The Simple AP® Human Geography Unit 6 Cheat Sheet

6.1 Origin & Influences of Urbanization

Site vs. Situation

Site: a city's physical features (water, harbor, hills, flat land) → why it started there.
Situation: location compared to other places (trade routes, rivers, rail) → why it grows.

City	Site	Situation
Singapore	island port	sea trade hub
Chicago	lake + river	rail hub
Istanbul	Bosporus	Europe–Asia

Why Cities Grow

First cities (~3500 BCE): farm surplus let people take other jobs; began in river valleys like Mesopotamia, the Nile & the Indus.
Industrialization: factory jobs → move to cities; today cities grow fastest in Africa & S. Asia.
Pull factors: jobs, schools & hospitals; **push factors**: rural poverty, conflict & farm machines.

Transportation & Growth

Transport eras: walking city → streetcar suburbs → car suburbs; each let cities spread farther out.
Suburbanization: US highways (1956) & cheap home loans → families moved out of central cities.
Sprawl: low-density, car-based growth at the edge; **decentralization**: jobs & stores leave downtown too (malls, office parks).

⚠ Site = physical & fixed; situation = relative & can change (a new rail line or canal).

✓ FRQ: explain a city's growth w/ BOTH its site & its situation, w/ a real city like Chicago.

6.2–6.3 Cities Across the World & Globalization

Big & Growing Cities

Megacity: metro area w/ >10M people (Lagos, Mumbai); **metacity**: >20M (Tokyo, Delhi).
Where growth is: most new megacities are in developing countries, from migration & births.
Urbanization rate: >55% of people live in cities; ~80% in rich countries, lower but rising in Africa.

Edges of the City

Term	Meaning
Suburb	homes outside the city
Edge city	offices & malls at hwys
Boomburb	fast-growing suburb
Exurb	rural area w/ commuters

Edge city example: Tysons, VA has more jobs than homes, built at highway interchanges.

World Cities

World cities: control centers of the global economy w/ HQs, stock markets & banks.
Top tier: New York & London, then Tokyo, Paris & Singapore; then regional hubs like Mumbai.
Connections: world cities link through flows of money, ideas, people & daily flights.
Income gaps: world cities attract rich professionals & low-wage service workers.

⚠ Megacity = big population; world city = global power. Not always the same city.

✓ Always name the scale: global, regional or national influence, w/ an example.

6.4 Size & Distribution of Cities

Rank-Size vs. Primate

Rank-size rule: 2nd city = ½ the largest, 3rd = ⅓, & so on → balanced system (US, Germany).
Primate city: largest city is more than 2× the next & dominates the country (Mexico City, Bangkok).
Why primacy: colonial capitals & centralized gov'ts → uneven development across the country.
Examples: Lima holds about ⅓ of Peru's people; Bangkok dwarfs Thailand's 2nd city.

Gravity Model

Gravity model: big cities that are close together interact most (trade, travel, migration).
Example: more people travel between NYC & Philadelphia than between NYC & Denver.

Central Place Theory

Christaller: towns serve market areas shaped like hexagons; bigger towns serve bigger areas.

Term	Meaning
Threshold	min. customers needed
Range	max. distance traveled
Low-order good	cheap, often (milk)
High-order good	rare, costly (surgery)

Pattern: many small towns w/ everyday goods; few big cities w/ special goods & services.
Assumptions: flat land, people spread evenly, shoppers go to the nearest town.

⚠ Threshold = how many customers; range = how far they'll travel. Don't mix them up.

✓ Graph: steep drop from city #1 to #2 = primate city; smooth curve = rank-size.

6.5 Internal Structure: Classic Models

Bid-Rent Theory

Bid-rent: land costs most at the CBD (downtown) & less farther out → offices win the center.
Result: tall, dense buildings downtown; lower density & bigger yards in the suburbs.

US Models

Model	Shape
Burgess (1925)	rings around CBD
Hoyt (1939)	wedges along roads
Harris-Ullman	several centers
Galactic	beltway + edge cities

Concentric zone: CBD → zone in transition → working class → middle class → commuters.
Zone in transition: old homes & factories near downtown; 1st stop for new immigrants.
Sector model: rich & poor areas form wedges that follow rail lines, roads or rivers.
Multiple nuclei: a car-era city grows around several centers (airport, university).
Galactic city: a highway ring w/ edge cities that act like small downtowns (Atlanta).

Using the Models

Filtering: as rich families move out, older homes pass to lower-income families as rentals.

⚠ Real cities mix models; say which parts of a model fit the map you're given.

✓ FRQ: name the model, describe 1 zone & explain WHY it formed there, w/ a city.

6.5 Internal Structure: Regional Models

Latin American (Griffin-Ford)

Spine: a wealthy sector of shops & homes runs from the CBD along a main boulevard.
Rings: good housing near the center → mixed areas → poor squatter settlements at the edge.
Disamenity sector: poorest land (steep hills, dumps); favelas in Rio de Janeiro.
Squatter settlements: self-built homes on land people don't own; many improve over time.

Sub-Saharan African

3 CBDs: a colonial CBD, a traditional market & an informal street market; ethnic areas ring them.
Edges: informal townships & squatter settlements w/ few services; mining zones nearby.

Southeast Asian (McGee)

Port zone is the center, w/ Western & Chinese commercial zones nearby; no single formal CBD.

Model	Rich live	Poor live
US	suburbs	inner city
Latin Am.	center, spine	edges
African	colonial core	townships
SE Asian	new suburbs	squatter areas

Colonial legacy: European planners built boulevards & segregated districts still seen today.

⚠ In Latin American cities, the rich live near the center: opposite of the US model.

✓ Compare a US & a non-US model: give 1 similarity & 1 difference w/ real cities.

6.6–6.7 Density, Land Use & Infrastructure

Residential Density

Density	Housing type
Low	single-family homes
Medium	townhouses, duplexes
High	apartment buildings

Density & cost: land near downtown is pricey → smaller homes & taller buildings.
Zoning: laws decide land use (homes, shops, factories); single-use zoning → more driving.
Mixed-use: shops below & apartments above → walkable neighborhoods w/ less driving.
Infill: building on empty lots inside the city instead of out at the edge, saving farmland.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure: roads, transit, water, sewers, power & internet a city needs to run.
Economic link: good infrastructure draws businesses & jobs; poor infrastructure repels them.
Informal settlements often lack clean water, sewers & legal power (Dharavi, Mumbai).
Transit-oriented development: dense housing near train stations → less driving.
Aging infrastructure: old pipes & roads cost a lot to fix (Flint, MI water crisis, 2014).

⚠ High density doesn't mean poor: Paris is dense & wealthy. Density = people per area.

✓ Explain how 1 new road or rail line changed land use or density in a real city.

6.9–6.10 Urban Data & Challenges of Change

Urban Data

Quantitative: census numbers (income, race, housing); **qualitative**: interviews & photos.
Uses: show change over time, map segregation & plan schools, transit & services.

Housing Discrimination

Process	Meaning
Redlining	loans denied by race
Blockbusting	fear sales → white flight
Gentrification	richer move in, rents ↑
Urban renewal	old areas torn down

Redlining (1930s): banks refused loans in Black areas → long-term disinvestment.
Gentrification: + fixed-up homes & more taxes; – higher rents push out long-time residents.

Other Challenges

Squatter settlements: homes built on land people don't own, often w/o water or power.
Shrinking cities: factory closures → people leave, empty lots & a smaller tax base (Detroit).
Environmental justice: poor areas often get highways, factories & waste sites.
Responses: affordable-housing rules, rent control & legal land titles for squatters.

⚠ Gentrification has winners & losers; give both.

✓ Map stimulus: describe the pattern, then explain a cause like redlining or filtering.

6.8 & 6.11 Sustainability + the Exam

Problems of Sprawl

Sprawl effects: lost farmland & habitat, traffic, air pollution & car dependence; costly new roads.
Brownfields: polluted old factory sites that can be cleaned & reused for housing or parks.
Urban heat island: pavement & buildings trap heat → cities hotter than the countryside.
Other problems: sanitation, dirty air & water, high energy use, flooding in coastal cities.

Smart-Growth Responses

Policy	Example
Growth boundary	Portland, OR
Greenbelt	London
New urbanism	Seaside, FL
Bus rapid transit	Curitiba, Brazil

Smart growth: plans that limit sprawl & build dense, walkable, transit-friendly areas.
Effects: + less sprawl, more walking & transit; – higher housing prices inside limits.

Exam Format

Section	Qs	Time	Weight
MCQ	60	60 min	50%
FRQ	3	75 min	50%

FRQs: 1 w/ no stimulus, 1 w/ 1 stimulus, 1 w/ 2 (maps, data); 7 pts each, 21 total.

⚠ "Explain" means say why or how it happens, not just what happens; give a cause.

✓ Name a real city & the scale (local, national, global) in every answer you write.