

1.5 Human-Environmental Interaction

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 10 marks**

KEY WORDS possibilism 或然论 • sustainability 可持续性
• environmental determinism 环境决定论 • natural resources 自然资源
• human-environment interaction 人地关系

Objective

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

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

2.1 State the main idea of possibilism. [2]

2.2 Define sustainability. [2]

2.3 A society builds irrigation to farm a dry region.

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

3 Exam-style questions

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

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

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]

Solutions

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.