

# 1.5 Human-Environmental Interaction

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Total: 10 marks

## Objective

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Build the skills to answer exam questions on **human-environment interaction** 人地关系.

You must be able to:

- distinguish **environmental determinism** 环境决定论 from **possibilism** 或然论
- explain why possibilism is now the accepted view
- define **sustainability** 可持续性 and **natural resources** 自然资源
- give examples of people modifying their environment

## 1 Worked examples

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Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

### ■ Determinism vs possibilism

**Environmental determinism** claims the physical environment *decides* how a society develops. **Possibilism** says the environment sets limits and offers options, but people *choose* how to respond.

### ■ Why possibilism won

Determinism was used to justify false, biased claims. Possibilism fits the evidence: societies in similar environments develop very differently, using technology to overcome limits.

### ■ Sustainability

**Sustainability** means meeting present needs without stopping future generations from meeting theirs —using **natural resources** so they are not used up or ruined.

## 2 Practice

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2.1 State the main idea of possibilism.

[2]

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**2.2** Define sustainability. [2]

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**2.3** A society builds irrigation to farm a dry region.

(a) Does this support determinism or possibilism? Explain. [2]

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### 3 Exam-style questions

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**3.1** The now-rejected idea that climate determines whether a society will succeed is [1]

- **A** possibilism
  - **B** environmental determinism
  - **C** sustainability
  - **D** distance decay
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**3.2** Using a fishery only as fast as fish can reproduce is an example of [1]

- **A** environmental determinism
  - **B** sustainable resource use
  - **C** time-space compression
  - **D** a perceptual region
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**3.3** Two societies live in similar mountain environments but develop very differently.

(a) Which theory does this best support? [1]

(b) Explain your choice. [1]

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### 4 Go further

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- work through the **1.5 Human-Environmental Interaction** lesson on the **Learn** page;

- read the **Thinking Geographically** section of the AP Human Geography handout on the **Know** page.

## Solutions

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**2.1** the environment sets limits/offers possibilities; people choose how to respond, aided by culture and technology.

**2.2** meeting present needs without preventing future generations from meeting theirs.

**2.3** (a) possibilism —people used technology to overcome an environmental limit rather than being controlled by it.

**3.1 B.** that the environment determines development is environmental determinism.

**3.2 B.** using a resource without depleting it is sustainability.

**3.3** (a) possibilism. (b) the same environment led to different outcomes, so people's choices —not the environment alone —shaped development.