Introduction to Geography

- Geography refers to the study of the world and the **relationships** between people and environments.

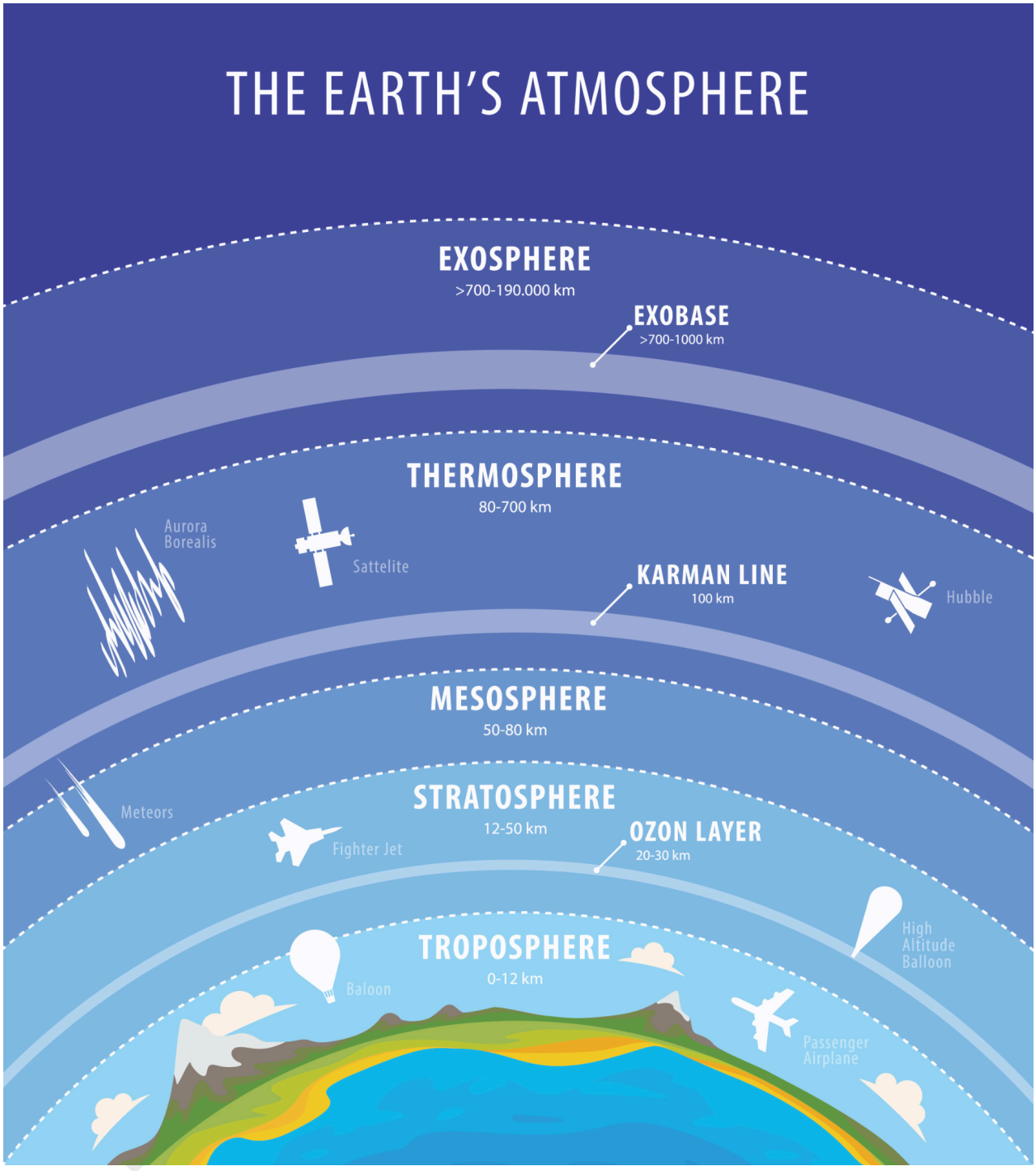
The chapter aims to answer:
• How do geographers study the world?

- How do we describe physical and built environments?

Physical vs Human Geography

Physical Geography

- Focuses on the study of the physical environment.
- Consists of all living and non-living things that are found naturally, as well as natural processes that occur on Earth.
- Physical environment consists of:
    - **Atmosphere**: Layer of gas and tiny particles surrounding Earth
        - Troposphere: Lowest layer, most clouds, precipitation and other weather elements occur within this layer
        - Stratosphere: It is the 2nd layer and its temperature is constant
        - Mesosphere: 3rd layer, temperature decreases with height
        - Thermosphere: Layer below exosphere; temperature increases sharply in lower thermosphere, then drops off and holds steadily with increasing height
        - Exosphere: Outermost layer
    - **Hydrosphere**: All water found on Earth and the atmosphere
    - **Lithosphere**: Solid layer of rock forming the surface
    - **Biosphere**: All living things on Earth (plants and animals)



Human Geography

- Focuses on the study of the built environment, e.g. housing, transport system

Geographical Concepts

A way to think about the world, through **space, place, environment, and scale**.

- **Space**: Physical area on Earth's surface
- **Place**: Area of Earth's surface holding a special meaning for people
    - Used to study relation of people with physical and built environment
- **Environment**: Physical and built environments, and processes occurring naturally / human actions
- **Scale**: Level of detail geographers study something
    - Map scale
    - Time scale
    - Geographic scale (local, national, regional, global)

Geographic Scale

- The level at which a geographical phenomenon is observed or described.

Different scales reveal different insights:

- Local scale: A neighborhood or town
- Regional scale: A province or continent
- National scale: Entire countries
- Global scale: Worldwide patterns

Exam Skills Notes for Chapter 1

How to Answer “Explain” Questions in Geography

- **Content is more important.** Your marks depend on the accuracy and completeness of your geographical explanation, not on perfect grammar.
- **Avoid one-sentence answers.** A single sentence will almost always be too shallow and result in lost marks.
- **Write at least three sentences.** This gives you space to show understanding, provide reasons, and link ideas.
- **Think in terms of a short paragraph.** Begin with a clear statement, add supporting details or examples, and finish by connecting back to the question.
- **Focus on geographical concepts.** Use terms like *scale, environment, processes, human activities* to show subject knowledge.

Exam Strategy: Don’t Trust Your First Instinct

- **Pause before writing.** Your first thought may be too simple or incomplete.
- **Think through alternatives.** Ask yourself: *Is there a better explanation? Can I add more detail or examples?*
- **Build a stronger answer.** A well-developed response shows you’ve considered multiple angles, not just the obvious one.
- **Prioritize the thinking process.** Marks come from demonstrating understanding of geographical concepts, not rushing to the first idea.

Correct vs. Complete Answers

- **Correct but incomplete:** You state one valid point, but you don’t expand or add supporting details.
- **Complete answer:** You include multiple points, examples, or explanations that show full understanding of the concept.
- **Strategy**: Always ask yourself: *Have I explained the “why” and “how,” not just the “what”?*

Managing Natural Resources Sustainably

Key Questions

- What are the different types of natural resources?
- How do people view and use natural resources?

Natural Resources

- **Definition**: Useful materials found on Earth, produced by natural processes in the physical environment (e.g., water, solar energy).
- **Renewable**:
    - Replenished naturally within the same time period used.
    - Considered unlimited due to continual natural processes.
    - Example: Solar energy is captured and converted to electricity; sunlight is received daily.
- **Non-renewable**:
    - Materials that may or may not be replenished.
    - If replenished, the process is very slow and availability is limited.
    - Example: Crude oil takes millions of years to form.

Views on Natural Resources

- **Nature-centred**:
    - Natural resources are valuable in themselves.
    - Should be preserved or retained in their original state.
- **Human-centred**:
    - Resources are valuable due to usage and benefit.
    - Motivation to extract for personal well-being or profit.
    - Over-extraction leads to depletion and environmental degradation.

Usage of Natural Resources

- Short-term extraction requires awareness of long-term impacts.
- Renewable sources can become non-renewable if overused.
    - Example: Trees cut down faster than they can be replanted.
- **Sustainable usage is essential**:
    - Conservation through the **4Rs**:
        - **Reduce**: Cut down consumption to reduce usage.
        - **Reuse**: Use same materials to reduce new resource usage.
        - **Recycle**: Convert used materials into new items (e.g., glass, aluminium, paper).
        - **Recover**: Extract useful materials from waste.