Unit 1: Geography its nature and perspectives

Key terms

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| Term | Meaning and examples |
| Globalization | A process that involves the entire world and results in making something worldwide in scale.  e.g.: The world, geopolitically and economically, has grown more globalized over the past few centuries. While leading to a wider dispersion of funds, and the increased development of nearly every inhabited place on Earth, the globalization of the economy has heightened economic differences among others. The gap between the rich and the poor has increasingly grown wider (uneven development). From a cultural standpoint, globalization is a delicate issue. While contributing greatly to increased standards of living globally, especially among LDC’s, the spreading of a uniform, and some argue, “western” culture is destroying some of the most defining cultures in the world |
| 5 themes of geography | See separate sheet |
| Map | A two-dimensional model of Earth’s surface, or a part of it |
| Scale (I) | The relationship between a map’s distances and the actual distances on Earth. |
| Cartography | The science of map-making. |
| Global Positioning System- | (GPS) a system that determines one’s exact location on Earth. |
| Remote Sensing & Geographic Information System | Remote Sensing is the acquisition of data about Earth’s surface for a satellite. For example, a geographer may want to know about average rainfall in a particular area or to track the path and strength of a hurricane. This data can be collected from satellites and aircraft.  http://www.go-geomatics.uwaterloo.ca/images/hurricane_lilli_2.jpg |
| (GIS) | Geographic Information Systems are computers that can capture, store, query, analyze, and display geographic data. |
| Meridians & Parallels | Meridians - (longitude) an arc drawn between the North and South poles.  Parallel - (latitude) a circle drawn around the globe parallel to equator and perpendicular to meridians. |
| Mental map | One’s perceived image of the surrounding landscape’s organization. E.g. if I were to ask you to draw a map of the neighbourhood our school is located in, that would be a mental map. |
| Political maps & Physical maps | Political maps show human-created features such as boundaries, cities, highways, roads, and railroads. Physical maps display the natural features of the earth - the location and names of mountains, rivers, valleys, ocean currents, and deserts. Most common [maps](http://geography.about.com/msubmenu1.htm) and globes are combinations of political and physical maps. |
| Spatial Distribution | Looking at a map of something to see how it is distributed across a space.  E.g.: The spread of Cholera, Dr. Snow wanted to know how the distribution of cholera sufferers came about. So he analysed the pattern and noticed that the disease was clustered around water pumps, and therefore made the link between contaminated water and the spread of cholera. |
| Concentration and Pattern | Concentration is the extent of a feature’s spread over space whereas pattern is the geometric arrangement of objects in space |
| Distance Decay | The farther away one group is from another, the less likely the two groups are to interact. |
| Space-time compression | The reduction in the time it takes for something to reach another place.  e.g.: The classic example is that people generally are willing to commute 20 minutes from home to work. In the Medieval city this meant working within a 20 minute walk of your home, or less than a mile. In today's city, figuring 60 mph, it can mean 20 miles. |
| Scale (II) | Scale also refers to the territorial extent of something. For example, local, regional or global. (Usually throughout this course when we refer to scale we will be using the second definition).  e.g.: on a global scale the USA is the wealthiest country in the world. But does that mean that everyone in the USA is wealthy. Of course not, if we shift the scale just the USA (National) we can see that the richer areas are at the coasts, and the poorest in the interior and extreme south and north. If we shift the scale to one city we can see different levels of wealth, and even if we shift it to one neighborhood or street. |
| Environmental Determinism | A belief that the physical environment causes social development.  This suggests that climate is a critical factor in how humans behave and has been criticized as being far too generalized and even racist. Critics have pointed out the Mayan and Mesoamerican civilizations developed in tropical climates.  To think of it in a very crude way the conditions of the environment determine what cultures are capable of achieving. How would an Environmental determinist explain the distribution of LDC’s and MDC’s in the world |
| Environmental possibilism | This is the counter to environmental determinism. It is the belief that while environment can limit certain actions of a people, it cannot wholly predestine their development.  It basically argues that the choices of a society are determined by its member’s requirements and the technology available to them. |