



International Geography Championships

Human Geography Examination High School and Middle School Division

Instructions – Mark your answers on the scantron provided. Correct answers are worth 2 points. Incorrect answers are worth –1 point. Questions left blank are worth 0 points. Write the answer to your tiebreaker question in the box at the top of your scantron.

Questions 1-10 are about economic geography and development.

1. Farming, fishing, and mining all belong to which sector of economic activity?

- A. productive
- B. consumptive
- C. primary
- D. administrative

2. The Industrial Revolution began in the late 1700s on which continent?

- A. Europe
- B. North America
- C. Asia
- D. South America

3. Which of these best describes free trade between countries?

- A. all traded goods must be given away instead of sold
- B. goods can be traded without tariffs or other restrictions
- C. only countries with similar economies may trade with each other
- D. governments control prices of all goods that are exported

4. A multinational corporation is a company that does which of the following?

- A. produces goods only within one country for export
- B. is owned and operated entirely by a national government
- C. operates factories, offices, or stores in multiple countries
- D. sells goods only to other businesses rather than individuals

5. Which of these is NOT typically a characteristic of a developing country?

- A. high rates of subsistence farming
- B. limited access to clean water and sanitation
- C. a large percentage of workers in the agricultural sector
- D. a very high average income and widespread ownership of luxury goods

6. Which of the following is NOT considered a benefit of globalization?

- A. access to a wider variety of goods at lower prices
- B. increased inequality between the richest and poorest countries
- C. greater cultural exchange between countries
- D. new markets for companies to sell their products

7. The World Bank provides financial assistance to developing countries primarily to help them do which of the following?

- A. fund development projects that reduce poverty and improve infrastructure
- B. build stronger military forces to protect against invasion
- C. attract tourism by improving airports and hotels
- D. increase exports of raw materials to core countries

8. A country where a meal costs \$1 would have a higher standard of living than its GDP might suggest because citizens benefit from which of these?

- A. greater purchasing power per dollar than in countries with higher prices for the same goods
- B. lower demand for manufactured goods reducing inflationary pressure
- C. government subsidies that artificially suppress prices below market value
- D. an informal economy producing goods outside the official GDP calculation

9. A post-industrial economy is best characterized by which of these?

- A. reliance on agricultural exports to fund development of new industries
- B. rapid growth of heavy manufacturing replacing older light industry
- C. dominance of service, knowledge, and technology sectors over manufacturing
- D. equal contributions from primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors

10. What makes a Special Economic Zone 'special' compared to the rest of the host country?

- A. exclusive government ownership of all businesses operating within the zone
- B. relaxed regulations, lower taxes, and reduced trade barriers designed to attract foreign investment
- C. higher wages and stronger labor protections than in the rest of the country
- D. designation as a protected area where domestic companies cannot be outcompeted

Questions 11-20 are about agriculture.

11. In agriculture, the word 'livestock' refers to which of these?

- A. farm animals such as cows, pigs, and chickens
- B. crops that are grown in very large fields
- C. machinery used to harvest grain
- D. wild animals that live near farms

12. What is the role of fertilizer in agriculture?

- A. kill insects that damage crops
- B. give plants the nutrients they need to grow
- C. add water to dry fields in summer
- D. protect crops from frost and cold

13. The widespread use of synthetic nitrogen fertilizers in agriculture became possible largely due to which of the following?

- A. the invention of the tractor
- B. the Green Revolution's development of hybrid seed varieties
- C. the discovery of nitrogen fixation in legume crops
- D. the Haber-Bosch process, which enabled the industrial production of ammonia

14. Which of these is an advantage of local farmers markets for small farmers?

- A. they are a place to buy new farm equipment and tractors
- B. small farmers can apply there for government loans and grants
- C. they are a place to learn about new farming technology
- D. they allow farmers to sell directly to consumers, often with higher profits

15. Which of these is NOT typically considered a form of subsistence farming?

- A. shifting cultivation
- B. nomadic pastoralism
- C. agribusiness
- D. intensive subsistence farming

16. Cotton, coffee, and cacao are all crops that are commonly associated with which type of large-scale farming system?

- A. plantation agriculture
- B. subsistence farming
- C. nomadic pastoralism
- D. organic farming

17. Which of the following crops is NOT typically associated with Mediterranean-climate agriculture?

- A. olives
- B. citrus fruits
- C. rice
- D. grapes

18. Which of these is NOT typically an environmental concern associated with large-scale irrigation in dry regions?

- A. rapid growth of forests due to increased water availability
- B. salinization, in which salt builds up in the soil over time
- C. depletion of rivers and aquifers used as water sources
- D. waterlogging of agricultural soils

19. Collective farming, as practiced in the Soviet Union and China, is best described as which of these?

- A. a cooperative arrangement where farmers voluntarily pool resources and share profits
- B. a system in which the state organizes and controls farms worked by groups of laborers
- C. a type of plantation farming that uses contract workers from other countries
- D. a modern corporate system where investors own large farm operations

20. Norman Borlaug, a key figure in the Green Revolution, is especially famous for developing which of the following?

- A. the first chemical pesticide used on a large scale in agriculture
- B. the center-pivot irrigation system used in dry farming regions
- C. a new type of tractor that could work in tropical climates
- D. high-yielding, disease-resistant varieties of dwarf wheat

Questions 21-30 are about culture.

21. Which of the following best describes what geographers mean by 'culture'?

- A. the physical features of a landscape shaped by climate and terrain
- B. the shared beliefs, values, and practices of a group of people
- C. the official laws and government policies of a nation
- D. the economic activities people use to earn a living

22. Folk culture is best described as which of these?
- traditional practices of a small, homogeneous group passed down over generations
 - modern trends shared widely through television, social media, and global brands
 - cultural behaviors adopted quickly by large urban populations
 - practices that arise from international trade and commerce
23. An area in which people share common cultural characteristics such as language or religion is known as which of the following?
- belief boundary
 - culture complex
 - cultural region
 - divergence zone
24. Relocation diffusion occurs when cultural traits spread through which of these methods?
- the rapid copying of ideas from one nearby group to another
 - the top-down adoption of trends from celebrities and influential leaders
 - the physical movement of people who carry their culture to a new location
 - the modification of a cultural idea as it moves into a new region
25. Which of the following is the best example of non-material culture?
- a clay pot decorated with traditional patterns
 - a ceremonial mask used in rituals
 - clothing worn during a cultural festival
 - a system of beliefs about the afterlife
26. The rapid spread of an internet meme from user to user across social media platforms is the best example of which of these?
- contagious diffusion
 - hierarchical diffusion
 - migrant diffusion
 - stimulus diffusion
27. Distance decay in cultural diffusion refers to which of the following?
- cultures that are farther apart are always more different from one another
 - a cultural trait becomes less influential and widespread the farther it spreads from its source
 - cultural practices disappear faster in rural areas than in cities
 - the older a culture is, the less influence it has on neighboring regions
28. An immigrant family that begins celebrating local holidays while keeping their native language at home is undergoing what process?
- assimilation
 - transculturation
 - acculturation
 - cultural divergence
29. Globalization in cultural geography refers to which of these?
- the decline of international trade due to political conflicts between nations
 - the effort by governments to preserve national cultures from outside influence
 - the movement of people from rural areas to cities within a single country
 - the increasing worldwide interconnection of peoples, economies, and cultures
30. Place names like New York, New England, and New Orleans reflect which of the following?
- the native languages of indigenous peoples who first settled those regions
 - the geographic features such as rivers, hills, and plains near those places
 - the names of famous explorers who were the first to map those locations
 - the cultural heritage of European settlers who named places after their homelands
- Questions 31-40 are about cities.
31. Which of these countries has four of its major cities at the top of the 2025 Global Liveability Rankings?
- Australia
 - the United States
 - China
 - Russia
32. Which of these is NOT a factor typically included in the global liveability rankings?
- quality of healthcare
 - political stability
 - the distance from the equator
 - availability of education
33. Alpha cities like New York and London have an outsized influence on which of the following?
- the weather patterns of nearby regions
 - the wildlife in surrounding rural areas
 - local farming and agriculture
 - global finance, culture, and business

34. Many medieval European cities grew without a fixed plan, resulting in what type of street layout?

- A. organic, winding streets that followed natural pathways
- B. a perfect grid of right-angle streets
- C. a set of circles radiating from the center
- D. a series of identical blocks

35. The Haussmann renovation of Paris in the 1800s created wide boulevards coming together at central points, a design known by what term?

- A. green planning
- B. radial planning
- C. grid planning
- D. smart planning

36. Mixed-use zoning allows a neighborhood to have which of these combinations?

- A. only factories and warehouses
- B. only residential housing
- C. only government buildings
- D. homes, shops, and offices all in the same area

37. Which of the following is NOT typically a goal of urban planning?

- A. increasing urban sprawl
- B. reducing traffic congestion
- C. improving access to parks and green spaces
- D. providing adequate housing for all residents

38. A conurbation is best described as which of these?

- A. a city that has been abandoned
- B. a rural village that grew into a town
- C. a large urban area formed by two or more cities merging together
- D. a city with no suburbs

39. Which of these best describes a shanty town?

- A. a wealthy gated community outside the city
- B. an informal settlement with poor housing and few services
- C. a planned industrial park
- D. a neighborhood with only luxury condominiums

40. Which of the following is an example of a megacity?

- A. Omaha, Nebraska
- B. Lyon, France
- C. Mumbai, India
- D. Phuket, Thailand

Questions 41-50 are about political geography.

41. A country ruled by a king or queen who inherits their position is known as which of these?

- A. a monarchy
- B. a democracy
- C. a theocracy
- D. an autocracy

42. Countries like the UK that use the Westminster system have which of these as their head of government?

- A. a president
- B. a supreme leader
- C. a priest or bishop
- D. a prime minister

43. In a dictatorship, political power is held by which of the following?

- A. all of the people of the nation
- B. a very large group of elected officials
- C. all of the religious leaders in a country
- D. one single person

44. The primary purpose of a capital city is to serve as which of these?

- A. the country's most populated city
- B. the seat of the national government and center of political power
- C. the main financial and banking center of the country
- D. the site of the country's largest international airport

45. Centrifugal forces in a state are those that do which of these?

- A. divide and weaken national unity by pulling regions or groups apart
- B. strengthen the central government's control over regional populations
- C. encourage immigration from neighboring states
- D. promote economic integration with supranational organizations

46. The principle of self-determination in international relations says which of these is true?

- A. states may annex neighboring territories if a majority of their own citizens support it
- B. supranational bodies have the authority to redraw national borders when conflicts arise
- C. people who share a common identity have the right to choose their own political status and governance
- D. all nations are entitled to permanent seats on the UN Security Council

47. Friedrich Ratzel's organic theory of states argues that states behave like living organisms in which of these ways?

- A. they follow fixed life cycles of birth, growth, and inevitable collapse
- B. they are healthiest when they remain small and compact
- C. they must expand their territory to survive and grow, or they will decline
- D. they derive their strength from cultural homogeneity rather than territory

48. In Wallerstein's world-systems theory, semi-periphery countries are best described as which of these?

- A. states that occupy a middle position, industrializing but still dependent on core nations
- B. the wealthiest and most economically dominant states that control global trade
- C. the poorest states that export raw materials and receive little economic benefit
- D. former colonial powers that have lost their dominance since World War II

49. States in the early stages of the demographic transition tend to face which distinctive political geography challenge?

- A. aging populations that reduce economic output and demand higher welfare spending
- B. declining birth rates that cause cities to shrink and lose political influence
- C. mass emigration that depopulates rural areas and concentrates power in capital cities
- D. rapidly growing young populations that strain resources and can fuel political instability

50. The relocation of Nigeria's capital from Lagos to Abuja in 1991 is best explained by which of these geopolitical rationales?

- A. Lagos had been captured by a rival faction and was no longer safe for the government
- B. Abuja's central location and ethnic neutrality made it a more politically cohesive choice for a diverse federal state
- C. Abuja was chosen because it had better port access to international shipping lanes
- D. the relocation was required under the terms of a regional trade agreement

Questions 51-60 are about population and migration.

51. The Demographic Transition Model was first developed based on the population experiences of which region?

- A. East Asia and Southeast Asia
- B. Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America
- C. the Middle East and South Asia
- D. Western Europe and North America

52. Which of the following is NOT a characteristic of a country in Stage 2 of the Demographic Transition Model?

- A. rapidly falling death rates
- B. high birth rates
- C. very low birth rates
- D. rapid population growth

53. Which of these best describes the trends in Stage 3 of the Demographic Transition Model?

- A. both birth rates and death rates are very high, keeping populations small
- B. death rates begin to fall rapidly while birth rates remain high
- C. birth rates are falling while death rates remain low, slowing population growth
- D. birth rates and death rates are both very low, with near-zero population growth

54. The ecumene refers to which portion of the Earth's surface?

- A. the inhabited and permanently settled area
- B. the uninhabited wilderness area
- C. the total land area of all continents
- D. the area covered by oceans and seas

55. Which of the following best explains why the ecumene has expanded significantly over the past two centuries?

- A. rising global temperatures that opened polar and arid regions to settlement
- B. advances in technology, transportation, and agriculture that made previously uninhabitable areas livable
- C. government colonization programs that forcibly relocated populations to frontier areas
- D. dramatic reductions in the world's non-ecumene due to sea level rise

56. Physiological population density divides the total population by which of these measurements?

- A. arable land area
- B. total land and water area
- C. number of urban centers
- D. the country's income level

57. Deserts, polar regions, and high mountains tend to have very low population density primarily for which of these reasons?

- A. government laws that prohibit settlement in those areas
- B. a lack of roads connecting those regions to the rest of the world
- C. the absence of any natural beauty attracting settlers
- D. extreme environments that make survival and food production very difficult

58. With regard to migration, an intervening obstacle is best described as which of these?

- A. a country that migrants pass through on the way to their final destination
- B. a cultural difference that makes migrants reluctant to assimilate
- C. a barrier, such as a mountain range, border policy, or cost, that discourages or prevents migration
- D. a government program that assists displaced persons in resettling

59. In the gravity model of migration, the volume of migration between two places is predicted to increase when which of these changes occur?

- A. the cultural similarity between the two places increases
- B. the population of both places increases or the distance between them decreases
- C. the cost of travel between the two places increases significantly
- D. one place experiences a natural disaster that displaces its population

60. Transnationalism in the context of migration describes migrants who do which of these?

- A. maintain strong social, economic, and cultural ties to both their origin and destination countries
- B. permanently sever connections with their home country and fully assimilate
- C. migrate repeatedly between countries without establishing permanent residence anywhere
- D. migrate for temporary work and return home when the contract ends

Questions 61-70 are about climate and energy.

61. Despite rapid growth in renewable energy, fossil fuels still dominate global energy supply for which of these reasons?

- A. solar and wind produce too little energy to power industrial processes
- B. existing fossil fuel infrastructure, subsidies, and energy density make them cheaper and more reliable at scale than current renewables
- C. most countries lack the political will to permit any new renewable construction
- D. renewable energy only works in equatorial regions with consistent sunlight and wind

62. A proposal to paint the rooftops of an entire city white would have which of these climate effects on the surrounding region?

- A. a warming effect because white surfaces trap more infrared radiation from the sky
- B. no measurable effect because urban rooftops represent too small a fraction of total land area
- C. a modest local cooling effect because increased surface albedo reflects more incoming solar radiation
- D. a cooling effect on the city but a warming effect on downwind rural areas

63. Urban areas with high proportions of surfaces like pavement and concrete contribute to urban heat islands and also cause which other environmental problem?

- A. reduced wind speed at street level because buildings block prevailing winds
- B. increased surface runoff and flash flooding because rain cannot infiltrate the ground
- C. more frequent tornadoes because the heat differential creates atmospheric instability
- D. loss of topsoil from agricultural fields located at the urban fringe

64. Proxy data is important to climate scientists because it allows them to do which of the following?

- A. predict future weather events using satellite data collected in real time
- B. reconstruct past climate conditions using natural records like ice cores and tree rings
- C. measure the current temperature of the ocean at different depths
- D. calculate how much carbon dioxide has been released since the formation of the Earth

65. Coral bleaching occurs when coral reefs are stressed by which of these?

- A. abnormally warm ocean temperatures
- B. the arrival of invasive fish species
- C. powerful underwater earthquakes
- D. the increased salinity of seawater

66. The enhanced greenhouse effect, unlike the natural greenhouse effect, is mainly caused by which of the following?

- A. the gradual increase in the Sun's energy output over thousands of years
- B. natural changes in the Earth's orbit that bring it closer to the Sun
- C. the depletion of the ozone layer that allows more sunlight to reach the surface
- D. increased greenhouse gas emissions from human activities like burning fossil fuels

67. Climate change is making water scarcity worse in many regions partly because which of these is happening?

- A. glaciers and snowpacks are melting and shrinking, reducing freshwater supplies
- B. oceans are expanding and diluting freshwater rivers and lakes
- C. rising temperatures are causing underground aquifers to drain rapidly
- D. more frequent hurricanes are pushing salt water into freshwater river systems

68. Which of these best describes the relationship between climate change and human health?

- A. it reduces health risks overall because warmer winters prevent cold-related deaths
- B. it has no measurable effect on health because humans adapt quickly to changing temperatures
- C. it creates new and worsening health risks including heat illness, disease spread, and food insecurity
- D. it improves nutrition in cold regions because longer growing seasons improve food supplies

69. Which of these cities is NOT generally listed among the world's most at-risk cities from land subsidence?

- A. Bangkok
- B. Shanghai
- C. Madrid
- D. Lagos

70. Which country currently generates the MOST total electricity from solar power in the world?

- A. Germany
- B. Australia
- C. the United States
- D. China

Tiebreaker

This question will only be scored if there is a tie for placement on the exam. **This is a required question, but there is no penalty for a wrong answer to this question.**

Write your answer legibly in the space provided on your scantron.

According to the IMF, what was the global GDP per capita in 2021 in US dollars?