CRAM
THE GEORGE F. CRAM COMPANY

ENVIRONMENTAL INTERACTIONS, U.S.

Discussion Guide

The following questions are designed to spark discussion and engagement with the map. The questions can be modified or adapted in any way to suit your class.

Questions

1. Locate your state on the main map and on the inset maps. By looking at the maps and the legends, what are five pieces of information you can identify about your state?

2. What do you notice about the types of vegetation on the map—cropland, grassland, tundra, forest, and desert—and where they are located in the United States?

3. Examine the main map and the Sea Level Change inset map, which shows the change in sea level over the past 50 years. Assuming sea change continues to follow this same pattern, which urban areas should be most concerned about flooding in the future?

4. What information from the main map may help explain the air pollution levels on the inset map?

5. Which states have more people living in urban areas? In rural areas? Explain what, if anything, surprises you about the percentages of urban population.

6. Examine the urban areas on the main map. What physical features help explain why big cities are located where they are?

Answers

1. Answers will vary. May include: vegetation zones and natural features, presence or lack of urban areas, presence of water features, levels of air pollution, sea level and temperature changes, and urban population.

2. Answers will vary. Students may note that semi-desert and desert vegetation is primarily in the south-west; that tundra is only in Alaska/higher latitudes; that forests are gathered around mountain ranges (Cascades, Rockies, Appalachians, Alaskans); that croplands are in the middle swath of the country.

3. Answers may vary, but can include: Seattle, WA; San Francisco, CA; San Diego, CA; Hilo, HI; Prudhoe Bay, AK; Corpus Christi, TX; New Orleans, LA; Charleston, SC; Atlantic City, NJ; Boston, MA.

4. Urban areas create higher levels of air pollution.

5. The states with the darkest shade of gray on the Urbanization inset map have 75–100% of their population living in urban areas (these states include California, Florida, Massachusetts, and Texas). The states with the lightest shade of gray have less than 50% of their population living in urban areas (Maine, Mississippi, Vermont, and West Virginia). Some may be surprised that a large state like Texas, for example, where most of the land is cropland and grassland, has over 75% of its population living in urban areas.

6. Answers will vary, but may include that big cities are primarily near bodies of water; they are on or near grass- and cropland; and they tend to not be atop natural features like mountain ranges.