

Exercise walk-through

Human-Environmental Interaction ■ 1.5

eXercise

You must be able to

- distinguish **environmental determinism** 环境决定论 from **possibilism** 或然论
- explain why possibilism is now the accepted view
- define **sustainability** 可持续性 and **natural resources** 自然资源
- give examples of people modifying their environment

Method — Determinism vs possibilism

Environmental determinism claims the physical environment *decides* how a society develops. **Possibilism** says the environment sets limits and offers options, but people *choose* how to respond.

Method — Why possibilism won

Determinism was used to justify false, biased claims. Possibilism fits the evidence: societies in similar environments develop very differently, using technology to overcome limits.

Method — Sustainability

Sustainability means meeting present needs without stopping future generations from meeting theirs — using **natural resources** so they are not used up or ruined.

Practice 2.1 ■ 2 marks

State the main idea of possibilism.

Solution 2.1

Worked steps

the environment sets limits/offers possibilities **B1**; people choose how to respond, aided by culture and technology **B1**.

Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

Define sustainability.

Solution 2.2

Worked steps

meeting present needs **B1** without preventing future generations from meeting theirs **B1**.

Practice 2.3 ■ 2 marks

A society builds irrigation to farm a dry region.

(a) Does this support determinism or possibilism? Explain.

Solution 2.3

Method: Determinism vs possibilism

Worked steps

(a) possibilism **B1** — people used technology to overcome an environmental limit rather than being controlled by it **B1**.

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 1 mark

The now-rejected idea that climate determines whether a society will succeed is

- A** possibilism
- B** environmental determinism
- C** sustainability
- D** distance decay

Solution 3.1

- A possibilism
- B environmental determinism**
- C sustainability
- D distance decay



Worked steps

- B. that the environment determines development is environmental determinism.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 1 mark

Using a fishery only as fast as fish can reproduce is an example of

- A** environmental determinism
- B** sustainable resource use
- C** time-space compression
- D** a perceptual region

Solution 3.2

A environmental determinism

B sustainable resource use 

C time-space compression

D a perceptual region

Worked steps

B. using a resource without depleting it is sustainability.

Exam-style 3.3 ■ 1 mark

Two societies live in similar mountain environments but develop very differently.

- (a) Which theory does this best support?
- (b) Explain your choice.

Solution 3.3

Method: Why possibilism won

Worked steps

(a) possibilism **B1**. (b) the same environment led to different outcomes, so people's choices — not the environment alone — shaped development **B1**.