# The Ultimate AP® Human Geography Unit 3 Cheat Sheet



## 3.1 Introduction to Culture

### What Culture Is

**Culture**: shared practices, technologies, attitudes & behaviors a society passes on; learned, not inherited.
**Cultural trait**: 1 unit of culture, e.g., food prefs, dress, architecture, land use, language, religion, music.
**Cultural complex**: set of linked traits (e.g., US Thanksgiving = turkey + football + family travel + parades).
**Folk culture**: small, rural, homogeneous groups; slow relocation diffusion; tied to local environment (adobe).
**Popular (pop) culture**: large, urban, diverse groups; fast hierarchical diffusion via media; placeless.

| Trait | Folk | Popular |
|---|---|---|
| Scale | Local, rural | Global, urban |
| Change | Slow, stable | Rapid, trendy |
| Diffusion | Relocation | Hierarchical |
| Landscape | Distinct | Uniform |

### Ways of Viewing Other Cultures

**Ethnocentrism**: judging others by your own culture's standards; belief yours is superior → bias, conflict.
**Cultural relativism**: judging a culture by its own context & values; geographer's goal when analyzing places.

⚠ Relativism ≠ approving every practice. It means understanding a trait in its context first.

### Key Vocabulary

**Taboo**: restriction on behavior from social custom (pork in Islam & Judaism, beef in Hinduism, alcohol).
**Cultural hearth**: origin area of a trait (Mesopotamia, Nile, Indus, Huang He, Mesoamerica, Andes, W. Africa).
**Cultural region**: area where traits cluster; edges are fuzzy transition zones, not sharp lines on a map.

✓ FRQ: name the trait, then explain HOW it spread or changed. A definition alone rarely earns the point.

## 3.2 Cultural Landscapes

### Reading the Landscape

**Cultural landscape**: physical environment modified by people; shows a group's values, tech & history (Sauer).
**Built from**: physical features, farm & industry practices, religion, language, architecture, land use.
**Sequent occupance**: layers left by successive groups in 1 place (Istanbul: church → mosque → museum).
**Religious landscape**: steeples, minarets, cemeteries, shrines, place names (San Antonio, St. Louis).
**Linguistic landscape**: signs, toponyms, bilingual street names (Québec French signs, Chinatown).

### Architecture & Land Use

| Style | Features | Example |
|---|---|---|
| Traditional | Local material | Adobe, igloo |
| Modern | Steel, glass | Skyscrapers |
| Postmodern | Mixed, playful | Denver library |

**Land-use patterns**: long-lot (French), township-range grid (US), metes & bounds (irregular), terraces.
**Placelessness**: loss of unique character as pop culture spreads identical malls, chains & suburbs.

### Identity on the Landscape

**Ethnic neighborhoods**: Little Italy, Chinatown → shops, temples, signs & festivals mark the group's space.
**Gender**: women's workforce role reshapes space (daycares, mixed use); some cultures separate gendered spaces.
**Indigenous communities**: reservations, sacred sites & land claims show resistance to dominant culture.

✓ Photo stimulus? Point to 1 visible feature, name the trait it shows, then link it to a value, group or era.

⚠ Landscape ≠ scenery. The exam wants the human imprint on the land, not the mountains or rivers.

## 3.3 Cultural Patterns

### Place & Identity

**Sense of place**: meaning people attach to a place from its language, religion, ethnicity & memories.
**Placemaking**: shaping public space to show a community's identity (murals, plazas, festivals, street names).
**Ethnicity**: identity from shared ancestry, language, religion & customs. **Race** = social category by physical traits.
**Ethnic enclave**: cluster of 1 group in a city; keeps culture alive & eases new arrivals (chain migration).

### Forces That Unite or Divide

| Force | Effect | Example |
|---|---|---|
| Centripetal | Unites state | Shared lang. |
| Centrifugal | Divides state | Ethnic split |

**Centripetal**: common language, religion, national symbols, shared history, good infrastructure → unity.
**Centrifugal**: rival languages or religions, ethnic tension, uneven development → separatism (Catalonia).
**Devolution link**: strong centrifugal forces → regions demand autonomy (Québec, Scotland, Basque Country).

### Gender & Global Patterns

**Gender roles**: women's workforce share ↑ w/ education & urbanization; ↓ where custom limits work outside home.
**Global patterns**: Romance langs in Latin America, Islam across N. Africa & SW Asia, Hinduism in S. Asia.
**Language & religion** unite or split: Spanish + Catholicism unite Mexico; Hindu vs. Muslim split S. Asia (1947).
**Language as identity**: Welsh, Basque & Catalan signal regional pride & resistance to the dominant state language.

⚠ Same trait can be centripetal in 1 state and centrifugal in another. Always tie it to a specific place.

✓ Use scale: a trait that unites a region (Catalan in Catalonia) can divide the state it sits in (Spain).

## 3.4 Types of Diffusion

### Relocation vs. Expansion

**Relocation**: people physically move & carry the trait; hearth may lose it (Irish Catholics to Boston).
**Expansion**: trait spreads outward from hearth while staying strong at home; 3 subtypes in table ↓.

| Type | How it spreads | Example |
|---|---|---|
| Contagious | Person→person | Viral meme |
| Hierarchical | Power/big city | Fashion, Asoka |
| Reverse hier. | Low → high | Hip-hop, Walmart |
| Stimulus | Idea, adapted | McAloo Tikki |

### Spotting Each Type

**Contagious**: distance-based, like a disease; every nearby person exposed (a TikTok trend, early Islam).
**Hierarchical**: from powerful people or big cities down the urban hierarchy (king converts → subjects).
**Reverse hierarchical**: starts in small places or low-status groups, then moves up (hip-hop from the Bronx).
**Stimulus**: core idea spreads but trait changes to fit local culture (no-beef menus at McDonald's India).
**Hearth → periphery**: traits weaken w/ distance from the hearth unless carried by migrants or mass media.

### Barriers & Distance

**Distance decay**: interaction ↓ as distance ↑; weaker today b/c of internet, cheap flights & global media.
**Time-space compression**: tech shrinks relative distance → faster, wider diffusion of ideas & goods.
**Barriers**: physical (mountains, oceans), cultural (taboos, language), political (censorship, closed borders).

⚠ Relocation requires migration. If people stay put and only the idea moves, it's expansion diffusion.

✓ Many traits use 2+ types at once (Islam: contagious, then relocation). Name each and the stage it explains.

## 3.5 Historical Causes of Diffusion

### Colonialism, Imperialism & Trade

**Colonialism**: settling & ruling distant lands → imposed language, religion, law (Spanish in Latin America).
**Imperialism**: control of another territory's politics & economy, often w/o mass settlement (British India).
**Trade**: Silk Road, Indian Ocean & trans-Saharan routes spread Buddhism, Islam, crops & ideas.

| Empire | Spread | Legacy |
|---|---|---|
| British | English, Angl. | India, Africa |
| Spanish | Spanish, Cath. | Latin America |
| French | French | W. Africa, Haiti |
| Arab | Arabic, Islam | N. Africa, SW Asia |

### Contact Languages

**Lingua franca**: shared language for trade between speakers of different tongues (Swahili, Latin, English).
**Pidgin**: simplified mix for basic trade talk; small vocab, simple grammar, no native speakers (Chinook Jargon).
**Creole**: pidgin that becomes a native language w/ full grammar (Haitian Creole, Tok Pisin, Gullah).
**Creolization**: blending of cultures into a new one (Caribbean food, music & languages after colonial contact).

### Why It Matters

**Legacies today**: official languages, borders, religions & elites in ex-colonies still reflect the colonizer.
**Forced migration**: Atlantic slave trade carried West African religions, music & foods → Americas (relocation).
**Missionaries**: Jesuits, Franciscans & Protestant groups built schools & churches → hierarchical spread of faith.

⚠ Pidgin → creole only when a new generation speaks it natively. A pidgin has no native speakers.

✓ Colonialism = relocation (settlers) + hierarchical (elites, missionaries, schools). Name both for full credit.

## 3.6 Contemporary Causes of Diffusion

### Globalization & Technology

**Globalization**: ↑ economic, political & cultural links worldwide → traits spread in days, not centuries.
**Communication tech**: internet, smartphones & social media reshape & speed cultural interaction worldwide.
**Time-space convergence**: travel time between places ↓ (weeks by ship → hours by plane → seconds online).
**Urbanization**: cities = hubs where cultures mix & trends start, then spread down the urban hierarchy.
**Migration today**: diasporas keep ties via apps & cheap calls → traits flow both ways (remittances, food, music).

### Convergence vs. Divergence

| Process | Result | Example |
|---|---|---|
| Convergence | Cultures alike | Global brands |
| Divergence | Cultures split | Amish, revival |

**Cultural convergence**: contact makes cultures more alike (Western dress, fast food, English loanwords).
**Cultural divergence**: groups split from or resist outside influence (Amish, Québec language laws).

### Global English & Resistance

**English as lingua franca**: business, science, aviation, internet; spread by British empire, then US media & tech.
**Cultural imperialism**: 1 culture's media & brands dominate (Hollywood, US fast food) → local traits can fade.
**Resistance**: France's Académie française, Bhutan's TV limits, Iceland coining new native words for tech.
**Glocalization**: global product adapted to local taste (K-pop w/ local idols, regional menu items, ads).

⚠ Globalization doesn't only homogenize. Local groups adapt, blend or push back (divergence, glocalization).

✓ FRQ: pair a cause (social media) w/ a mechanism (contagious diffusion) & an effect (convergence).

## 3.7 Diffusion of Religion & Language

### Universalizing vs. Ethnic Religions

| Religion | Hearth | Main diffusion |
|---|---|---|
| Christianity | Levant | Reloc. + hier. |
| Islam | Arabia | Contag. + reloc. |
| Buddhism | NE India | Hier. (Asoka) |
| Sikhism | Punjab | Reloc. (diaspora) |
| Hinduism | Indus Valley | Reloc. (diaspora) |
| Judaism | Levant | Reloc. (diaspora) |

**Universalizing**: seek converts worldwide, founder-based, spread far (Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism).
**Ethnic**: tied to 1 group & homeland, few converts, slow spread (Hinduism, Judaism, Shinto, Yoruba).
**Christianity**: apostles relocate; Emperor Constantine → hierarchical; colonialism → Americas & Africa.
**Islam**: conquest & trade from Mecca → N. Africa & Spain; traders carry it to Indonesia (largest Muslim pop.).
**Buddhism**: hearth NE India, now mostly E. & SE Asia; Asoka's missionaries, monks & Silk Road traders carried it.
**Hinduism & Judaism**: stay concentrated near hearths; spread mainly via diaspora migration (relocation).

### Language Families

**Family → branch → language → dialect**. Indo-European = largest (Germanic, Romance, Slavic, Indo-Iranian).
**Indo-European origin**: Kurgan (horse nomads, conquest) vs. Anatolian (farmers spread peacefully from Turkey).
**Other families**: Sino-Tibetan (Mandarin), Afro-Asiatic (Arabic), Niger-Congo (Bantu), Austronesian (by sea).
**Bantu migration**: farmers carried Niger-Congo languages across sub-Saharan Africa (relocation + expansion).

⚠ Buddhism's hearth (India) is now mostly Hindu. Hearth ≠ where most followers live today (E. & SE Asia).

## 3.8 Effects of Diffusion

### When Cultures Meet

| Process | Meaning | Example |
|---|---|---|
| Acculturation | Adopt some traits | Learn English |
| Assimilation | Lose old culture | 3rd-gen, no lang. |
| Syncretism | Blend into new | Santería |
| Multicultural | Coexist | Toronto, Canada |

**Acculturation**: minority adopts some host traits but keeps core identity (keeps religion, food & holidays).
**Assimilation**: minority fully absorbed, original traits lost; often forced (Native American boarding schools).
**Syncretism**: 2+ traits fuse into a new one (Día de los Muertos, Vodou, Sikhism, Tex-Mex food).
**Multiculturalism**: many cultures coexist & keep distinct identities in 1 society; often state policy.

### Language Change

**Dialect**: regional variation in vocab, spelling & accent; its boundary on a map = **isogloss** (soda vs. pop).
**Endangered**: kids stop learning it. **Extinct**: no speakers left; ≈ 40% of the 7,000+ languages are at risk.
**Revival**: Hebrew (Israel), Irish, Welsh & Māori kept alive by schools, media, road signs & official status.
**Toponyms**: place names show who settled or ruled; post-colonial renaming (Bombay → Mumbai, Calcutta → Kolkata).
**Loss of folk culture**: pop culture can replace local dress, food & crafts → uniform, placeless landscapes.
**Diaspora**: scattered group keeps traits abroad via enclaves, worship sites & media (Indian diaspora in UK).

### Exam Moves

⚠ Acculturation keeps core identity; assimilation erases it. This is the most-missed pair in Unit 3.

✓ Syncretism = a NEW blend. If 2 cultures just sit side by side, call it multiculturalism on the exam.