

Geography Lesson

Can you imagine what your city would look like if you saw it from ten thousand feet above the ground? Neatly planned and perfect in proportion like a geometric design, it would strike you as something very different from what it actually is while you are in the thick of it.

Here is a poet's description of just such a view of the city, and some questions that come to his mind.

When the jet sprang into the sky,
it was clear why the city
had developed the way it had,
seeing it scaled six inches to the mile.
There seemed an inevitability
about what on ground had looked haphazard,
unplanned and without style
When the jet sprang into the sky.

When the jet reached ten thousand feet,
it was clear why the country
had cities where the rivers ran
and why the valleys were populated.
The logic of geography —
that land and water attracted man —
was clearly delineated
When the jet reached ten thousand feet.

When the jet rose six miles high,
it was clear the earth was round
and that it had more sea than land.

But it was difficult to understand that the men on the earth found causes to hate each other, to build walls across cities and to kill. From that height, it was not clear why.

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glossary

inevitable: that cannot be avoided

haphazard: without plan or order

delineated: shown

working with the poem

1. Find three or four phrases in stanzas one and two which are likely to occur in a geography lesson.
2. Seen from the window of an aeroplane, the city appears
 - (i) as haphazard as on ground.
 - (ii) as neat as a map.
 - (iii) as developed as necessary.Mark the right answer.
3. Which of the following statements are examples of “the logic of geography”?
 - (i) There are cities where there are rivers.
 - (ii) Cities appear as they are not from six miles above the ground.
 - (iii) It is easy to understand why valleys are populated.
 - (iv) It is difficult to understand why humans hate and kill one another.
 - (v) The earth is round, and it has more sea than land.
4. Mention two things that are
 - (i) **clear** from the height.
 - (ii) **not clear** from the height.