Theme 1: Interaction Between Humans and the Environment (ENV)

The interaction between humans and the environment is a fundamental theme in world history. The environment shaped human societies, but, increasingly, human societies also affected the environment. During prehistory, humans interacted with the environment as hunters, fishers, and foragers, and human migrations led to the peopling of the earth. As the Neolithic Revolution began, humans exploited their environments more intensively, either as farmers or pastoralists. Environmental factors such as rainfall patterns, climate, and available flora and fauna shaped the methods of exploitation used in different regions. Human impact on the environment intensified as populations grew and as people migrated into new regions. As people flocked into cities or established trade networks, new diseases emerged and spread, sometimes devastating an entire region. Beginning with the Industrial Revolution, human effects on the environment increased with the development of more sophisticated technologies, the exploitation of new energy sources, and a rapid increase in human populations.

OVERARCHING QUESTIONS:

1. How have people used diverse tools and technologies to adapt to and affect the environment over time? [ENV-1 and 2]

2. How and to what extent has human migration and settlement been influenced by the environment during different periods in world history? [ENV-3, 4, 5, and 6]

3. How has the environment changed as a consequence of population growth and urbanization? [ENV-7 and 8]

4. How have processes of industrialization and global integration been shaped by environmental factors and in turn how has their development affected the environment over time? [ENV-9]