

GEOGRAPHY TIPS

Describe Aspects of a Geographic Topic at a Global Scale (AS 91013)

**WHAT IS THIS STANDARD ABOUT?**

In this standard students have to describe a global pattern, the factors or processes that have caused this pattern and to describe the significance of the topic to people’s lives.

An important part of geography is being able to interpret topics at different scales. Most of the assessments are based on environments at a local or regional scale. This assessment is one of the few that looks at the whole world to identify patterns and interactions. As such it helps promote geographic understanding. It is also useful that this standard scaffolds into a similar one at both Level 2 and Level 3.

**UNPACKING THE TERMS**

* **Global**: Regions or nations across more than one continent or hemisphere.
* **Geographic topic**: A theme on a global scale that has a spatial dimension and is related to the natural and/or cultural environment.
* **Pattern**: A definite spatial dimension that is described using geographic terminology such as ‘linear’ or ‘clustered’.
* **Factors and /or processes**: the characteristics or actions involved
* **Significance to People’s lives**: The impacts they have on the way people live. **Describe**: This means to identify and give an account of; to make reference to the qualities, characteristics or recognisable features. A simple explanation can also be included.
* **Showing Insight:** This means in-depth understanding that can involve weighing up and judging evidence - reading into and beyond the subject matter/evidence, linking causes to effects. Consideration of perspectives can help in showing insight.
* **Comprehensively Describe:** means both showing insight and the use of geographic terminology and concepts.

**CHOICE OF TOPIC**

When deciding on a suitable topic you should consider the following:

* Start with an easily identified pattern. If a clear pattern cannot be seen it will not be easy for your students to answer the questions about it. Even though ‘random’ is an established pattern it is very difficult to explain why it is like this so is best avoided at this level. One that occurs in a few areas or is clustered is far easier.
* Ensure the topic is ‘geographic’. Many good topics are more social and while these may be of interest to students they will struggle to extract the geography from it. A good geography topic is one in which the location matters.
* Ensure there are easy to understand reasons for the pattern. As this is at Level 1 do not pick ones that are too complex or will require a lot of background teaching. For example, those in which the pattern is associated with development may best be left to Level 2 when this is explored in more depth.
* Can you combine this with another geography standard to cut down on background information? An example is the 1.1 Extreme Natural Event (global pattern of earthquakes/volcanoes/tropical cyclones etc) or the 1.2 Population (global pattern of ageing population or population distribution). However, a word of caution here as the requirements of this standard differ from the requirements of the external. Alternatively combine with the 1.3 looking at the global pattern of tourism or mining.
* Choose a topic in the news or of interest to students. Ideas here include the global distribution of McDonald’s, climate change, obesity or coffee.

**WRITING ASSESSMENT TASKS**

Writing your own assessment tasks is not difficult but can be daunting if you are new to geography teaching. Many resources are available via subject associations or cluster groups as teachers are willing to share ideas that have been proved to work well. Most cluster groups now use dropboxes for this purpose so check to see what is available in your region. There are several organisations that you can buy assessment tasks from such as Geostuff <http://www.geostuff.co.nz/home.html> and Classroom Solutions <http://www.classroomsolutions.co.nz/geography.html> or World Vision <https://www.worldvision.org.nz/Catalogue/Education/Search/?&f1=39&f2=&f3>=

that are often ideal to use in the first instance until you gain confidence.

If you are writing your own assessment tasks then use the exemplars provided on the TKI site as a guide. 2 exemplars are provided for each standard at <http://ncea.tki.org.nz/Resources-for-Internally-Assessed-Achievement-Standards/Social-sciences/Geography/Level-1-Geography>. You can download these and use them as a base to add your own context to. When doing this it is important that you use the language of the standard so have this available. If you have constructed your own assessment task it is important that you get a fresh pair of eyes to moderate this before it is used.

The TKI resources are provided as exemplars of what is possible and should not be downloaded and used in their original format as they are readily accessible to students. However, you can adapt them.

**DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN LEVELS**

There are several ways that the Level 1 standard is differentiated from Level 2 and 3. These include:

* The key instruction word here is ‘describe’ whereas at Level 2 it is ‘explain’ and Level 3 ‘analyse”. As a result explanations are not required.
* The topic chosen. While the same topics can be used at all levels some topics are easier to understand than others. At Level 1 this should not be too complex.
* The assistance that is given by the teacher. It is vital to read the Conditions of Assessment <http://ncea.tki.org.nz/Resources-for-Internally-Assessed-Achievement-Standards/Social-sciences/Geography/Level-1-Geography> and clarifications of the standard that clearly set out what the teacher can help with. At Level 1 the teacher should select the topic. They can also help by providing the global map and a list of factors and/or processes (see below).
* The resources provided. At Level 1 the majority of resources should be provided by the teacher. These should be of the appropriate reading level for this year group. Check the resources answer the aspects required and that they are up to date. Alternatively a web quest or similar can be provided as long as these have been vetted to check they are appropriate to the year level. Students can be encouraged to provide additional resources themselves but this is not mandatory at this level.

**GLOBAL EVIDENCE**

Throughout this assessment it is important that each aspect is answered by referring to places in different continents or hemispheres in order to fulfill the requirement to be ‘global’. Just naming 2 different places will not fulfill this requirement and it is best for students to use as many examples as possible. It is easier to ask for ‘global evidence’ rather than case studies as students tend to get stuck on small details if they are treated as case studies rather than looking at the bigger picture and the links that exist. While it is important that global evidence is provided at all levels the Achieved student is likely to mention names only as an add on at the end. At higher levels they are more likely to integrate appropriate evidence into answers.

**PRE-TEACHING**

This standard is likely to take several weeks to be completed. Before assessing this it is important students are familiar with the following:

* What global means - where the main continents and countries of the world are and what hemisphere is which. An understanding of global geography.
* How to identify patterns. Try providing a map of an unknown pattern so students concentrate on describing a pattern rather than the processes behind it.
* Background to the geographic topic – what it is about.
* Understanding the resources provided. What do they mean?
* A chance to add to the resources provided
* What concepts apply to this topic?
* Background to the standard - what is required for each criterion?
* How to write geographic answers
* How to integrate global evidence into answers

**DESCRIBING THE PATTERN**

The student does not have to map the global pattern. A map showing the pattern can be supplied to students and this will encourage the focus to be on the description of the global pattern. An issue arises when students draw their own maps to illustrate a spatial pattern and no discernible pattern can be identified as this can impact on the next stage of the task.

The description of the pattern should use appropriate geographic terminology. This can include - linear, peripheral, regular, clustered, radial, concentrated, dispersed or scattered. Patterns should not be confused with location. “The main countries and continents that produce high amounts of coffee are in small clusters around the world. Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Indonesia and Ethiopia are all large producers of coffee”. In this example a recognised term to describe the pattern, clusters, has been used. In contrast, in the following example, no pattern has been identified and location has been given. “Coffee is produced between the latitudes 25° north and 25° south of the Equator. The largest producers are Brazil, Colombia and Indonesia”.

Students could annotate a map of the spatial pattern describing or identifying relevant features/characteristics e.g. continents, nations, longitude/latitude, climate zones etc., prior to writing a detailed description. This helps to scaffold the answer.

The description goes to Excellence. For Achievement a pattern should be identified and described as well as places named in different hemispheres as examples. At a Merit level the pattern needs to be unpacked a little further to show subtle differences within it. For example if you are describing the pattern of volcanic eruptions in the world for achievement the student may make the connection to a peripheral pattern on plate boundaries. The student who takes it to the next level may point out that the majority of volcanic eruptions occur around specific plates and/or that there are some exceptions with a few occurring in other locations citing specific examples.

**DESCRIBING FACTORS AND/OR PROCESSES THAT CAUSED OR CONTRIBUTED TO THE PATTERN**

It is important to interpret this aspect correctly. It has two parts. First, there must be an understanding of how the factors and/or processes cause the pattern and secondly show an understanding of the actual process and/or factor involved. e.g subduction is responsible for the pattern of earthquakes on the plate boundary PLUS a description as to what this process is. The emphasis is less about the factors or processes that have caused the topic and more on the **pattern** of the topic. Hence if you are doing earthquakes it is not about so much about how earthquakes form but why they are in a linear pattern. Admittedly the two are connected but it is up to the student to make that connection.

It therefore often pays to work backwards. Start with the pattern and ask why the pattern exists? This will lead back to some factors and/or processes.

At least 2 factors, 2 processes or 1 factor and 1 process are required for achievement. A list of these can be provided by the teacher to select from.

For Achievement 2 factors/and or processes must be described and linked to the pattern with places in different (more than one) hemispheres/continents included.

For Merit this is the same but that more depth is provided in the description and linkage. This could relate to specifics of the named examples and providing more depth in the linkage between the two.

For Excellence again two factors/ processes can be applied with a clear linkage between them and the pattern that incorporates good specifics of the named examples, geographic terminology and refers to at least one concept such as ‘process’, ‘pattern’ or ‘interaction’.

**DESCRIBING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TOPIC TO PEOPLE’S LIVES**

Unlike the previous aspect this does not relate to the pattern but the topic. This must be established by describing the impact of the topic on the **lives** of people. This aspect differs from the previous standard in that the focus is directly on people’s lives. The answer must provide global evidence of the effect on people’s lives. Stating the number of people killed in an earthquake is insufficient, or how much damage was caused is only relevant if linked to how it impacts on people’s lives.

The effects must be to do with people not the natural environment. Any reference to the natural environment needs to be treated as neutral. Again places in different hemispheres must be referred to somewhere within the answer.

Differentiation between grades will depend on quality rather than quantity. At all grades several impacts need to be mentioned. For Merit you would expect more specific detail while at Excellence several additional requirements must be met. These include using geographic terminology such as differentiating between social and economic impacts or positive and negative and using geographic concepts such as different perspectives or change.

**MANAGEMENT OF THE ASSESSMENT**

The standard can be lengthy and take several weeks to complete. A useful approach to this standard is to collect assessment evidence during the course of the learning. You teach the first aspect, set a task and collect that evidence and then move onto the next. Such an approach means that the assessment does not interfere with the learning. If this is done it is important it is not marked between each stage since a holistic judgment must be applied at the end.

The majority of schools assess this standard using a written booklet. However, it can be assessed in other ways such as producing a poster or power point or movie. It is also possible to do as an oral presentation if feasible with class numbers. You can assess the different aspects in different ways such as the pattern and processes presented as a poster and the significance to people as a power point.

If doing in a written format it often helps to provide a booklet for this standard as it assists the student in seeing how much you are expecting at each stage. However, do ensure if you do this that space is provided for the excellence student to be creative.

**MARKING OF THE ASSESSMENT**

It is important to note the aspects of the research that step up through the grades and how the quality is determined.  The chart below unpacks the Achievement Criteria, and the geographic research must involve all aspects identified below.  The final judgment is based on a holistic examination of the evidence.

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| **Achievement** | **Achievement with Merit** | **Achievement with Excellence** |
| Describe aspects of a geographic topic at a global scale.  Describe the pattern  Describe factors and/or processes that caused or contributed to the pattern.  Describe the significance of the global topic to people’s lives. | Describe, in depth, aspects of a geographic topic at a global scale.  Describing in detail the pattern  Describing in detail the factors and/or processes that caused or contributed to the pattern   * specific information   Describing in detail the significance of the global topic to people’s lives   * specific information | Comprehensively describe aspects of a geographic topic at a global scale.  Fully describingthe pattern  Fully describingthe factors and/or processes that caused or contributed to the pattern   * specific information * geographic terminology * geographic concepts * insight   Fully describingthe significance of the global topic to people’s lives   * specific information * geographic terminology * geographic concepts * insight |

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