Five Themes of Geography

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. A researcher marks an observatory at 19° N, 155° W on a map. Which theme do the coordinates illustrate?

A. Location
B. Place
C. Movement
D. Region

Correct answer: A. Location
Latitude and longitude give an absolute location. They specify where the observatory is situated.

2. A class describes a town by its cobbled streets, granite buildings, and steep hills. Which theme fits this description?

A. Movement
B. Location
C. Place
D. Region

Correct answer: C. Place
Place describes the human and physical characteristics that make a location distinctive.

3. A map follows nurses as they relocate from several small towns to a larger city for work. Which theme is most directly illustrated?

A. Place
B. Movement
C. Region
D. Human–environment interaction

Correct answer: B. Movement
Movement covers the flow of people, products, and information between locations.

4. A map groups counties together because all of them share a dry climate. Which theme explains the grouping?

A. Location
B. Place
C. Movement
D. Region

Correct answer: D. Region
A region groups areas by a shared characteristic. Here the shared characteristic is climate.

5. Homeowners in a flood-prone neighborhood raise the floors of their houses on piers. Which theme focuses on the decision to adapt?

A. Place
B. Human–environment interaction
C. Location
D. Movement

Correct answer: B. Human–environment interaction
The decision links human building practices to a natural condition. Raising a floor adapts the house to flood risk.

6. A visitor is told that a lighthouse is just east of the harbor entrance. What kind of location information is this?

A. Relative location
B. Absolute location
C. A regional boundary
D. An altitude reading

Correct answer: A. Relative location
Relative location uses the position of another feature as a reference. The harbor entrance is the reference here.

7. Which observation describes a physical characteristic of a place?

A. The island imports fruit by ferry
B. Most residents commute south to work
C. The clinic is west of the bakery
D. The shoreline has steep basalt cliffs

Correct answer: D. The shoreline has steep basalt cliffs
Cliffs are a natural landform. The other observations describe movement or relative location.

8. Students in several towns contribute to a shared online map. Which part of the project best illustrates movement?

A. Marking the latitude and longitude of a pier
B. Recording the slope of a hill
C. Sending map updates from one town to another
D. Naming an area with a shared climate

Correct answer: C. Sending map updates from one town to another
Information can move even when people stay in place. The map updates travel between towns.

9. A farming village diverts part of a stream into irrigation channels. What makes this an example of human–environment interaction?

A. People change how water flows to support farming
B. The channel gives the village an absolute location
C. The stream’s name marks a cultural region
D. People record the village’s latitude

Correct answer: A. People change how water flows to support farming
The community modifies water flow to meet an agricultural need. The focus is the relationship between people and water.

10. A map shows the group of districts that use the same official language. Why can those districts be treated as one formal region?

A. They were grouped only because someone found them attractive
B. All residents travel to one transport hub
C. Each district has the same exact coordinates
D. They share a specified human characteristic

Correct answer: D. They share a specified human characteristic
A formal region can be defined by a common cultural or physical feature. A shared language is a cultural characteristic.

11. A map marks locations of five train stations. A table then shows how many riders travel between every pair. Which theme does the table add?

A. Human–environment interaction
B. Place
C. Movement
D. Absolute location

Correct answer: C. Movement
The station markers show where the stations are. The table adds flows of passengers between them.

12. Several towns receive deliveries from one central depot. A geographer draws a boundary around the depot’s service area. What type of region is defined?

A. A formal region based on elevation
B. A functional region
C. A formal region based on dialect
D. A perceptual region based on reputation

Correct answer: B. A functional region
A functional region is organized around a center and its connections. The depot and delivery routes define the service area.

13. A coastal town installs water-resistant flooring and builds a flood barrier. How do the actions illustrate two kinds of human–environment interaction?

A. Both actions classify the town as a cultural region
B. Both actions only describe movement of people out of town
C. The flooring identifies absolute location, and the barrier identifies relative location
D. The flooring adapts buildings to floods, and the barrier modifies how floodwater can reach them

Correct answer: D. The flooring adapts buildings to floods, and the barrier modifies how floodwater can reach them
Residents adapt structures with water-resistant flooring. A barrier changes the path or reach of floodwater.

14. Two maps show the same communities. One groups them by annual rainfall and the other groups them by the radio station people can receive. What does the difference demonstrate?

A. Regions depend on the characteristic or relationship used to define them
B. All regions must have identical boundaries
C. A place has no physical characteristics when it is also in a region
D. Relative location is the same as latitude and longitude

Correct answer: A. Regions depend on the characteristic or relationship used to define them
Rainfall defines one set of regions. The stations and their broadcast areas define another, so the boundaries can differ.

15. Which research question emphasizes place, while the others emphasize how people respond to or modify their surroundings?

A. Why did residents move roads away from steep slopes?
B. How have farmers changed the valley’s water supply?
C. What building styles and rock formations characterize the valley?
D. How does building on hillsides affect runoff?

Correct answer: C. What building styles and rock formations characterize the valley?
The first question describes the valley’s human and physical features. The others investigate relationships between human actions and the terrain or water.