Introduction: Welcome to Advanced Placement Human Geography! Geography means to picture or draw the world; that is a tremendous task, and consequently geography incorporates knowledge from most every other class you might take (including sciences, history, math, international languages, and the arts). I think you will find the class one of the most useful you take in the upper school, as it deals with “real world” issues and is focused on problem-solving. I can guarantee that you will learn a lot of pragmatic knowledge about the world in which we live and learn a lot of things that you can apply to other classes. I will spend a fair amount of time explaining what geography is in August, but for now I am going to go directly to discussing the summer reading book.

Harm de Blij, the author of your book, is one of the most famous geographers in the world. For many years he was the editor for the National Geographic Society and has published over 30 books. Why Geography Matters is a book designed to explain the discipline of geography to the general public. Most people think geography is memorizing capital cities and mountain ranges. When you finish this summer reading assignment, you will see that geography is much more than this. Below you will find a study guide that takes you through each chapter that we are reading in the book. To make the assignment shorter, I have decided that we will not read chapters 8, 9, and 12. These chapters are a bit dated and deal with some complex issues that we will cover, but later in the course. Attempt to do all that this study guide ask you to do. If you don’t fully understand something, that is ok. We have the whole year to clear things up. Feel free to discuss the assignment with other students in the class and/or to contact me at T.Michael.Kelley@gmail.com anytime over the summer. I will try to answer your questions as quickly as possible. See you in August.
Chapter 1: Why Geography Matters

This chapter spends a lot of time discussing the sorry state of geographic literacy. Additionally, the chapter attempts to explain what geography is.

One point that I want you to remember is that geography is very much concerned with synthesizing data gathered from other fields to produce a coherent picture of some part of the world. In doing this, de Blij explains four traditions of geography. Each of these traditions requires synthesizing information from science, history, cultural studies, demography, sociology and other fields in order to produce a "picture" of some part of the world. I have listed these four traditions. Be sure you understand them. If I ask you to explain what they mean on the first day class, you should be able to do so.

Four Traditions of Geography

1. Geography deals with the natural and the human world

2. Geography assesses the complicated relationships between human societies and natural environments

3. Geography engages in research in and tries to understand foreign cultures and distinct regions

4. Geography identifies and assesses the location tradition--that is why are some locations better at certain things than others.

Three other terms you should be able to use from this chapter. Write a short paragraph where you relate these three concepts to each other

Spatial Orientation
Cultural Landscape
Distance Decay
Chapter 2: Reading Maps and Facing Threats

As chapter 1 noted, geographers think spatially. The major tool used in thinking spatially is a map. This chapter introduces you the basics of maps and why maps are important. One thing you should remember from this chapter is that a map is a human creation and isn't a perfect reproduction of what is really there. Maps are drawn for a purpose, and that purpose emphasizes certain things above others. Maps can "lie" as the chapter notes. They can also e a form of aggression. After reading the chapter, you should know the following -- that is be able to define the term and explain why it is important.

Mercator Projection
Scale
Compass Rose
Contour Lines
Meridians
Parallels
Longitude
Latitude
Map Projection
Absolute location
Cartography
Mental maps
Dr. John Snow's cholera map
Cartographic aggression
GOES
LANDSAT
GIS
Geotechnology

Chapter 3: Earth's Changeable Environments

One of the four traditions of geography is that it deals with both the human and natural world. In this chapter, de Blij takes you on a brief history of life on Earth using a geography-based explanation of how living things got to be as they are. This is not the only possible explanation, but it does serve to show how thinking spatially can produce theories and possibly understanding,

In the first paragraph under the section "Dramatic Beginnings," de Blij explains the two process that created the Earth: accretion and
differentiation. You should look up these terms as they apply to the creation of the Earth and be able to explain how they relate to the creation of the Earth.

How does the theory of continental drift (now called plate tectonics) explain how the Earth's continents were formed?

A mystery is how the Earth got so much water. What are some of the theories discussed in this chapter?

What was the phenomenon called "Snowball Earth?" When did it occur? What evidence do we have of its occurrence? What major change in the evolution of life occurred during this period? Why did this change occur?

What factors caused the Permian Extinction and the K-T Boundary Extinction? How did each of these extinctions affect life on Earth?

Explain how the cycles of glaciations and interglacials explains the migrations of primates between Asia and Africa, the evolution of humans, and the early migrations of humans from Africa to Asia and Europe.

What is an evolutionary bottleneck? Why was the Toba explosion an evolutionary bottleneck for humans?

Chapter 4: Climate and Civilization

The second tradition of geography is analyzing the complicated relationships between human societies and natural environments. This chapter begins to explore this tradition.

Climate changes and volcanic eruptions have had major impacts on human civilizations. Identify each of the following and explain the impact each had on the development of human civilizations.

Younger Dryas 12,000 BP
Thira Explosion 3620 BP
Medieval Optimum 2000 BP
Little Ice Age 1200s - mid-1800s
Tombora Explosion, 1815
Industrial Optimum mid-1800s to present
What is the difference between climate and weather?

Using Vladimir Koppen's classification of climates, Ellsworth Huntington argued that certain climate regions favored the development of advanced civilizations and others tended to retard the development of such civilizations. Explain Huntington's argument and the evidence that supports it.

Chapter 5: A Future Geography of Human Population

This chapter continues with the analysis of the interaction between human societies and the environment. It focuses on what is the most stunning demographic occurrence during the Industrial Optimum: the explosion of human population from around 900 million in 1800 to 7 billion today.

What are the major factors behind the human population explosion during the industrial optimum?

Explain how cultural traditions, religion, government policy, and environment explain the regional variations in population growth.

Chapter 6: The Mesh of Civilizations

In this chapter, de Blij takes us into the realm of politics and the role of states in imposing a political geography on the Earth.

This chapter sets up chapters 7, 10, and 11, which each deal with specific political entities.

Define "state" as the term is used in this chapter. What is the difference between a unitary and a federal state?

What are the four features that all European models of the state have in common?

Explain how the Convention on Law of the Sea (CLOS) divides the oceans among states?

Explain the three step process in creating a boundary: definition, delimitation, and demarcation.
Chapter 7: Red Star Rising: China's Geopolitical Gauntlet

Using the political geography analysis of China given in this chapter (and any additional evidence you wish to include), write a brief argumentative essay in which you agree or disagree with the following statement: The United States and China are on a course where military confrontation is inevitable. (Note: a brief argumentative essay should be about one page typed.

Chapter 10: European Superpower?

This chapter discusses the current state of Europe (and what exactly Europe is.) Europeans have created a supranational organization called the European Union, but not all European countries are members and not all members are equally committed to this union.

Additionally, many European countries are experiencing devolutionary and decentralizing movements that are weakening national power at the expense of regions within the countries. Using the information presented in this chapter (and any additional evidence you wish to include), write a brief argumentative essay in which you agree or disagree with the following statement: Europe is becoming less and not more unified.

Chapter 11: Russia on the Eastern Front

Using the analysis and evidence provided in this chapter (and any other evidence you wish to include), write a brief argumentative essay in which you agree or disagree with the following statement: Russia can become a superpower again.