn the second point as the response does not provide an explanation, but simply states the words or terms are difficult to diffuse.

Sample: 3C

Score: 3

In part A the response earned 1 point for correctly identifying the internet and people in power as two specific means of the global diffusion of new words or terms in popular culture.

In part B the response earned 1 point for describing the processes of contagious diffusion as a group using a word or term, and then others nearby begin to adopt and use the same word or term. The response earned an additional 1 point in part B for describing hierarchical diffusion as a process where a person in power, such as a celebrity, uses a word or term, and then their followers begin using the same word or term. The response did not earn a point in part B for relocation diffusion, as the description provided is general to culture and not specific regarding words or terms.

In part C the response earned no points as no barriers to the diffusion of terms are identified, and no explanations are provided. The response provided is nonspecific.