

Cultural Patterns and Processes

AP Human Geography ■ Unit 3

AP Human Geography



What we will cover

- 1 Culture & landscape
- 2 Cultural patterns
- 3 Types of diffusion
- 4 Causes of diffusion
- 5 Religion & language
- 6 Effects of diffusion

Culture and cultural landscape

- **Material culture** 物质文化 = objects; **nonmaterial culture** 非物质文化 = ideas, beliefs.
- The **cultural landscape** 文化景观 is the visible human imprint on the land.
- **Sequent occupance** 连续占用: successive cultures layered on one place.



The visible human imprint on land

Cultural patterns

- **Universalizing religions** 普世宗教 seek converts; **ethnic religions** 民族宗教 tie to one people.
- **Centripetal** 向心 forces unify; **centrifugal** 离心 forces divide.
- Shared language, religion, ethnicity form cultural regions.



Ethnic enclaves mark cultural regions

Cultural patterns

Acculturation



adopt some traits
of another culture,
keep your own

Assimilation



fully blend into
the other culture,
lose your own

Syncretism



two cultures fuse
into something
new

Types of diffusion

- **Relocation diffusion** 迁移传播: spreads as people move.
- **Expansion diffusion** 扩展传播: spreads outward, stays at source.
- Expansion = contagious, hierarchical, or stimulus.

Types of diffusion

Relocation diffusion



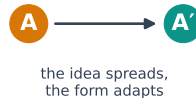
Contagious (expansion)



Hierarchical (expansion) big places first



Stimulus (expansion)



Causes of diffusion

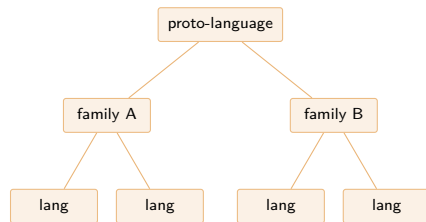
- Historical: **colonialism** 殖民主义, trade routes, migration.
- Contemporary: **globalization** 全球化 and communication technology.
- **Time-space convergence** 时空收敛 makes places feel closer.



Trade and media shrink cultural distance

Religion and language

- A **language family** 语系 shares a common ancestor.
- A **lingua franca** 通用语 is a shared language across groups.
- A **pidgin** 皮钦语 becomes a **creole** 克里奥尔语 when learned as a first language.



a family shares a common ancestor

Worked example – name that diffusion

Classify each: (a) Italians carry pizza to New York; (b) a dance trend spreads friend-to-friend; (c) a chain opens in Tokyo, Paris, then small towns; (d) Europeans see Chinese porcelain and invent their own.

- (a) **relocation** – the people moved.
- (b) **contagious** – near-neighbour contact.
- (c) **hierarchical** – biggest places first.
- (d) **stimulus** – the **idea** spread, not the thing.

Ask **one** question first: did the source **keep** the trait? If yes it is expansion (then pick the sub-type); if the trait **travelled with people**, it is relocation.

Effects of diffusion

- **Cultural convergence** 文化趋同 vs **divergence** 文化趋异.
- **Acculturation** 涵化 keeps some identity; **assimilation** 同化 loses it.
- **Syncretism** 文化融合 blends cultures into something new.

Key points

Relocation = people move;
expansion = idea spreads

Contagious/hierarchical/stimulus
are expansion types

Universalizing religions convert; **ethnic** pass by birth

Diffusion causes **convergence**,
syncretism, assimilation

Worked example – the command word is the question

“Explain how food preferences can be a culture trait.” (real AP question)

“Many dishes use ingredients or ways of cooking unique to one culture group – a national dish, say – so choosing and eating that food expresses belonging to the group, which is what makes it a culture trait.”

Explain needs a **link**, not a definition: connect the food preference **to** the idea of a shared culture. Listing foods earns **zero**.

Check yourself

- 1 Contagious or hierarchical: a trend spreading from big cities down?
- 2 What is relocation diffusion?
- 3 Give one element of a cultural landscape.
- 4 Which diffusion carries the idea, not the people?

Answers 1. hierarchical 2. people migrate and carry the culture with them 3. buildings, signs, land use, religious sites 4. expansion diffusion