# **Human Geography Discussion Guide (for use during or after reading)**

1. What do you notice and wonder about the thematic map on pages 6 and 7? (Where Humans Live, p. 6-7)
   1. Students’ answers will likely vary. Guide the discussion toward students’ curiosities and encourage them to ask questions to help pique their interest and maintain engagement.
   2. If needed, review the idea that thematic maps focus on particular features, such as rainfall or temperature. Then show these features with colors or shading that represent different features highlighted by the map.
2. Define topography and explain why it is important for humans to consider it when building. (Landscape, p. 8-9)
   1. Topography is the arrangement of physical features on a landscape. It is important for humans to consider topography when building because differences in topography change the needs of certain builds. For example, it is difficult to build on a slope or a hill, but with the right adjustments to the building process, these buildings can be home to beautiful views.
3. How have humans’ farming and fishing habits changed over time? What affect have they had on Earth? (Farming and Fishing, p. 10-11)
   1. Early humans did not settle in one place and continuously farm and fish the same areas. Rather, they were hunters and gatherers who moved their homes to follow their food sources and other resources. About 10,000 years ago, people developed agriculture as they began to settle in areas with fertile soil and plenty of water. Today, about 40% of Earth’s land is covered in farms. This has huge impacts on Earth’s geography. Because of Earth’s human population growth, the need for food continues to increase, and agriculture must take over more and more land. In addition, humans are overfishing certain fish populations, causing them to die out and negatively impacting other parts of their food chain.
4. What are natural resources? How are they used and where are they found? (Natural Resources, p. 12-13)
   1. Natural resources are the raw materials found in nature that humans use to make their lives more efficient or enjoyable. Natural resources include trees, fresh water, groundwater, oil, coal, and other minerals. Geologists find mineral deposits like gravel, sand, limestone, and copper by digging in quarries. Iron ore, gold, and other gems can be found in mines deep underground.
5. What is energy? Describe the different ways in which humans harness energy and their impacts on the environment. (Energy, p. 14-16)
   1. Humans rely on energy for many things including for heat, their vehicles and machines, and to run their homes and businesses. Energy is power and can be harnessed and used in many ways. For centuries, people have burned fossil fuels including coal, crude oil, and natural gas. These are nonrenewable and contribute to global warming. Recently, people have started taking action to protect the planet from further warming and climate change. Many have turned to such renewable resources as solar energy, wind turbines and mechanical energy, hydroelectric power, and geothermal energy. In addition to these being renewable energy sources, they do not produce CO2 and add to global warming like their nonrenewable counterparts.
6. How has human transportation changed over time? Why is efficient transportation so important? (Transportation, p. 16-17)
   1. Humans need good and reliable transportation because we move around for school, work, and fun. We move quite a lot! When humans began to settle in one spot, they chose to build their homes and communities near rivers because of their clean water, ability to transport things and people, and their related resources. Settling near rivers did not always prove helpful, especially as human populations grew. Over time, methods of transportation have developed and improved, allowing people to travel more efficiently. Today, common transportation methods include roads, railroads for passengers as well as freight, and air travel.
7. Describe at least one geographical and one weather-related challenge people still face today. (Challenges, p. 20-23)
   1. Students’ answers may vary but will likely include the following:
   2. Geographical challenges: Building on hills, mountains, or up steep and twisty roads can be quite dangerous. Living on small, secluded islands can make people feel cut off and can make it challenging to access needed supplies. Rivers, seas, and oceans can threaten flooding, especially after storms. Droughts occur in hot, arid climates causing crops to fail and water sources to dry up. In cold climates, hazards occur due to excess snow and ice build-ups.
   3. Weather-related challenges: Weather-related challenges include thunderstorms, blizzards, tornadoes, and hurricanes which all can cause excessive damage and pose threats to human life.
8. Describe at least two ways in which people have modified the environment in order to get the resources they need or want. (Modifying the Environment, p. 24-27)
   1. Students’ answers will vary but may include the following:
   2. People have found clever and creative ways to modify their environment. They have created bridges and tunnels to help traverse landforms, they have adapted ways of building homes such as adding stilts to avoid rising tides and/or floods, and they have designed buildings to sway rather than collapse during earthquakes. Humans have built farms, beaches, dams, irrigation systems, canals, aqueducts, and more. Although these usually help people, they can have negative effects on the environment.
9. Humans have impacted Earth’s environmental health in many negative ways. Choose and describe two, highlighting the unique challenges these human activities have caused. (Bad Impacts, p. 30-33)
   1. Students’ answers will vary but may include the following:
   2. Although humans have found many creative ways to modify their environment to help them, these have come at great cost to Earth’s environmental health. Clearing forests reduces biodiversity and cutting down trees that absorb harmful CO2 increases the amount of greenhouse gasses in our atmosphere and contributes to global warming. In addition, humans are harming our planet by burning fossil fuels, leaking hazardous waste into water supplies, and not stopping or cleaning up chemical runoff. Urbanization has contributed greatly to increased factory waste runoff, mass deforestation, and soil erosion. In addition, more and more animals are being pushed toward extinction due to loss of wildlife habitats, the hunting and capturing of animals, and the general effects of global warming.
10. What can people do to make things better for Earth and the environment? (Making Things Better, p. 34-37)
    1. Students’ answers will vary but may include the following:
    2. Individuals, organizations, businesses, and governments must all work to reduce humans’ impacts on Earth. First, people can reduce, reuse, and recycle their goods. They can use reusable items, such as reusable shopping bags, in their everyday lives. People can also choose to shop and eat responsibly by buying locally produced foods and avoiding commonly overfished seafood. We can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by using energy-efficient light bulbs, turning off electric items when not using them, and cycling or walking instead of driving. In addition, planting trees and cleaning up your community are great ways you can get involved at a local level.