

### **Discussion Questions**

#### **Slide 23**

- American pioneers settling in the West sought out major rivers, such as the Platte and its branches, and areas that were flat enough to farm. What other geographical factors do you think would have been important in choosing where to settle?

#### **Slide 31**

- Think about some of the things you know about your town, such as patterns of income distribution, transportation routes, or the location of hospitals or schools. What thematic maps could you create to illustrate relationships between these factors (e.g., the relationship between income levels and access to hospitals)?

#### **Slide 32**

- How are we affected by the use of energy resources such as fossil fuels, uranium (in nuclear energy), and the sun?

#### **Slide 33**

- How does the use of fossil fuels impact our lives?
- What do you think life in the United States or Canada would be like if the supply of fossil fuels were severely limited?
- What changes would people have to make in their everyday lifestyles?
- How else would society have to adjust?
- How do you think the depletion of fossil fuels would affect people in other parts of the world?

#### **Slide 34**

- If we used solar power for more of our energy, how might this affect the economy, the environment, and society?

#### **Slide 35**

- What would you need to know in order to determine where to place a power plant in your town?
- What about a landfill?
- A big hospital?
- A high school?

#### **Slide 36**

- Which parts of your town would most benefit from new or expanded transportation routes, such as new roads and highways, bus lines, or light rail?
- How could you use a map to help answer this question?
- What other methods might you use besides analyzing maps?

Slide 37

- Imagine a place like Colorado's "Front Range," which includes Denver, Fort Collins, Colorado Springs, and many smaller towns, which has seen tremendous population growth in recent years despite an urgent shortage of water. What differences might exist in this area if people and governments continue to increase their demand for water instead of trying to conserve it?

Slide 38

- How might rapid population growth affect your town, your state, the entire country, other parts of the world, or the world as a whole?

Slide 39

- In what ways might rapid population growth affect the environment?
- What other factors could have an impact on the environment?
- Deforestation occurs for multiple reasons, including the desire of local people for cash income, the perceived need to clear the forest to farm, the ability of large logging companies to cut huge areas of forests, and the inability of governments to agree on safeguards for the rainforest. What do you think would be the best way to combat each of these problems?

Slide 42

- How might a cruise ship, which offers the same types of amenities as land-based resorts, impact the environment through which it travels?

Slide 43

- How might popular recreational activities impact ecosystems?

Slide 45

- What role do you think tourism should play in the future?
- What types of tourism should governments encourage?
- What changes should be made—if any—to the way tourism is developed and practiced today?

Slide 46

- Think about your own town. What steps do you think should be taken to improve the environment in and near where you live?
- What do you see as the most pressing environmental problems in your area?

Slide 47

- Many towns work to improve the quality of their natural environment through recycling programs, parks and greenbelts within and around the city, public transportation, bicycle and walking paths, and water quality safeguards. Has your town implemented any of these?
- Has it made improvements to these things in recent years?
- Where could you go to find out more information?
- Based on what you know now, which of these improvements do you think should be priorities for your town?
- Can you think of other improvements your town should consider?

Slide 49

- What would people in your town do in the event of a natural disaster?
- Where would people go, and how would they cope with the situation?
- Are you aware of any specific plans to help your town prepare for an earthquake, hurricane, flood, or other type of natural disaster most likely to strike your area?

Slides 52–53

- The National Park Service, according to the Organic Act of 1916 which created it, aims to “conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”  
What does this statement mean to you?
- What contradictions exist within this statement?
- Should national parks emphasize wilderness and prevent people from entering certain areas or only allow them to travel through these areas on foot?
- Should parks be made as accessible as possible to humans?
- Should any type of outdoor recreation be permitted in national parks or should parks only allow certain activities?
- How might such a statement assist or hinder efforts by the National Park Service and other organizations and agencies charged with making plans for the parks and their visitors?
- What would you do if you were in charge of deciding how to handle common park problems like traffic congestion, smog, noise pollution, and damage to ecosystems?
- What difficulties do you think go along with the job of national park planner?