2025 United States Geography Championships – Free Response Examination Scoring Guide

Section 1 - [20 points]

Use the image in section 1 to complete the following.

1. What was the life expectancy of the US, China, Egypt, Afghanistan, and Brazil in 1960. [5 points]
2. How many of the five countries have a life expectancy over 65 years as of 2022? [1 point]
3. How much higher was life expectancy in China in 2022 than it was in 1960? [1 point]
4. How much higher was life expectancy in Afghanistan in 2022 than it was in 1960? [1 point]
5. Briefly explain THREE reasons why life expectancy might go up in a country. [6 points]
6. Why do you think life expectancy in the US was so much higher than these other countries in 1960? [3 points]
7. Why do you think life expectancy went down so much and so quickly in Afghanistan in the 1980s? [3 points]

1. US – 70; China – 33; Egypt – 46; Afghanistan – 33; Brazil – 51 (answers +/- 1 year were accepted)
2. 4 of the 5
3. 46 years (+/- 2 years accepted)
4. 28 years (+/- 2 years accepted)
5. Factors like better healthcare, improved living conditions, better nutrition, economic growth, and public health measures
6. In 1960 the US was the wealthiest country in the world with a highly developed healthcare system, a high standard of living, and more access to inexpensive, high-quality food than the other nations
7. There was a major war and associated disruption in the Afghan economy during the 1980s

Section 2 - [20 points]

Use the image in section 2 to complete the following. This image shows earthquakes over 4.0 magnitude in 2017.

1. Which of the nine earthquakes numbered on the map occurred on the Ring of Fire? Which of the nine earthquakes numbered on the map occurred on the boundary of the African Plate? [9 points]
2. How many total earthquakes above 8.0 magnitude occurred in 2017? How many total earthquakes between 7.9 and 7.0 magnitude occurred in 2017? Based on the information on the map, in what country did the strongest earthquake in 2017 happen? [3 points]
3. In the space provided, draw a diagram illustrating the formation of a tsunami caused by an earthquake. Your diagram should illustrate at least three steps (but may include more), and each step should be labeled using appropriate vocabulary. [5 points]
4. Based on the information on the map, list these countries in order from MOST earthquake risk to LEAST earthquake risk – Japan, Finland, the US [3 points]

1. Ring of Fire – 1, 3, 4, 6, 9; African Plate – 2, 5, 7, 8
2. 1 above 8.0; 6 between 7.9 and 7.0; Mexico
3. Diagrams for this part could take many forms. Points were awarded for readability, accuracy, and proper labeling with relevant vocabulary.
4. Japan, the US, Finland

Section 3 - [15 points]
Use the images in section 3 to complete the following. This image shows continental divides and ocean drainage basins throughout the world.
1. Identify by number each of the following on the map – Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, Pacific Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, Gulf of Mexico (Gulf of America), Arctic Ocean. [6 points]
2. Identify by letter the drainage basins that empty into each of the following – Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, Gulf of Mexico (Gulf of America), Arctic Ocean [5 points]
3. Briefly define the term continental divide in the space provided. [2 points]
4. Briefly define the term endorheic basin in the space provided. [2 points]

1. Atlantic Ocean – 3, Indian Ocean – 6, Pacific Ocean – 1, Mediterranean Sea – 5, Gulf of Mexico (Gulf of America) – 2, Arctic Ocean – 4
2. Atlantic Ocean – B, Indian Ocean – E, Mediterranean Sea – C, Gulf of Mexico (Gulf of America) – A, Arctic Ocean – D
3. A continental divide is a high ridge or elevated area that separates river systems flowing in different directions
4. An endorheic basin is a drainage basin where water does not flow to the ocean. Instead, rivers and streams inside the basin end in lakes, salt flats, or wetlands, where the water evaporates or soaks into the ground.

Section 4 - [15 points]
Use the image in section 4 to complete the following.
1. Identify by number each of the following on the image – natural levee, point bar, floodplain, oxbow, talus. [5 points]
2. Briefly describe in the space provided how a natural levee is formed by a river. [4 points]
3. Briefly describe in the space provided how an oxbow lake would form from a meandering river like the one seen in this image. [4 points]
4. Briefly define the term talus and describe how talus would form from the walls of a canyon like this one. [2 points]

1. natural levee – 6, point bar – 4 OR 2, floodplain – 1, oxbow – 5, talus – 3
2. A natural levee is a raised bank formed by sediment left behind when a river floods
3. An oxbow lake forms when a meandering river cuts off one of its bends
4. Talus is a sloping pile of loose rocks and broken debris that collects at the base of a cliff, canyon wall, or steep slope

Section 5 - [10 points]
1. In the space provided, discuss how immigration has changed American culture and society since the 1960s.

1. Increased cultural diversity - Immigration has made the U.S. more culturally diverse. This is reflected in food, music, language, festivals, and everyday life; Growth of multilingual communities - Large immigrant populations have expanded the use of other languages in schools, media, and businesses; Economic contributions - Immigrants have filled important roles in industries like technology, healthcare, agriculture, and service work; Changing demographics of cities and suburbs - Immigrants revived some urban neighborhoods and contributed to population growth in suburbs; Political and social impact - Immigration has influenced elections, public policy debates, and discussions about national identity, civil rights, and inclusion.