

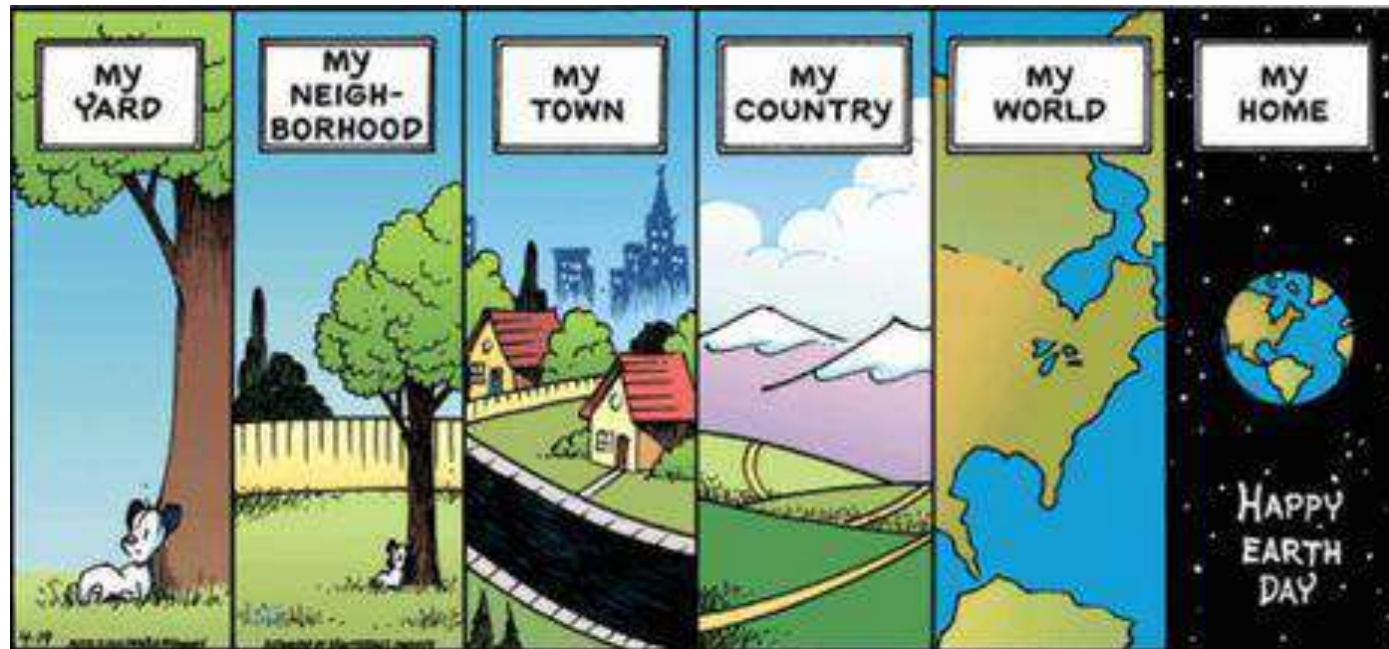


UNIT 1 – PART 1

GEOGRAPHY – ITS NATURE AND PERSPECTIVES

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING (1.A)

- By the end of this section, you will *understand* that **geography, as a field of inquiry, looks at the world from a spatial perspective.**



LEARNING OBJECTIVE (1.A.1)

- By the end of this section, you will *be able to* **explain the importance of geography as a field of study.**
 - Geographic information provides *context* for understanding spatial relationships and human-environment interaction.

PART I: THE SPATIAL PERSPECTIVE

- Essential question: How does the way geographers look at the world *differ* from that of others scientists?



PART I: THE SPATIAL PERSPECTIVE

- Geography is the **why** of **where**.
 - Why are things where they are?
 - How did things become distributed as they are?
 - What is changing the pattern of distribution?
 - What are the implications of the spatial distribution for people?

5 THEMES OF GEOGRAPHY

Location **Where? (most basic question)**

Place **How can this location be described?**

Region **With what other locations does this place share certain characteristics?**

Interaction **How have humans and the environment affected each other in this location?**

Movement **How has this location been affected by the flow of people, goods and ideas?**

5 THEMES OF GEOGRAPHY

Movement

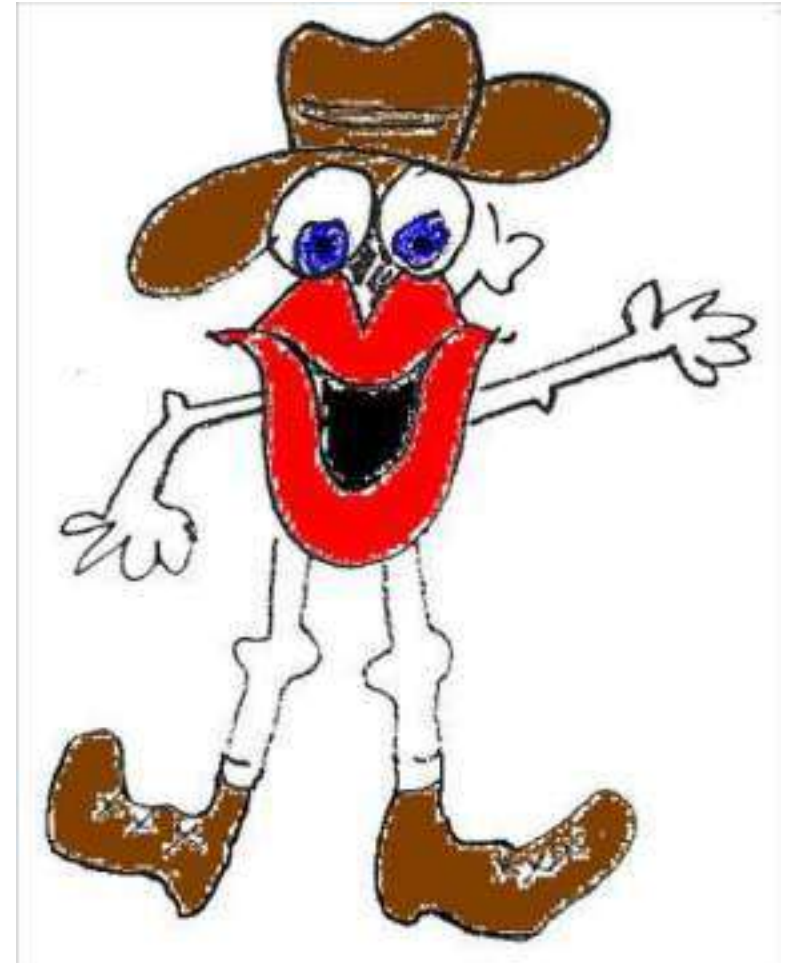
Region

Location

Interaction

Place

= “Mr. Lip”



GEOGRAPHY AS A FIELD OF STUDY

- Geography (Greek)

- Geo- (earth)

- -graphy (writing)

- **Subfields**

- Physical – elements of the physical environment (weather and climate)

- Human – spatial characteristics of humans and human activities



GEOGRAPHY AS A FIELD OF STUDY

- Subfields of Human Geography
 - Population – health, births, migration, etc.
 - Culture – language, religion, popular music, etc.
 - Economics – agriculture, level of development, wealth, etc.
 - Urban areas – cities, suburbs, challenges from growth, etc.
 - Political - local government, nations, distribution of power, etc.

EARLY HISTORY OF GEOGRAPHY

- Greeks and Romans were first in western Eurasia
 - Homer's *Iliad and Odyssey*
 - Aristotle observed Earth's features and how they influenced human behavior
 - Eratosthenes used geometry to calculate Earth's circumference and coined the term *geography*
 - Ptolemy, 500 years after Eratosthenes, summarized Greek knowledge of geography, including locations and sizes of continents; dominated European thought for 1,000 years.



EARLY HISTORY OF GEOGRAPHY

- European Middle Ages
 - Europeans rarely ventured outside their region but Muslim culture flourished in the Middle East and North Africa.
 - Built strong trading ties with Africa and East Asia.



MODERN HISTORY OF GEOGRAPHY

■ Age of Exploration

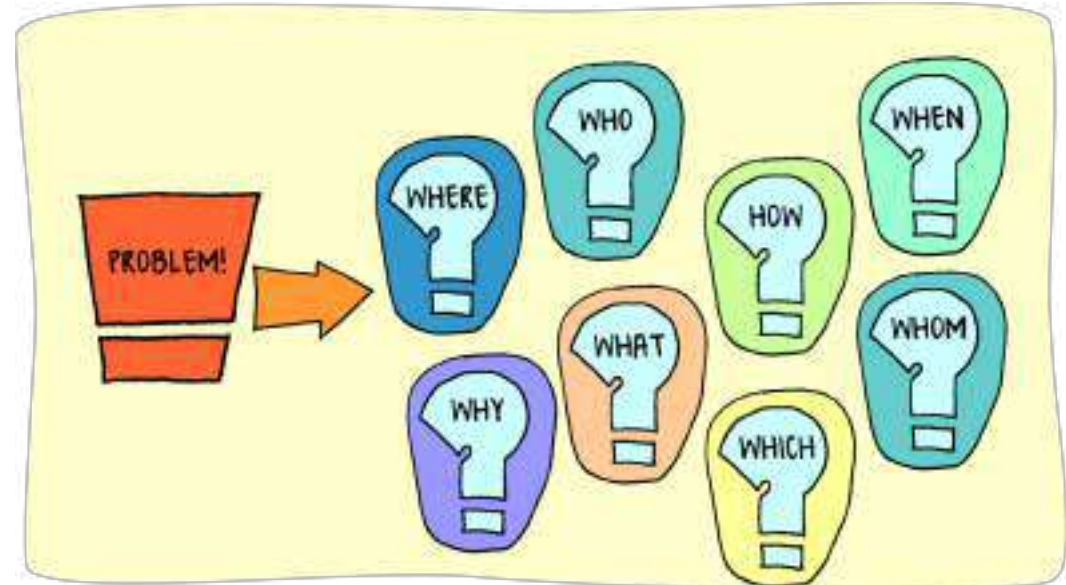
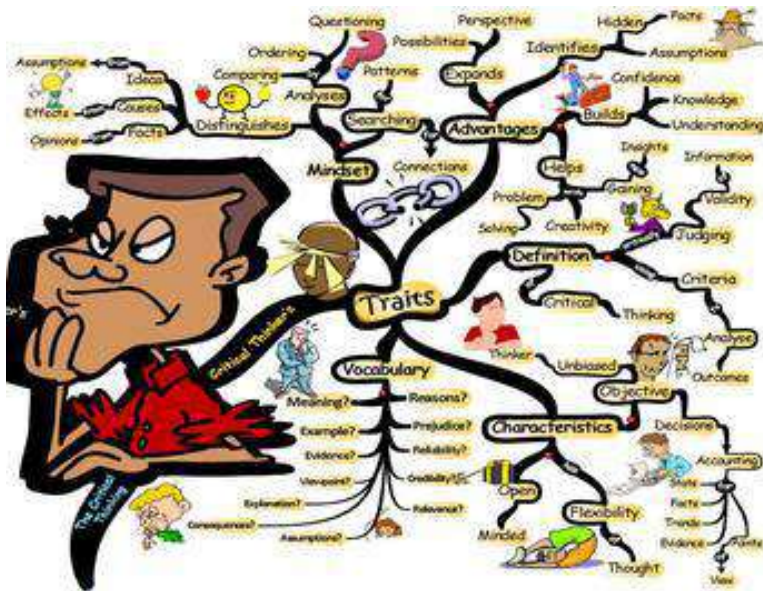
- Christopher Columbus (1492) launched a new era in exploration, mapping, and description.
- Gerardus Mercator – created a world map for *sailors* and is still widely used today

■ More Recently

- Carl Sauer (1889-1975) expanded the focus of geography beyond physical traits of the earth to include human activity

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING (1.B)

- By the end of this section, you will *understand* that **geography offers a set of concepts, skills, and tools that facilitate critical thinking and problem solving.**



LEARNING OBJECTIVE (1.B.1)

- By the end of this section, you will *be able to* **explain major geographical concepts underlying the geographic perspective.**
 - Geographic concepts include location, place, scale, space, pattern, nature and society, networks, flows, regionalization, and globalization.

GEOGRAPHICAL CONCEPTS

- Historians look through the lens of **time** to understand the **past**.
- Geographers look through the lens of **space** to understand **place**.

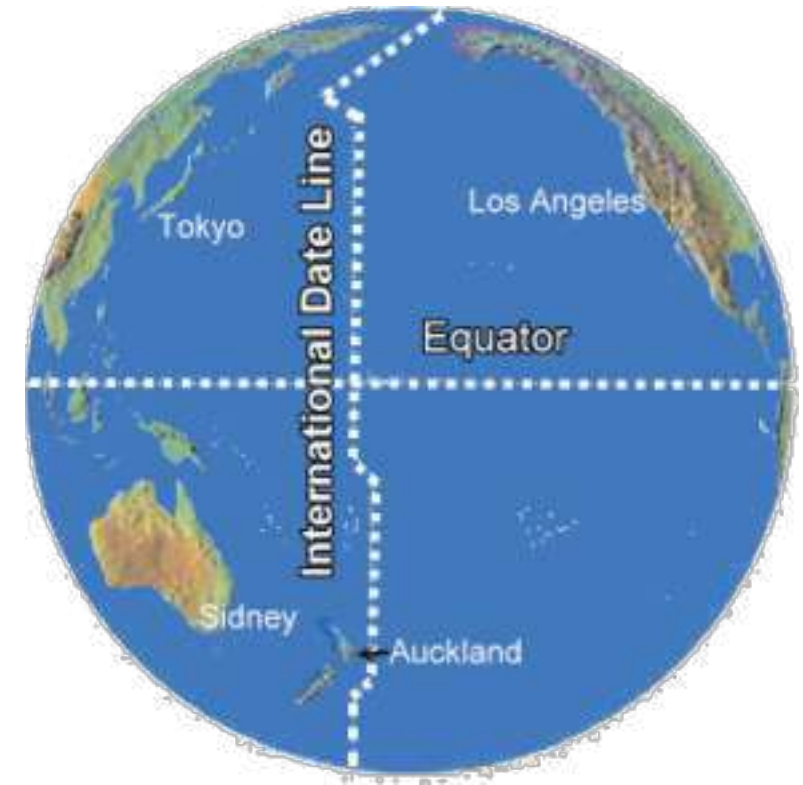
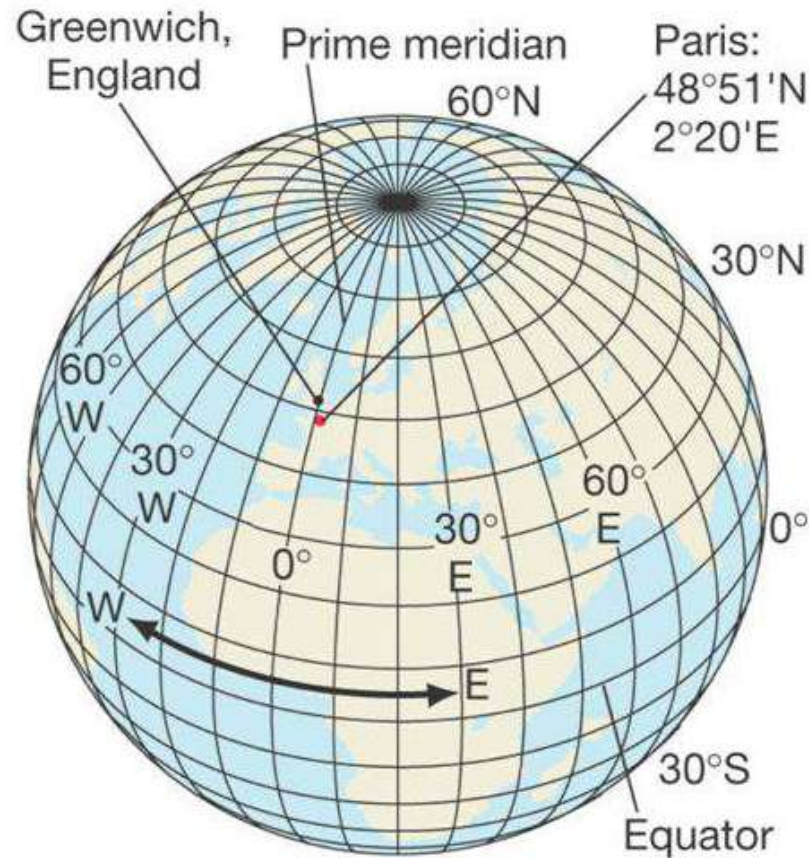


LOCATION

- Absolute location
 - **Absolute location** - the precise spot where something is according to some system
 - Most widely used: latitude and longitude
 - **Latitude**: distance north or south of the equator (0° lat)
 - **Longitude**: distance east or west of the **prime meridian** (0° long)
 - Prime meridian passes through Greenwich, England
 - **International Date Line** (180° long)

LOCATION

- **Prime Meridian**: 0 degrees (runs through Greenwich, England)
- **International Dateline**: 180 degrees
- **Time Zones**: every 15 degrees of longitude equals one hour



LOCATION

- Relative location
 - **Relative location** - where something is *in relation to* other things
 - Example: Salt Lake City, Utah is located just south of the Great Salt Lake and just west of the Rocky Mountains
 - Often described in terms of **connectivity** (how well two locations are tied together by roads or other links) and **accessibility** (how quickly and easily people in one location can interact with people in another location)

LOCATION

- Relative location
 - Can change over time and as accessibility changes
 - Example: **ghost towns** (abandoned settlements) of the western United States once had relative locations near water sources (which dried up), along trade routes (which changed), or near mines (which closed).
 - Their relative locations lost the advantages (resources or trade) but their absolute locations remain the same.

PLACE

- Place

- **Place** refers to the specific human and physical characteristics of a location.
- A group of places in the same area that share a characteristic form a **region**.
- Two ways to refer to place: **site** and **situation**
 - Site: characteristics at the immediate location (soil type, climate)
 - Situation: location relative to surroundings

PLACE

- Place

- **Sense of place** – humans tend to perceive the characteristics of places in different ways based on their personal beliefs.
- Example: the characteristics of Rome, Italy, might be described differently by a local resident than by an outsider or by a Catholic than by a Hindu.
- If a place inspires no strong emotional ties in people, it has **placelessness**.

PLACE

- Place
 - **Toponyms** – place names
 - Some provide insights into the physical geography, the history, or the culture of the location
 - Example: coast of Florida (beach names), Salt Lake City, Los Angeles
 - Some can be confusing (Iceland and Greenland) while some are deceiving (Lake City, Iowa not on a lake and Mount Prospect, Illinois is only 665 ft above sea level)

DISTANCE

- **Distance** is the measurement of how far or how near things are to one another
- **Proximity** indicates the *degree* of nearness
- Meters, miles, kilometers, etc.
- Straight line distance (as the crow flies) or travel distance
- Example: Milwaukee to Kalamazoo is 130 miles by air but 250 miles by car

DISTANCE

- Distance and Time

- **Time-space compression** is the shrinking “time distance” between locations because of improved methods of transportation and communication
- Example: New York and London are separated by an ocean, but the development of air travel greatly reduced travel time between them and now feel much closer today than in the 19th century
- Result: global forces are influencing culture everywhere and reducing local diversity more than ever before

DISTANCE

- Distance and Connection
 - **Spatial interaction** refers to the contact, movement, and flow of things between locations – physical (through roads) or information (through radio or Internet)
 - The increasing *connection* between places is reflected in the growth of spatial interaction
 - The **friction of distance** indicates that when things are farther apart, they tend to be less well connected
 - This inverse relationship is called **distance-decay**

DISTANCE

- Example: the weakening of a radio signal as it travels across space away from a radio tower – friction of distance causes the decay, or weakening, of the signal.
- Improvements in transportation, communication, and infrastructure have reduced the friction as they have increased the spatial interaction.

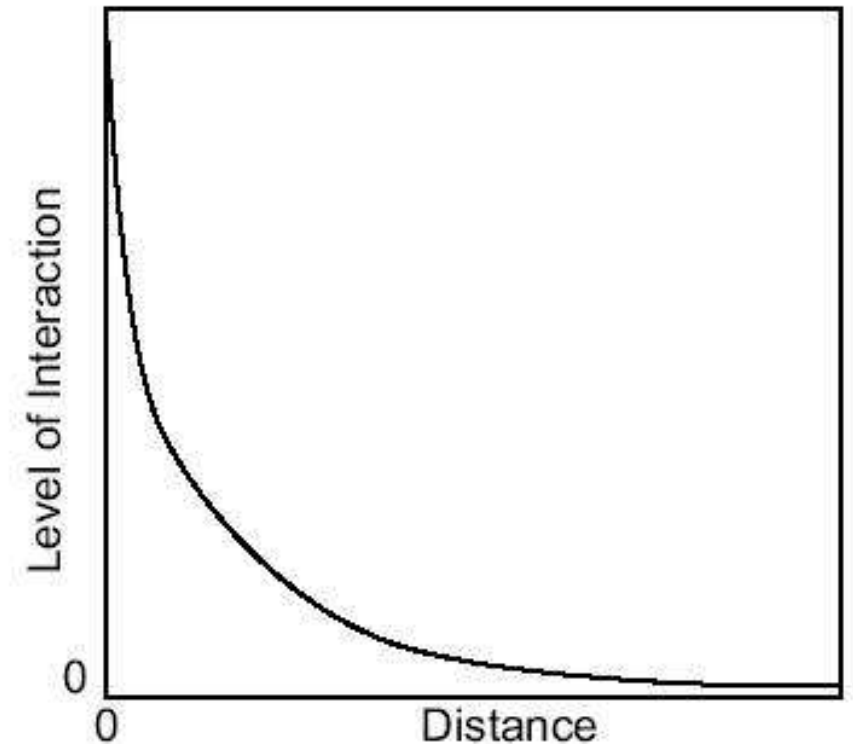


Figure 4.3. Distance decay curve showing decreasing interaction as distance increases.

DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION

- Density
 - **Density** is the number of something in a specifically defined area
 - Population density is the number of people per square mile – count the people and divide by the area
 - Psychological density – in a full elevator, one person may think it *feels* fine while one person feels uncomfortable



DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION

- Distribution
 - **Distribution** is the way a phenomenon is spread out over an area
 - Clustered or sparse
 - For example, two city blocks with the same *density* (amount of people) might have very different distributions – evenly spread out vs. high-rise apartment and empty park
 - Geographers look for *patterns* in distribution: linear (towns along a railroad line), circular (homes of people who shop at a store), geometric (squares formed by roads), or random (pet owners)

DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION

■ Distribution

- Matching patterns of distribution is called **spatial association** and indicates that two (or more) phenomena may be related, or associated with one another
- Example: the distribution of malaria matches the distribution of the mosquito that carries it (be careful – correlation does not mean causation)
- Example: distribution of bike shops in a large city might be similar to the distribution of athletic wear stores. One does not cause the other but may reflect the distribution of active people

HUMAN-ENVIRONMENTAL INTERACTION

- The relationship between humans and the natural world are at the heart of human geography
- The connection and exchange between them is called **human-environmental interaction** – specifically sustainability, pollution, and environmental issues



HUMAN-ENVIRONMENTAL INTERACTION

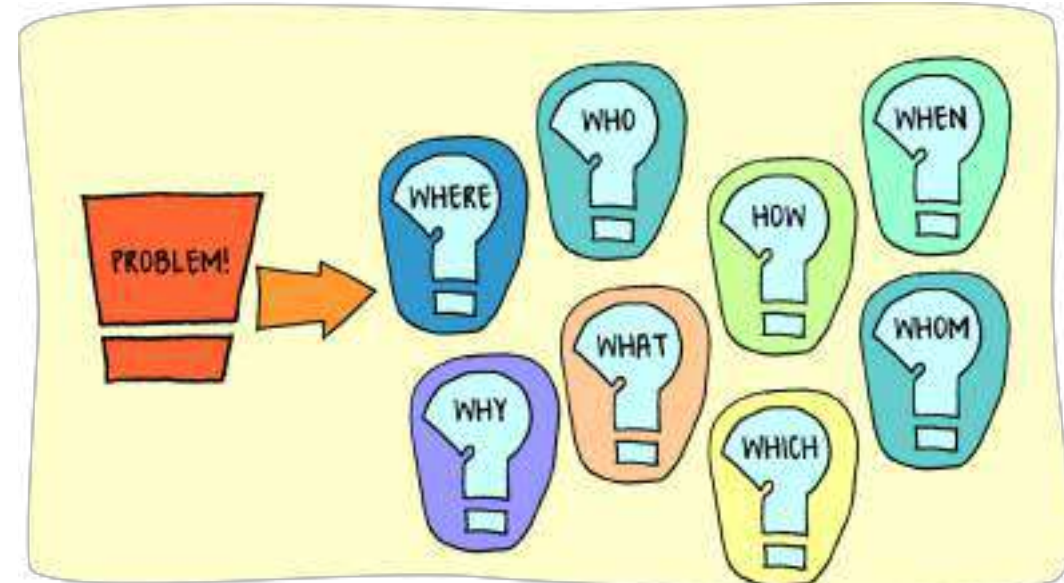
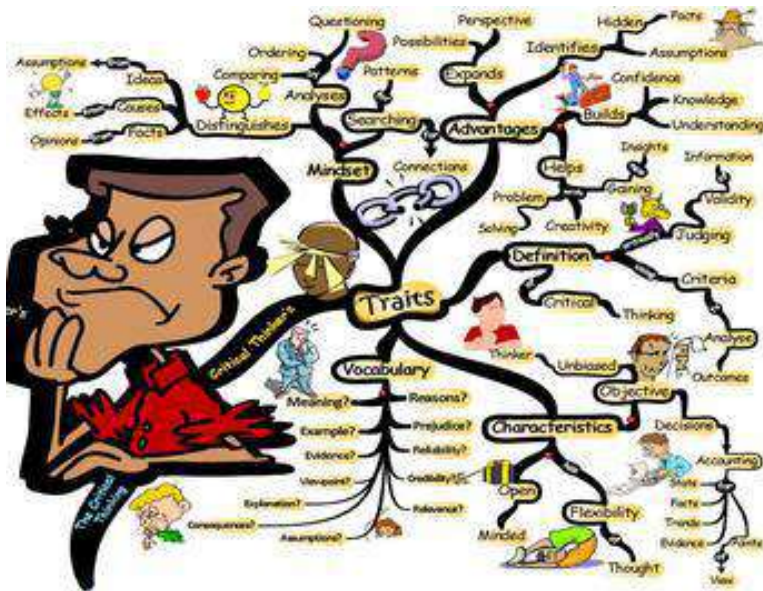
- **Cultural ecology:** the study of how humans adapt to the environment
- The belief that landforms and climate are the most powerful forces shaping human behavior and societal development is called **environmental determinism**
- In the 19th and early 20th centuries, some people used this concept to argue that people in some climates were superior to those of other climates

HUMAN-ENVIRONMENTAL INTERACTION

- In reaction came the view known as **possibilism** – a view that acknowledges limits on the effects of the natural environment and focuses more on the role that human culture plays
- Different cultures may respond to the same environment in different ways, depending on their beliefs, goals, and available technologies

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING (1.B)

- By the end of this section, you will *understand* that **geography offers a set of concepts, skills, and tools that facilitate critical thinking and problem solving.**



LEARNING OBJECTIVE (1.B.2)

- By the end of this section, you will *be able to* **use landscape analysis to examine the human organization of space.**
 - Landscape analysis (e.g., field observations, photographic interpretations) provides a context for understanding the location of people, places, regions, and events; human-environment relationships; and interconnections between and among places and regions

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

- **Landscape analysis** is the task of defining and describing land
- Observation and Interpretation
 - The first part of landscape analysis is field observation
 - Take notes, sketch maps, count, measure, and interview
 - Before technology, this was the only way to gather data about a place

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

- **Built environment** refers to the physical artifacts that humans have created and that form part of the landscape
- **Examples: buildings, roads, signs, and fences**
- The built environment varies from place to place (think China vs. Germany)
- Anything built by humans is part of the **cultural landscape.**



FOUR-LEVEL ANALYSIS

One systematic way to study geographic phenomena is to use Four-Level Analysis.

Level	Description	Key Questions
1. Comprehension	Establish the basic information clearly	What? Where? When? Scale?
2. Identification	Identify and describe patterns in phenomena	Are phenomena connected?
3. Explanation	Explain how individual phenomena might form a pattern	Why is something where it is? How did it get there?
4. Prediction	Explain why a pattern is important, and predict what it might lead to	So what? What if? What are the effects?