

1 Regions, site and situation – Part 2

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Vocabulary

Write each word three times.

English	Write it 3 times (English)
region	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
formal region	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
functional region	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
vernacular region	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
Site	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
Situation	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
Absolute location	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
Relative location	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
GIS	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
GPS	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
Remote sensing	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
census	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
Environmental de-terminism	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
Possibilism	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>

Recall

From Part 1 you can now name map types, projections, and the three spatial terms – density, concentration and pattern.

This sheet covers the rest of Unit 1: how geographers divide the world into regions, and where their data comes from.

New ideas

■ 1 Three kinds of region

A **region** is an area defined by one or more shared characteristics. There are exactly three types and the exam expects you to name which one you mean.

A **formal region** shares a measurable trait – a country, a wheat belt, an area where more than half the people speak French. A **functional region** is organised around a node and its surrounding area: a pizza delivery zone, a newspaper circulation area, an airport's catchment. A **perceptual** or **vernacular region** exists in people's minds – “the Midwest”, “the South” – with no agreed boundary.

■ 2 Site and situation

Site is what a place is physically like: its land, water, climate, soil. **Situation** is where it sits relative to other places – its connections, its accessibility.

Singapore has an unremarkable site (a small, hot, resource-poor island) and an extraordinary situation (astride the Strait of Malacca), which is why it is wealthy. Naming which one explains a place is a common exam task.

■ 3 Absolute and relative

Absolute location is a fixed coordinate: 1.35° N, 103.82° E. **Relative location** describes a place by reference to others: “at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula”.

The same split applies to distance and direction – absolute distance is measured in kilometres, relative distance in travel time, cost or effort.

■ 4 Where the data comes from

Geographers now work mostly with digital data. **GIS** (Geographic Information System) stores layers of spatial data and analyses relationships between them. **GPS** gives absolute location from satellites. **Remote sensing** collects data about the surface from satellites or aircraft without touching it.

Non-digital sources still matter: a national **census**, field observation, interviews, and travel narratives.

■ 5 Environmental determinism and possibilism

Environmental determinism claimed the physical environment decides how a society develops. It was used to justify colonialism and is rejected today.

Possibilism replaced it: the environment sets limits, but people choose among the possibilities within them – which is why two societies in similar environments develop differently.

Practice

Try these in order. The methods are all above.

1.6 Name the type of region defined by a node and the area it serves. [1]

1.7 Distinguish between the site and the situation of a city, using an example. [3]

1.8 Give one absolute and one relative way of describing distance. [2]

1.9 Explain one way a geographer would use GIS that a paper map could not do. [2]

1.10 Explain why environmental determinism was replaced by possibilism. [2]
