**Steps to Writing AP Human Geography FRQs**

The FRQ section of the AP Human Geography Exam will require you to answer three mandatory questions in 75 minutes. The following steps will help you prepare to write effectively on this portion of the test.

**Before You Write:**

**(2-3 minutes for each FRQ)**

1. Read the factual statement at the beginning of the FRQ and do the following:
   1. **Underline** the important key words and phrases.
   2. **Take notes** in the margin key terms, vocabulary, examples that could potentially be included in your response.
2. Read the entire series of questions (a, b, c, d, etc.) and do the following:
   1. **Circle** the verbs (that tell you what to do).
   2. **Underline** any key vocabulary terms.
   3. **Make a list** of ideas in the margin next to each part of the question – list MORE in the preliminary notes, and then choose your ***best*** ideas and work with them.

**As You Write:**

**(20 minutes for each FRQ)**

1. Answer the question in the order it was asked.
   1. **Label the parts of the FRQ as it is labeled in the question** – if the question is organized “A., B., C.,” answer it “A., B., C.”
      1. This helps you stay focused to be sure you have answered each part of the question.
   2. **Write in complete sentences** – not bullets or outline form.
   3. **Skip lines between each part of the question** (not every line) to make your answer easier for the reader to grade.
   4. **Do NOT include a thesis, formal introduction, or conclusion** – these are not required and including them is a waste of time.
   5. **Answer each section of the question COMPLETELY**. When you have answered a part of the question (which you have underlined or circled) cross it off.
   6. **Know the Verbs** – identify, define, describe, explain, and discuss are the most common.
      1. **Identify:** state a clear, concise, and specific answer.
      2. **Define:** give the precise meaning or basic qualities of something.
      3. **Describe:** provide a representation in words of the basic attributes or characteristics.
      4. **Explain:** give a detailed account, by offering reasons or adding details, to make something plain.
      5. **Discuss:** offer a considered review which may include explanations, examples, arguments, factors, and additional evidence.
   7. **Be specific and state things you think are obvious**. Do not assume the reader is an expert in the topic; assume you are talking to a young child. Explain any abbreviations or acronyms.
   8. **Write neat and legibly** – if they can’t read it, they can’t grade it.

**After You Write:**

**(2-3 minutes for each FRQ)**

1. Reread your work if you have time.
   1. **Do not rush!** Students are always in a rush to turn in their tests, but if you have to sit in the room for 75 minutes anyway, why not reread your answers?
   2. **Final check –** go back and make sure you answered each question fully; if you did not, you can write more at the end and then draw an arrow to the appropriate place where the information belongs.

**Other Important Information**

* **Complete the FRQs you know first** – you may be able to write these faster, leaving more time for the FRQs that are more difficult.
* **Think geographically** – remember this is a geography test, not a history test. Think about the interconnections between people and places. Location, scale, time, and spatial perspective are important.
* **Be specific** – do not be vague; if a sentence does not include something specific, it does not need to be in there.
* **FRQs are nothing like typical essays or English papers** – avoid verbosity, opinion, and fluffy language!
* **Writing in AP Human Geography is technical**; FRQs are content driven, **NOT** writing driven!
  + Definitions alone usually do not earn points; **make sure you are applying any terms to the prompt.**
  + With average-sized handwriting, most high-scoring essays are approximately 1.5 pages
* **Spelling does not count**, but you should do your best.
* **FRQs are scored, not graded**; each question has a certain number of items the graders are looking for, like a checklist.
* Anticipate the number of points the rubric will have. You should be able to do this from the directions in the prompt.
* Your goal is to convince your reader that you have an understanding of what you are writing about and can make connections as required by the prompt. Use terms, people, examples, and key ideas to make your understanding as obvious as possible. You want to avoid contradicting yourself and keep in mind that randomly writing about geography will not likely earn you any points.
* **Write in black or dark blue ink** – essays written in pencil are hard to read.