

**Module: Physical Geography**  
**Topic Content: Environmental Impact on Humans**

**Environmental Impact on Humans**

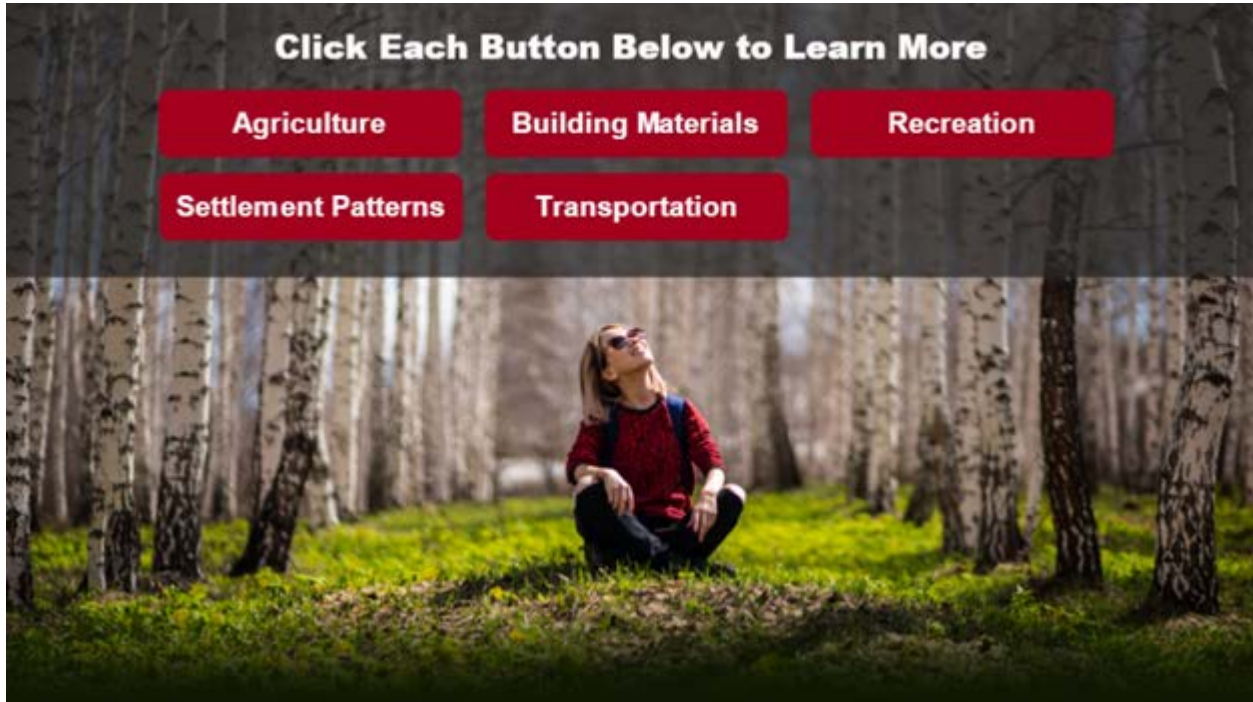


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# Module: Physical Geography

## Topic Content: Environmental Impact on Humans

### Menu



Many aspects of human society are influenced by the environment in which the humans develop. Click each of the buttons to learn more about the impact of the environment on humans.

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#### Agriculture



The physical landscape and climate of a location dictate the type or amount of agriculture. The temperature, amount of precipitation, elevation, and type of soil all determine the types of crops that can be grown. For example, vegetable root crops like beets, carrots, and potatoes thrive in areas with cool climates and sandy soil, while rice will only thrive in monsoon-like weather conditions. Animal agriculture is also influenced by the physical landscape and climate of a region. Regions with large areas of grassland are suitable for grazing animals like cows and sheep, while islands and coastal regions often depend on fishing. Regional diets are often viewed as a cultural preference, but they are actually the result of the climate and weather patterns of the region.



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**Building Materials**



The way people build their homes largely depends on the materials available. For example, regions with an abundance of forest typically harvest lumber as a building material, while rockier regions may excavate stone from a quarry. Climate and weather phenomena also influence the way people construct buildings. For instance, in a hurricane-prone area like the Caribbean, a solid structure made from stone and concrete will easily hold up against strong winds; however, in areas near active fault lines, an inflexible building will crumble during an earthquake.

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**Recreation**



The surrounding geography and climate influence the types of recreational activities available to people. Cold mountainous areas are perfect for sports that require snow, like skiing and snowboarding. Areas near large bodies of water are great for swimming, surfing, and sailing. Rural areas are well-suited for activities like hiking and camping.

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### Settlement Patterns



Geography influences the areas and ways in which people settle. Throughout history, large numbers of people have settled near navigable waterways because they provide water for drinking, irrigation for crops, and a way to travel and trade. In contrast, fewer people live near the poles or in a desert, where the harsh terrain and extreme climate make life more difficult. Some landforms even serve as natural political boundaries. For instance, in North America, the Rio Grande acts as the border between Southern Texas and Northern Mexico. Mountains also serve as natural borders, like the Pyrenees Mountains in Europe, which separate France and Spain.

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### Transportation



Geography can also dictate the variety and availability of different modes of transportation. In areas located on harbors or near large waterways, marine transportation is common. Mass transportation is more likely to be found in cities with larger numbers of people, while rural areas maintain a much smaller network of roads. Local landforms and water features must be considered when developing a transportation pattern. Furthermore, transportation patterns require disaster planning in case of environmental emergency. For example, if a hurricane is heading toward a location, residents need to have access to safe routes so they can evacuate the city.