

AP Human Geography – Student feedback (2016-2017)

This year's AP human geography course, undoubtedly, was pretty rigorous. For those who aspire to take the AP exam at the end of the year, I would recommend buying an AP textbook, such as The Princeton Review, which helped me immensely. Although it doesn't seem necessary, it is important to do all the homework questions and take the time to actually learn the material, because that definitely reflects the AP curriculum, which is slightly different from what the tests are on throughout the year. Although the class seems like a lot of work, it is important to remain calm, composed, and de-stressed throughout the year. I did enjoy our research projects and essay prompts that we were assigned at various times throughout the year. I would recommend that students begin studying at the beginning of the year, to avoid cramming towards the end, near the exam. It is crucial for students planning on taking this course at the beginning and throughout the year to evaluate their writing skills and general knowledge. Then, if a student is not such a strong writer, he or she can work on their skills from the beginning of the school year, and see an improvement towards the end. Time management skills were vital in taking this course, as homework is given almost every night, but all of it is given in advance. It really helped to get my human geography homework done as soon as possible, so I could focus on my long-term assignments in the class. I would also recommend taking plenty of practice AP exams early on in the year, and continue to track your progress from there. It is one thing to know all of the information, but it is a totally separate skill to be able to properly take a test, especially under pressure. Overall, despite the challenge, I truly did enjoy taking the course. It gave me something to be proud of, and taught me some lessons that I will surely carry with me to future AP classes.

- Lizzy A

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At the beginning of the year when I saw that I had been put into an AP class, I was very nervous since I had absolutely no idea what was expected of me. I had also never heard of any class called Human Geography, so I was especially nervous. As the class went by, I became less and less nervous once I realized that it was like any other class. It may have moved at a faster pace with more information in the curriculum, but it was a class just like all my other classes. Just like in all other classes, it is crucial that you remain on top of all your homework. Complete all of it on time, or even before the due date. That way it doesn't accumulate and take up all your time. Also, anybody who is trying out for a sports team or any other extracurricular activity should try to complete the work way before the due date, since the teams and activities begin to take up work time. I was on the basketball team and with practice three to four times a week I always had a tremendous amount of work to complete, with an insufficient amount of time to complete it. Make sure you space out your work so that you don't become too stressed out. At the end of the year there is an AP exam. Do not take this exam lightly. Buy a review book within your first couple months of being at school, and READ the book. It is a critical component to the class since it encompasses every term that you will be studying over the course of the year. If you review the concepts and key terms within the book, it will be significantly easier to study for the AP test without cramming at the last second. In order to do your absolute best, DO NOT judge your performance based on others. It will only give you the wrong mentality. Nobody else in the class will be like you. Everybody will have different strengths, different weaknesses, and different study habits. If somebody is memorizing terms for a test, you absolutely do not have to memorize them also. You study for the test in the way you know that you can do best. For me memorizing the terms did not help. When I understood what the terms were saying, that is when I did my best.

- Leora B

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APHG is a rigorous course that requires efficient time management, a comprehensive understanding of a variety of concepts relating to a multitude of things ranging from history to economic development to basic geography. One of the most challenging things about taking AP Human Geography is realizing that this class will be significantly harder than any of your other classes, and will give you a much greater workload than any of your classes. For me at least, procrastination has always been an issue, and when faced with the task of reading an entire review book or completing practice tests and free response questions, I have always had the urge to just say “Whatever I’ll just do it later, I have plenty of time”

It is important to learn to resist this urge early on. Additionally, start studying early on, and answer every homework question thoroughly as it covers most of the information you will need to know for the exam. Keeping up with current events will help you understand many of the concepts you will learn, and providing examples can help you earn extra points on the exam even if your other answers are not as strong as you would like. Buy a review book a couple weeks before Pesach so that you have time to start reviewing and highlighting important terms, and then read through the book over Pesach break. Engaging in class discussions will help you see if you understand the material and can apply it. While overstressing is never a good idea, it is important to take this class seriously and to always do the homework and review material. One of the harder things for me was the significant amount of models that you must know for the exam. For these models it is important to know what they represent, their flaws, and a detailed description of them as such questions will be on the exam in the form of multiple choice questions or free response questions. Finally, while this class is difficult, I do believe that anyone who puts in time and effort will easily be able to succeed and achieve a passing score.

- Roey B

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If I had the opportunity to take AP human Geography again in my freshman year, I would definitely do so. This course prepares you for the upcoming 4 years of high school and helps you learn study habits, test taking skills and material that you can relate to the current world. In the beginning of the year I was in a lower class but was doing well so I decided to move up into the AP course. I originally thought that this course was useless and was never going to help me in real world situations but I was completely wrong. All the terms and history of cities have helped me understand many of the issues occurring in the world along with news broadcasts and newspaper articles. Many of the important tools and study habits that are needed in order to succeed in this course include actually reading the textbook for homework, studying each night and staying organized. Reading the textbook and doing the homework is one of the most important tools needed in order to succeed as when you are beginning to study for the AP test you will already have learnt many of the models, terms and examples from the textbook. I would recommend beginning to study after winter break for the AP test as being prepared and confident will be a key factor in doing well on the test. Many of Mr. Ohring's tests and quizzes also relate to the AP test as the material and format are very similar on all his assessments. Organization is also important because without organization you will not be able to do well on his journal checks, assessments and the AP test. Lastly, if you don't pay attention during class there will be a very good chance you might have to move to a lower course as you will never be prepared for the assessments and essays. Hopefully, you enjoy the course and succeed as this course will prepare you for the upcoming 4 years.

- Benjamin B

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Yaakov's Guide to Cracking the AP Exam

Dear Optimistic Freshman,

After struggling through the AP Human Geography course of 2017, and making many different mistakes, I have made a list of things I should have done which would have made my life so much easier. I have now come up with the perfect strategy to score perfectly on the AP Exam. If you actually read and live by these tips, you will not only get a five on the exam, but you will also retain more knowledge in the long run, and you will gain a larger appreciation for the world around you.

1. Read Carefully-In the beginning of the year, you will probably be very excited, and you will probably do all of the homework assignments thoroughly. As time goes on, you will begin to lose interest, and start to lower your standards. You will probably get to the point where you are clicking on the search button of the online textbook, and looking up the main words of the homework questions. You might also create a shared Google Doc, and split the homework among your friends. Don't do any of that. You will save yourself so much time and stress if you actually pay attention to the reading and work through it.

2. Don't push things off-I know you have heard this one before, but in this class, your work can really add up. If you must procrastinate because you are just one of those kids like me, you shouldn't, but if you must, do it in any other class. Not this one. Do all of your readings on time, no matter what the circumstances are. Trust me. There is too much stuff going on in school, and specifically in this class that you can fall behind almost instantaneously.

3. Make a list of theories and models-As you continue through the course, any time you come upon any term with the word theory, or model, write it down in a separate document. This is a big one. If I had known in the beginning of the year how important this would be, I would have been much better off. Add definitions and contemporary examples of each term, as well as the pages in the book where you can learn more about the topic. Keep in mind that you can add any more terms besides theories and models that you have trouble with, or find important.

4. Don't be afraid to ask-Mr. Ohring expects a lot from you, but don't be intimidated by this. He can help explain different concepts that you have trouble with. I'm serious; Mr. Ohring is there for a reason. He is happy to help. You can also ask your friends for help. Friends can often prove to very helpful because you can relate to them, and they can speak to you in a way you can understand.

5. Buy and Read the Princeton Review-This is a great resource, which most of the kids in my class used including me. I was stupid however, and waited until just before the AP exam to start studying. Learn from my mistake. Be sure to buy this book at least before Passover break, maybe even earlier. Make sure to read all of the tips offered by it. Read the book at a constant pace and maintain a routine of reading about ten pages per day. Also it helps to highlight the most important phrases in each paragraph, and maybe even annotate if that is something you

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are good at. This will help you skim through the book when you read the information for your second or third time (Yes you should read it more than once). Some kids bought multiple different kinds of review books, just to get a wider variety of information and examples on different concepts, but this is not so essential.

6. Human Geography still requires geography-Any time you hear the name of any place or region, open up a map immediately to make sure you know where it is that you are learning about. This will help you better understand the concepts and help you answer some of the questions which require geographic knowledge on the AP exam.

7. Take practice tests-This is a simple one. A good way to get a feeling for the AP exam is to take as many practice tests and Free Response Questions you can find. It will increase your speed and help you understand what kind of test the AP exam is.

8. Use your online resources-As the exam nears, use the glossary of the textbook to help remind you of the different terms used throughout the course. I used this myself and it helped. You can also look up Quizlets on models, theories, and other terms. These may seem ridiculous, as some of them are hundreds of terms long, but if you follow the tips above, it will merely act as a review, and you will probably zip through them pretty fast. The ones you don't know, you can "star," and work on later.

9. Don't freak out-You don't want to psyche yourself out before the test. A lot of your friends may talk to you about what they did to study. I found that pretty much every conversation I was having with the kids in my Human Geography class leading up to the test was about the test. This really ticked me off, and I began to think that what I was doing to prepare for the exam wasn't sufficient. Be confident in yourself, and avoid all of the commotion that your peers are needlessly creating. You have done what you need to prepare for the exam, so don't worry. You should also know that this course is optional and that it won't affect your life so much. If you don't get the grade you want, your life isn't over. Keep in mind that you also don't have to show colleges the grade you get on the exam, so really there isn't any risk.

10. Work efficiently, and use common sense on the AP exam-During the exam, pace yourself on the questions, but also give yourself time to look back at your answers. Also, make sure to go with your gut, because it is right most of the time. You should read the questions carefully, and make sure to only answer what the question is asking. Often times, the correct answer will have an important word in it that is also in the question. The bottom line is that you should pay attention to only what the question is specifically asking.

I know this all seems really tedious and boring, but trust me it will save you so much time and stress if you actually follow these instructions. You will get a 5/5 on the AP exam if you follow these tips, and you will be so relieved when it is all over. Study hard and good luck.

Sincerely,
-Yaakov E

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Towards the beginning of the year I would not have recommended taking this class as a freshman. I was really overwhelmed through the year with the large amount of work I would have to do each night as well as the fact that I had a lack of knowledge of the AP human geography material itself. After taking the AP human geography exam, I would definitely recommend taking this class with the understanding that it requires a lot of work and self-motivation. With this mindset, I would recommend to start the year with a human geography exam review book, learning from experience it would have been so much more beneficial to begin reading the book in the beginning of the year than later, in April. When studying for the exam, besides for reading your exam book take as many practice multiple choice and FRQ tests as you can. Being able to apply all of the materials you have studied is one of the hardest parts of taking this course and exam. When taking multiple choice practice tests, don't just choose the answer that seems the most right; understand all of the answers and prove why the other choices would be wrong. When taking FRQs, try to focus on what the question is asking and don't be concerned that you may have shorter or longer answers than other people or that you didn't get the same answers as others. There are many ways to answer a question that are still accurate and are answering the question. The more practice you have the more comfortable you will become with the information and the easier it will be to apply the information in your essays. Also when you are completing homework questions, do not just try to find the answer and move on, actually read the information in the textbook because the questions will actually help you understand and apply the information. Although it may be tedious reading through the book will help you in the long run. Regarding the AP exam itself, try not to worry about time. When I was taking the exam, I wasn't thinking about time. Rather, I was focusing my thoughts on the material in the moment and as I was answering the questions. I finished with time to spare. When you are too focused on time, you may not be able to think straight because you are so nervous that you won't finish the exam.

- Shaina F

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Entering AP Human Geography, I had lots of assumptions and very little knowledge of what I was really signing up for. My first piece of advice for freshmen: look up human geography before you start the class. It will be very beneficial to know what you're actually going to be learning (and eventually tested on) before you begin. Another piece of advice: do not listen to the stereotypes. You likely have phrases floating around in your head like "easiest AP" and "everyone gets a 5". Throw those out the window. Aside from being almost entirely falsified, those statements won't do you any good on the day of the AP exam or throughout the class. For the first few months of Mr. Ohring's class I was very diligent about giving the homework he assigned and the in-class review of that homework my full attention. I eventually became a little less attentive, specifically during the review, and that was certainly a poor decision. The homework consists of the bulk of the AP material and it is essential to know that stuff in and out. It is basically a choice of whether to learn that material in allotted class time throughout the year or in the 2 weeks prefacing the AP exam. Along the same lines, I would highly recommend purchasing an AP review book at the inception of the school year. I personally bought the Princeton Review book and found it exceptionally helpful. While which book you buy is your choice, it is critical to just buy one of them. In addition, I would recommend beginning your study of the book early. I understand that it takes tremendous amounts of motivation to begin studying for a May exam in October and it may seem excessive, but you will certainly appreciate it in April, when your friends are cramming the material you are fluent in. Even if it's just 5 pages a day or 10 terms, it will make all the difference in the long run. Remember, it is a marathon, not a sprint. Finally, advice for the exam itself: the most critical advice I can give you is to study your way, in reference to the AP material. I personally benefitted from taking several full-length multiple choice practice tests, going through many FRQs (specifically the ones provided on the CollegeBoard website), and comprehensive review of the Princeton Review. I have friends who did not find the Princeton Review helpful and friends who swore by it. Regardless, it is important to find which study method works for you and stick with them. Aside from the actual content of the exam, knowing how to take the test is half the battle. From process of elimination to outlining FRQs and creating "word-banks" with AP terms, test-taking skills is one of the major factors that was essential for the AP exam. In summation, please remember that you are a freshman and you are going above and beyond what is expected of you by taking this course. View it as an opportunity rather than a punishment and learn from your inevitable mistakes. Good luck!

- Sydney F

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AP Human Geography definitely requires a lot of thinking. Before starting the class, I was unsure whether I could handle the workload, and keep myself up to date on class notes. In the beginning of the course, the amount of work seemed to scare many of my classmates, but I pushed through it, knowing that I would become easier as time went on. While studying for tests throughout the year, I realized that it wasn't as difficult as I thought it would be; I just needed to put in the time and effort in order to process the information I was given. The homework in the textbook is right there, all you have to do is find it. I found it very helpful to use the textbook in addition to my notes in order to properly study the material, because it included many concepts that I would not have identified otherwise. Before each test, I suggest reviewing the material with other classmates by repeating it back and forth, until you thoroughly remember each idea. Also, make sure to notice the little bits of information within the notes, because it may be used for an extra credit question at the end of the test. It is definitely useful to keep organized, as you will be covering more information than in any other class you have ever taken. I recommend keeping all classwork, homework, and notes in one place, and creating a "journal" either on your device or in a notebook so it is easy to access. Always do your homework, and be prepared to discuss your answers in class. When it came to studying for the AP exam, I realized what all my hard work over the year was for. I started studying about a month before the exam, using various review books in order to make sure that I didn't miss any key ideas. I might suggest that you should start studying earlier than I did, as I did end up cramming in a bunch of studying in the final week. Remember, this exam is all about preparation, so make sure to leave enough time to develop your study schedule. Also, it is critical to get a full night of sleep before the exam, and the anxiety will not help with that. After I walked out the doors of the exam room, I felt as if a huge burden was taken off my shoulders. I felt so relieved to have completed probably the most difficult test in my life, and I was happy to finish the year strong. I have learned so much from this course, and I highly recommend that paying attention in class as well as a good work ethic can help guide anyone through the journey of AP Human Geography.

- Jonah G

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For those in the future and to all whom it may concern, these are my discoveries of living through an AP class in ninth grade. First off, studying is mandatory. I walked into this class thinking "I've never had to study before, so why do it now?" This is the opposite mentality of what is wanted. At first, the task of actually studying seems daunting, but the butterflies soon disappear towards the actual exam. This is why I personally encourage future students to study every single weekend. Purchase the Princeton review at the beginning of the year, and read through 10 pages a night. Once a habit is made, studying will be a breeze.

Not only should studying be done from the Princeton review, but from Mr. Ohring's weekly model checks and lessons as well. This may seem a little laborious at first, but in the long run it is extremely helpful.

Another unique way to study is by mastering the countries themselves. I recommend going on Sporcle.com and finding trivia on the countries of the world. Human geography is all about location so if one knows the countries of the world inside and out, there will be much more understanding of the material itself.

Another way to get the edge on this test is by relaxing 24 hours before the exam.

Although it may seem counterintuitive, relaxing and not studying before the exam refreshes the brain and best prepares you for the test. This is only a personal recommendation of past experiences but all other approaches are accepted as well.

Last piece of advice is to always always always read straight from the textbook. The Independent homework reading and answers are actually helpful. Do not skim through the textbook until the exact sentence is found that answers the question. Actually read through and comprehend the information that is presented in the book. If the material is read through once or twice, there is a much better chance of retaining the information as opposed to not reading it at all.

- Eitan G

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If I could go back in time and give myself advice about this course, I'd tell myself to stop spending all my energy worrying about the upcoming Human Geography tests, and focus on doing the homework thoroughly! This is a dual curriculum- you'll be learning about different regions of the world in class in addition to the AP Human Geography College Board course. You will learn a lot from both, but it's important to keep a balance. Last year, I studied so hard for the tests and put less of an emphasis on the homework. (Homework was reading the AP textbook and answering questions). I always completed my homework, but I didn't take time to read through the textbook, I just skimmed through for the answers. (I mean there's a search box- they're practically encouraging you to skip the actual reading- but DON'T do it!) While this meant I did well on my tests, it also resulted in me having to study for hours upon hours upon hours for the AP exam- probably more than I should've had to.

I was prepared to take an exam on all that we'd been tested on throughout the year, but the AP exam? Not so much. Had I read through the entire text book when we were assigned homework, not just to finish, but to understand and learn, I'd have a different story. Yes it's annoying and takes time and self-motivation, but reading the textbook thoroughly little by little over the course of the year will decrease the amount of cramming and panicking you'll have to do come April.

You'll have to do lots of free response questions (FRQs) and multiple choice diagnostics at home. You can find these online. The more of these you do and the sooner you start, the more comfortable and confident you'll be for the exam. Also, get the Princeton Review. Now! Don't make my mistake and buy it over Pesach and only look at it a month prior to the test. Pace yourself, and start now. (But definitely don't limit yourself to this text book, trust me). Focus on studying models and concepts. The test makers love those (you'll get the gist of the types of questions College Board love to throw at you as the year goes in). They also like to focus on agriculture and urban concepts- study that the most. I'd tell you more about the different models and such, but the Princeton review will do that even better than I could- so go buy it!

You might be intimidated and discouraged regarding the exam, but seriously, no matter what kind of student you are, as long as you read the textbook, the Princeton review, and do some practice tests at home, you'll be fine- and most importantly, you'll learn SO MUCH!

Don't listen to those people who say it's pointless to take an AP freshman year, or that human geography isn't important, because they're wrong. Taking an AP was a genuinely beneficial experience and improved my studying ability and writing (Skills that are imperative in high school... Especially the writing!!). Most importantly, I've learned so much and (get ready for the most cheesy line) I have a new perspective of the world. There's so much about the world and about the reasons behind phenomena that you didn't even know you didn't know. This class will broaden your perspective and knowledge of the world, I promise!

- Avigail G

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To Incoming Freshman,

I hope you are prepared to take this next step in your life and be ready for a change. I would like to give you some advice regarding the AP Human Geography course. I can positively say you should take this course. Although it may initially seem very difficult, boring, and annoying, you will definitely learn a lot, even though you may only realize it at the end of the year. Here are five important things you should do to be prepared for this class, and any other in your high school career. First, the Princeton review book will be your best friend. Buy it as soon as possible. Second, before you really start the course brush up on where all of the countries are located. It will be very helpful to visualize what an area looks like when it is discussed in the textbook or in class. Third, throughout the year you need to pay attention to what you are reading in the iBook and/or the textbook. All of this information will be on the end of the year AP exam. Fourth, one thing I did not do, which I regret, is listening to the daily news. I found that on the exam, the College Board asked for current examples of ideas in Human Geography. Lastly, always be aware about how much work you have to do. This piece of advice can be applied to any of your classes. A good tip would be to use a planner and write out all of the work due. Also, in Human Geography specifically, don't leave your work to the last day. Do some work early so that you don't get yourself stressed. Another thing, keep all of your work organized. Use folders, binders or other ways to keep subjects in an organized fashion. The most important thing to remember is to just enjoy high school and learn new ideas.

From your fellow high schooler,

- Elisheva G

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Hi incoming freshmen! I know the whole process of transitioning to high school is nerve racking and taking an AP on top of that is really difficult. Throughout freshmen year a lot of people came to me and said, “You’re in 9th grade and you’re taking an AP?!”. I anticipate that you will encounter this conversation at some point over the year. At some points I heard this question and wondered why should I put all this work and pressure on my shoulders? As the year comes to an end, I am able to reflect back and understand how beneficial this class was for me. I learned a tremendous amount and truly feel as though I have improved significantly from the beginning of the year. I would like to share with you some tips that I have learned over the duration of this course and some mistakes that I have learned from as well.

Begin preparing for the exam early on:

Do not wait till two months or one month before the exam to begin studying. You should start your review early on in the year so that you are not stressed during the months leading up to the exam. Also, you are more likely to retain information if you internalize it gradually as opposed to cramming.

Surround yourself with positive friends:

Unfortunately, people often share their grades and people begin comparing themselves. At many points in the course I compared my grades with my classmates and immediately my stomach would drop. Do not be discouraged by hearing that your peer got a higher grade than you. You must learn from your mistakes and realize that everyone moves at a different pace. It is important to have friends that support and encourage you as opposed to someone who may make you feel inferior because of your test score.

The importance of homework:

The terms, models, concepts, and everything you need to know for the exam are in the homework. Take the time to process the homework and review it so that you retain the information. In addition, if you slacked off a little at the beginning of the year, it is not too late. It is never too late to make new study habits or begin taking homework and assignments seriously.

When you are taking the exam:

Do not doubt yourself. You have studied an insane amount so do not second guess your answers. During the free response section of the test, if you do not know the exact definition of a term or you do not understand the question, do your best. Free response questions are not yes or no questions; there is more than one answer. When discussing answers with friends, don't be worried if you came up with a different idea or did not

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mention a specific term; there are multiple ways of answering free response questions. If you make your argument and support your answer you will likely receive partial credit if not full credit. Also, if you have a term or concept that comes to mind make sure to incorporate it so that the reader sees you have comprehensive knowledge of the material.

To conclude, remember that you are taking a challenging course as a freshman. It is okay to not get hundreds on every test or quiz. Lastly, your test scores do not define you in the slightest. I struggled at many points throughout this course and I would be happy to relieve stress and give encouraging words to anyone taking this class. Good luck!

- Chani K

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Dear Freshman taking APHG,

AP Human Geography is hard. It should be. After all, it's a COLLEGE level course, and you're taking it in ninth grade. But there are ways to set yourself back, and ways to make it easier. When you are assigned textbook reading and homework questions, don't just scan the text for the answers. Read the textbook, and understand the concepts. ALL OF THEM. Even though at times, it can be extremely boring, you must stay focused. I understand that this may seem like a lot of work, but it will save you many sleepless night of studying and frantically reading the Princeton Review like your life depends on it. By understanding what you read, not merely copying it word for word into your notebook, you will have been studying for the AP test throughout the entire year. Long term preparation is essential in any AP course. Whereas in middle school, you were able to just cram for a big test a day or even week before, this is impossible to do on a test like this. Don't just complete the necessary questions to get a good grade on a journal check, know the information as if you have a test on it the next day. Some people may tell you that The Princeton Review book "saved them", or that it "taught them everything." The Princeton Review is an excellent review book, but it is just that, a review book. I suggest you use it to refresh yourself on material that you have already read in the textbook, but not as your sole means of learning the material. If you take a practice test, and don't score as well as you anticipated, do not be discouraged. You may not have yet reached a chapter that covers the subject matter, or you may just need to review additionally. You'll also probably notice some of your friends who get practice test scores that are much higher than yours. This does not mean that you should initiate panic level 1000, or think of yourself as stupid. The kids who got higher scores than you might just have better memories of information that you learned earlier in the year, be great at guessing, or just happen to know some really random information about Nigeria's GDP. DO NOT WORRY. Freshmen year is a big adjustment for everyone, and freaking out that you got a worse grade on a practice test that does not count will not help. Rather just go home, keep working hard, and review what you already know. I found that a lot of my friends who panicked only pushed themselves further behind by saying that they were stupid, or that AP Human Geography was not "natural" to them. To be honest, it is not "natural" to anyone, even that kid who scores in the 50s on his first practice test. I highly doubt that anyone in your class has been raised to enjoy Power of Place videos, or knows anything about Demographic Transition before they walk into Mr. Ohring's class. This class will seem boring, difficult, and meaningless to you at some point, I guarantee it. You might even consider dropping out. But believe me, you will learn a tremendous amount about politics, the world, and just how to work hard. So stick with it. It'll pay off.

P.S. If Mr. Ohring ever shows you a movie called "King Corn", PAY ATTENTION, then come ask any kid who took the class last year about it.

- Yoni K

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To the upcoming freshmen,

Reflecting back on my year in AP human geography, I realized a few things that I think would be really helpful for your success in this class and especially on the AP exam. I'm going to share with you a few things that I wish I would've known when I started this class in the beginning of the year:

1. Read the iBook: I know that you may be tempted to just search through the book to find the answers, but don't. The iBook is your best resource in terms of the AP, and if you really take the time to read and comprehend it, then you will be very prepared for the exam. I know that it is very difficult and time-consuming to actually read through the whole book, but it will be extremely worth it and you definitely won't regret it. If it helps you, you may even want to highlight things that you think you need to know and write notes to help you remember them. Also, try to think of terms, ideas, and examples that relate to what you're reading.
2. Know examples: Although you may think that the exam is just defining terms, using models, and explaining concepts, it is really just about knowing examples. You don't need to be able to, for instance, define the dependency ratio word for word, but you would need to know which countries have high dependency ratios and which ones have low dependency ratios. It's not about knowing the terms; it's about being able to apply them.
3. Know countries and regions: No matter how many terms and models you know, if you don't know what goes on in specific countries and regions, you won't be prepared. You need to know what type of clothing, food, agriculture, religion, architecture, language, music and overall culture each place is associated with. Don't memorize these things for each place, but just be familiar with them, so that you won't be completely lost when they ask you these kinds of questions on the multiple choice section.
4. Figure out what works for you: I've written a few things here that I know help me, but they may not necessarily help you. You need to find what works for you and what helps you learn and remember things. For me it's rewriting them in my own words and saying them out loud, but for you it may be something completely different. Don't try to imitate the ways that other people are studying, because their study habits might be helpful for them, but your brain works differently than theirs, so you may need to try something else.
5. Don't stress: This course and the exam are really not worth your stress or anxiety. Do your best, but remember that it doesn't matter whether you get a one, two, three, four, or five. This AP is just for your benefit, and it will help prepare for APs in the future. These are just a few pointers that I think will help you on the exam, but it's really up to you to learn the information and be prepared for the exam. Remember that even if you have no clue what an FRQ is talking about, just make things up and include terms that might relate. Good luck!

- Liora M

AP Human Geography – Student feedback (2016-2017)

At the beginning of this year, I was very excited to begin the AP Human geography course, and I set a goal for myself to score a 5 on the AP exam. I enjoyed doing the textbook questions and paid attention to the lectures in class. However, as the year progressed, I began to feel the intense pressure of the course. Essays in MLA format, daily textbook readings, and weekly tests and quizzes inhibited my focus on studying for the actual AP exam. Furthermore, multiple exams and projects assigned in other classes at the same time made studying for the AP exam not a priority. While I worked very hard and my results from tests and quizzes reflected the work that I put in, upon receiving the results of my first AP practice test I knew that I had to begin studying for the exam and that I could not afford to wait any longer. That was when I purchased the Princeton Review book and began my intense two month study session devoted entirely to preparation for the exam. I put long-term projects on hold as I took numerous practice tests and read hundreds of pages in the book. In total I took around 12 practice tests total as well as around 20 free response questions and felt more or less prepared for the exam. The actual exam felt similar to any other and required the application of countless concepts that I learned throughout the year. While I was well prepared for the exam, I feel as if I would have had a better mindset entering the test if I had paid more attention to the daily textbook readings. I was more focused on completing the questions as opposed to learning and retaining the genuine answers. To help incoming freshmen with this topic, I propose that students should be encouraged to answer questions as they wish without writing the answers using the exact words stated in the textbook. Additionally, to properly absorb critical textbook information, I believe that it will be extremely helpful if students are tested on certain aspects of the textbook, such as the models of urban planning and the Malthusian Theory. This way, students can spend less time at home studying concepts that they already learned in class. In addition to this, the incorporation of in-class projects using technology such as GIS and Remote Sensing (Google Earth) into the AP Human Geography course will assist students in visually comprehending geographical concepts and present day conflicts on a global scale. On a final note, I believe that it will be much easier for students to study during the latter part of the year if they are assigned specific "study nights" or periods of time that are devoted entirely to studying and do not involve assigned homework or projects. This will relieve students of additional and unnecessary stress and will promote studying for the exam.

- Ariel M

AP Human Geography – Student feedback (2016-2017)

When I found out I was placed in an AP, I was very nervous. Anyone who I told that I was taking an AP asked me why I was taking a college course in ninth grade. At some points throughout the year, I would doubt whether or not I should've taken a very rigorous and time consuming class. In retrospect, I'm very glad I took this course, and these are some tips or things I should've done that would've been very beneficial for the incoming freshmen. First off, staying caught up with current events and news is crucial. By knowing what goes on in the world today, it will easily allow you to apply the information you are learning in this class for your benefit. I would make it a priority to read the news either online or from a newspaper at least once a week. This will ultimately lead you to understanding the world and its' international politics, economics, cultural practices, and conflicts. Another thing I wish I would have taken more seriously is the homework in this course. Don't just get the homework done so you can cross it off of your to-do list, rather actually read through the pages and really try to understand the concepts and material. If you do this, you will notice that by the end of the year when it's time for you to take the exam, you know everything, but you just need a quick review. Everything that will be on your AP exam is in the readings, so I highly recommend you take them seriously and read through them thoroughly. Another step that is pivotal to doing well inside and outside the classroom is learning the different maps and regions. Being able to identify a random country on the map is so important and is something good to generally know for day to day conversations. It will help you to develop examples of ideas you've learned in the course and will assist you on the AP exam. Now, for the AP exam itself, I would recommend buying the Princeton Review in the beginning of the year. It will require a lot of motivation and perseverance to study, but it will only help you in the long run. Also, it's not just about memorizing key terms but about understanding them, being able to apply them, and give examples. Also, don't let other students stress you out. Go at your own pace, manage your time, and organize your work and you will be in good shape. One last thought of something I wish I would have taken better advantage of was speaking and engaging in class discussions. If you have a question or a comment, don't be afraid to say it. This class is going to be a challenge, and it may not be an easy A, but if you work hard throughout the year and really try your best, I guarantee you will learn very much in this course and really see you work pay off.

- Sivan M

AP Human Geography – Student feedback (2016-2017)

Taking tests

Never study only the night before. For some classes, this practice is definitely acceptable and can land the student with a very decent grade. For AP Human Geography, this was never the case. I have tried it, and I have failed. I turned out okay in the end, but through unnecessary levels of stress. I strongly recommend against it. Study from a bare minimum of three nights before a scheduled test. Quizlets are extraordinarily helpful to make. Using Quizlets made by fellow peers should be a last minute resort. Making them is studying.

Studying for the AP Exam

Start now! Get the Princeton review FROM DAY ONE. Read a little every week. A little could mean one page. But do it. I really regret leaving the studying to a month before the exam date. At least familiarize yourself with models, theories, and concepts.

Completing homework and reading thoroughly

“Oh, Shoot! I forgot to do my homework! Eh. I’ll do it during breakfast before class.” None of that! Sit down in quiet and get your stuff done. The homework assignments are a lot if you don’t keep up. I am writing this after I took the exam and I’m still catching up on homework because I was so disorganized. As I’m writing the answers to the homework, I remember a question about the topic that was either on the final or the actual exam itself. If I had only been doing it regularly like I was supposed to! Another thing: never read the textbook for the sake of getting the homework done. Homework is important, sure. You get a grade for it. But most importantly you need to understand the material you are reading. Do not sift through the text or use the search. BIG MISTAKE.

Reading and writing skills

I started off the year typing my homework. Because I live in Hollywood, this seemed like the best option because I could do the questions on the bus on Google Docs. I strongly recommend against this. You are required to write on the AP exam. Practice your handwriting if it is bad. You can’t get a good score on the exam if they don’t know what you’re saying. I also found that I process the material infinitely better if I write it.

Engaging in class discussion

When the teacher is reviewing homework or notes for a test, I found the best way I absorbed the information is to listen and not do anything else, like take notes. That doesn’t mean spacing out and having nothing but your friends to refer to after class. Internalizing what he is saying will make it that much easier to read over the notes later to study. You’ll be able to say, “Hey, I remember him saying something about this. Oh, and he gave this example.” And if you have questions, ask away. Google definitely helps, but it’s nothing close to face to face feedback.

Keeping up with current event

Enable news notifications on your phone. You don’t even have to read the article! Just read the title of the alert. Also, go to cnn10.com for a fantastic 10 minute daily update on world events.

AP Human Geography – Student feedback (2016-2017)

The AP Human Geography course is fast paced, but it is very important to stay on top of all your work. AP Human Geo is a preparation for the AP Exam at the end of the year, so keep all of your work from class. Not only memorizing the material for tests and homework, but understanding the key ideas enough to apply them to other concepts is a very helpful way to go through the year because the AP tests you on how well you can compare and analyze a situation with all of the information you learned. The class involves a lot of work, including articles, 30 minute videos, and reading the textbook; but you should try to learn about individual countries' location, government, and major occurrences that they are known for. It is also good to know multiple examples of world powers, global problems, and supranational organizations. There is a lot of research and studying that has to be done outside of school; and the best way to stay ahead of the game is to review previous tests or lessons with new concepts. For example, the homework involves terms that are directly pulled from the AP Exam, which means that any term in the homework should be remembered. The Free Response Questions (FRQ) are random, so you may not remember the one specific term they are asking you for, so use logic to figure out the answer. Always answer a test or AP question even if you don't know the answer because you can very easily get partial credit if you explain other ideas related to the question. If needed be vague or guess on a multiple choice question because it's not worth wasting your time on a question you have no clue about. Time is also a big factor into the exams over the course of year because it is difficult to see the amount of information you know in just a 40 minute period, so work efficiently and focus on the longer questions. The best way to make sure you have enough time to finish any exam is to take practice tests for the AP and log your progress as well as your time to see what topics you need to focus on, how much time should be spent in each section, and to see if you are internalizing the ideas you learned. Now would be a good time to say that this class is interesting and thought provoking, so come into every class like it is your favorite subject and you are confident in the things you know, not scared of missing homework or getting a bad grade. This is a hard class with so much information on totally different topics that you will all get aggravated and stressed out because you won't get the grades you think you deserve, but this is a new experience for every one of your classmates. Don't be afraid to drop down because if you are doing this class for your resume or college credit, it will be a long and difficult year that may not be worth your time because of worse grades. Ask questions because all of your classmates are as confused as you are, and take it seriously even if you aren't doing so well. I know that this essay has probably done at least one of three things: 1) scared the living daylights out of you, 2) prepared you for the course, or 3) barely fazed you because you think you are different from everyone else in my class that are all saying the same thing. If you are in this APHG class, that means that you are pretty smart, hard-working, and care about your efforts in school, so pick which of above three choices is the best way to approach the school year. The best way to stay positive is to do your best because the kids that cared the most were the most accomplished, confident, and happiest when they walked into class each day. I wish you all good luck, but in the end, don't stress out if you are not really prepared for taking a college level course, because at this age, you are also just learning how to drive.

- Akiva R

AP Human Geography – Student feedback (2016-2017)

Reflecting on the past year with my acquired vast Human geography knowledge I would like to offer to anyone taking this course a quick “how to” guide on your upcoming year in AP Human Geography. First I would like to share with you the best things that I did to study and what I also wish I would have done.

The first thing you should do is buy the AP Human Geography Princeton Review. That book has everything you will ever need to know for the exam. Once you buy the book, which I did in January, don't let it just sit in a corner in your room unopened, which I did until a month before the test. What you should do is read and study about 15 pages of it every weekend. This will help you have the least amount of stress coming into the exam as possible because you will not be cramming. Another great part of the Princeton Review is it has a chapter in the beginning of the book that tells you how to take the test and manage your time so you can answer all of the questions and still have some time to go over them. That has completely transformed my test taking abilities because the reality is that you will not know every single question on the test but this will teach you how to make the best possible guesses on the multiple choice section. In terms of the FRQs, fake it until you make it. As long as you prove your point and backup your answer, you will get points. The person who is grading your essay is on your side. They are told to give you as many points as they can. A way to avoid that situation entirely is to study for the test like everything will be an FRQ, not a multiple choice question. As you are going through the material, start to apply it to real life examples, current events, and other models and theories. This mindset will not only help your essay, but also your multiple choice score because that section is in no way spit back. Another great thing to do is after you take a practice exam, go over all the questions you got wrong and study them because those concepts will most likely appear again just in a different form.

Throughout the course and as the AP exam date approaches, the stress level will rise for everyone. Even if you are someone like me who does not get stressed out, there are other students in the class who will definitely psyche you out but I assure you that this is not their intention; rather it is their coping mechanism to deal with their stress. Everyone has different studying and coping methods and it should not stress you out that yours is different than anyone else's. You do you. On that note, don't be embarrassed to ask a question because you think you are the only one who does not know what a term means; don't be afraid to ask. It's most likely that half the class does not know what it means either and are also too embarrassed to ask. Another great thing to do in this situation is to just look it up; your iPad is right in front of you. The best thing to remember is that it is just a test. There is no need to stress out because no one and no college will ever know your score if you chose to withhold it.

Another thing I wish I had realized sooner than the last week of school is that the content of this class is actually useful. I do feel like a very well rounded individual now who can contribute to any conversation and be confident that what I am saying is valid.

In AP Human Geography, put in all of your effort, read the Princeton Review religiously from the beginning of the year, relax, and you will do very well.

- Mayrav S

AP Human Geography – Student feedback (2016-2017)

Over the course of the school year I have learned many valuable lessons that I would like to bestow upon you, the upcoming Freshmen who are going to be taking AP Human Geography next year. The biggest and most important piece of advice that I learned is to manage your time properly. You do not want to end up rushing through all of the assignments that you have at the last minute. There is a lot of work in this class and it helps tremendously to spread it out evenly over a significant period of time that way you are not stressed. By spreading out all the work that you have over a period of time you are also able to take more time to analyze and process what the textbook readings are asking from you. The textbook is what the Human Geography exam is based upon so by knowing what the textbook says you are in pretty good shape for doing well on the exam. Another piece of advice that I found extremely important is to buy either the Princeton Review book or the Barron's book to assist you in studying for the AP exam at the end of the year. You should not only buy the book early on, but study from it as soon as possible. It will help tremendously in the long run when you are not cramming at the last second to learn the many terms that are needed in order to do well on the exam. I personally got the book at the beginning of the year but I kept on postponing studying from it because I felt that the test was in so long and I do not need to start studying so soon. This is one of the biggest things that I regret not doing to prepare for this exam so start studying from the book as soon as possible! Also, do as many practice tests as possible. These tests help you get used to the style of how the questions on the AP exam are written. More often than not the questions on the exam are not written in a very straight-forward fashion and it can take some time to be able to process what the question is asking from you. With the limited time that you are allotted to take the exam you do not want to spend a lot of time trying to figure out what the question is asking; you just want to answer the question as soon as possible so that you can finish all of the questions on time. Therefore by taking many practice tests you are instinctively processing and making a mental note of the style of the questions, therefore eventually requiring significantly less time on the actual AP exam to process each question. Lastly, you will need to read the news a lot so that you have a very good understanding of the current issues that are going on in the world. Knowing what is currently going on in the world not only assists you on questions that ask you specifically about a certain event that occurred, but it can also help you learn the material better. Whenever learning something new it always helps to relate it to something that you know a lot about. Therefore if you learn a new concept or term in Human Geography, you will be able to connect it to a contemporary example, therefore deepening your understanding of that piece of information. Overall, I wish you the best of luck succeeding in this class and good luck!

- Sarit S

AP Human Geography – Student feedback (2016-2017)

When I tell others that I took an AP course during freshman year, I often get remarks about how crazy it is for freshmen to take APs. Although I entered the school year not knowing about the effort I would need to put in to succeeding, I realized taking this AP has prepared me for future challenging classes and I do recommend that next year's 9th graders take the class as well. Personally, the homework questions and assignments were not too difficult to keep up with, but studying for the AP exam was something I struggled with. I only began reviewing for the test during Passover break and I regret not starting earlier. I suggest that future freshmen should purchase the Princeton Review textbook in the beginning of the year and begin studying sections of the book early on. Instead of cramming for three weeks before the exam, the incoming students will already know the material and only have to review terms that are confusing or forgotten. Since the AP Human Geography class at KYHS includes a dual-curriculum, it was essential that I studied at home in addition to completing assigned homework and preparing for assessments in class on other topics. Another aspect of studying for the exam was comparing myself to my classmates who scored better on multiple-choice practice exams or memorized all the details for every model and theory. Only until the night before the exam was I finally able to assure myself that I had prepared the best I could and that it was useless to compare my abilities to others' strengths. Finishing homework assignments on time and participating in class discussions helped me in applying concepts and theories for the AP exam to real-life examples. Using the knowledge I learned in Human Geography class, I was able to understand current events and the motives of world leaders to make decisions. One issue about taking an AP in 9th grade was that there was no explanation of why we were taking an AP course, how our scores were calculated, what our scores meant, and how would taking an AP get us into college. I still do not know the answers to some of these questions and I hope that before starting the AP Human Geography course, next year's freshmen will be properly informed by the school about Advanced Placement classes and exams.

- Batsheva S

AP Human Geography – Student feedback (2016-2017)

The AP Human Geography course may be the first AP course that you experience, and will therefore give you experience to take other and more difficult AP courses in the future. However, you likely have little to no AP experience going into this course, so here are some tips to help you be successful in this course:

Initially, it may seem extremely tough, overly complicated, highly stressful, et cetera, but stick with it. It gets easier as it goes along, and when it is all over, it is extremely rewarding on many levels: you'll feel great, looks good on college applications, you get the idea.

Don't intentionally stress your classmates out. It's not cool, and not worth the cheap laugh, because they could do the same to you at the worst moment possible.

A good idea is to immediately purchase a review book, like Princeton or Barron's, to act as a secondary resource for whenever you need it, and so it is already in your possession when you begin studying.

By January, start going through the review book occasionally. It doesn't count as "studying" per se; it's just beneficial to get a lay of the land for the AP and final exams. You'll be grateful you did it later. Don't just skim over it either, actually read the review book.

Actually try in the practice exams. This may seem unnecessary to state, and for some people it may appear downright ridiculous to point out: "Why wouldn't I try?" They are a lot more important than you may initially think, and when your teacher says not to worry, as it's only a practice exam and doesn't affect your grade, you'll be tempted to try less.

Don't. Give it your all, as though it's a real exam, but don't forget not to get stressed out, because if you do, then the test is just as ineffective as it would be if you didn't try.

Don't get held back by one bad grade. Figure out what you did wrong, and then go to your teacher to figure out how to change that so you don't make the same mistake twice.

Don't forget that it's a college-level class, and the fact alone that you're even in it should be encouraging and motivate you to give it your all.

- Samuel S

AP Human Geography – Student feedback (2016-2017)

Tips for the Incoming Freshmen

This year you are going to take an AP course and test. Disclaimer: AP does not stand for Adolescent Prodigies, it stands for Advanced Placement, and you will shortly understand why that is. The AP Human Geography exam is made up of two sections, 70 multiple choice questions and three Free Response Questions, all of which you will be required to prepare for. Preparing for the AP exam is an overwhelming task due to the overload of information presented to you through review books and by your teacher. First piece of advice, buy the Princeton Review Book and or Barron's Review at the start of the school year and begin by reviewing a chapter a week. The more times you go through these books, the more likely you are to remember important examples that will show up on the test. After you have gone through the book at least once is when you should start taking practice tests, not before, not during, but after. Taking a practice test before you have even gone through the book once is pointless and often discouraging. Understand that every student is different and every student works at a different pace, therefore make sure to figure out what type of studying works for you. Do not get discouraged by your practice test scores, do not throw out your test scores, instead- go through all of the questions and answers and use those scores to help you better prepare... I guarantee that you will see at least one of those questions again. After you read through your AP Human Geography Review book, begin to use outside resources such as term packets, and AP Quiz Apps (iscore5). Based on my past experience I will stress to you that another outside resource that will help you will be the homework you will complete in this class. This homework will 100% show up on the AP exam. Studying and remembering criteria from the homework alone can result in a 4 or 5 on the AP exam. Do not search for the key word answers, do not split the homework with a friend, and do not space out in class when the homework is being reviewed! Lastly, if you are ever bored and you find yourself playing a game on your iPad, stop playing that game and play a map game. Whether it is on the multiple choice section or the FRQs, maps will show up on your AP exam and they will not be labeled. You will need to know the location of a country in order to understand the question and give an educated response. Use Google to find map games that will help you, as opposed to wasting your time with games that have no purpose. FINALLY: Take a breath! You got this! And welcome to ninth grade AP Human Geography!

- Tehila Z