



## AP<sup>®</sup> Human Geography 2002 Sample Student Responses

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Religion is all over the world and is made up of a variety of customs. Each religion has its own beliefs and goes about everything differently. They all affect the landscape in some way. They limit some of the areas that could be populated & affect the extent to which industrialization and technology could advance. Sacred sites, such as those in Israel have caused conflict between religions and led to the destruction of other areas. The position of each site determines how everything around it can be placed and gone about. Burial practices and sites also differ within territories such as in Africa or Mexico. Every custom in burials is different somewhat and the change between regions is noticeable. The difference in styles of architecture in an area can also show how each religion plays a role in the community. The high top cathedrals and small buildings for synagogues give the community a variety of designs adding color and variety. Each style of architecture also varies on the natural landscape of an area because it determines how much can be built, while at the same time making land for a building can change the landscape and affect the environment somewhat. Each religion comes from a different group of people bringing with it a different language. The idea that each language in religion

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is different leads to a variety in place names. This marks the boundaries of each religion. The combination of different religions in a community leads to a variety of styles of architecture, languages, sacred sites, and burial practices to come together to form a whole different environment.

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One way ~~that~~ religion has shaped the cultural landscape is through sacred sites. Many religions, both universal and ethnic, have specific locations on Earth's surface that are considered sacred. In India, the Ganges River is a sacred site to the religion of Hinduism, the major religion in India. ~~Hinduism~~ Hinduism is an ethnic religion and over 90% of people in India are Hindu.

The burial practices and burial sites of religions also shape the cultural landscape. Certain religions have strict beliefs about burial practices and locations, especially ancient religions. In Egypt, the burial practices of the ancient Egyptians is visible in the Great Pyramids of ~~Egypt~~ Giza. Here, important members of ancient Egypt are buried. We also see how they buried their dead: they wrapped them and placed them in coffins.

Architecture plays a major role in some religions, and can greatly affect the cultural landscape. Usually it involves the building style of the place where a religion is practiced, such as a church or temple. The Roman Catholic Church built cathedrals

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in a style of architecture called gothic. Gothic Cathedrals of the Roman Catholic Church can be seen in places where Roman Catholic is the predominant religion, such as in Vatican City and Rome.

Place names are often derived from religions. If a ~~that~~ region is primarily one religion, many of the place names in that region will be named for important people or places of the religion there. Religious place names can ~~be~~ be found in the New England region of North America. Many place names in New England are named for saints of the protestant branch of the Christian religion.

Religion shapes the world's cultural landscapes in four main ways: Sacred sites, Burial practices/sites, Architecture, and Place Names.

First, most religions have sacred places that are special or holy to them. They may be the believed birthplace of a famous religious leader, or they may be a special land feature with believed sacred power or sanctity. An example of a sacred site is the "Kaaba" in the city of Mecca. This is a holy site to Muslims, because it contains the Koran, the Islamic holy book. People flock to Mecca by the thousands on pilgrimage every year to see it.

Second, Burial practices and sites are important in many religions and can be seen in the ways people dispose of dead bodies. For example, Hindus practice the ceremony of cremation. Therefore, there are no cemeteries in places where Hinduism is the only religion. Also, cremation ashes are often sprinkled in the Ganges River, making that river both polluted and very crowded.

Third, Architecture has a very obvious impact on the way buildings on the cultural landscape show religion. For example, the Islamic mosque dominates cities where Islam is practiced; in fact, cities are built around

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the mosque, with the mosque as a focal point. These mosques are decorated with geometric designs, but no pictures, because Islam forbids reproducing nature or animals and people in artwork.

Finally, Place names show the impact a religion has on the "built" or cultural landscape. Names reflect religions of people who lived in certain places. For example, San Diego, California, San Francisco, California, and Corpus Christi, Texas reflect the dominance of Catholicism in the Spanish culture that one had prominence in those areas.