

GEOGRAPHY TIPS

Explain Aspects of a Geographic Topic at a Global Scale (AS 91246)

**WHAT IS THIS STANDARD ABOUT?**

In this standard students have to describe a spatial or temporal pattern of a geographic topic at a global scale, explain the cause(s) that have contributed to this pattern and to explain the significance of the topic for people

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 from a similar one at Level 1.

**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.
* **Spatial Pattern**: A definite spatial dimension that is described using geographic terminology such as ‘linear’ or ‘clustered’.
* **Temporal Pattern**: A definite arrangement of features that changes over time in a specific location that is described using geographic terminology such as being constant, exponential, irregular or fluctuating.
* **Causes:** The factors (circumstances) and /or processes (sequence of actions) involved
* **Significance to People**: The impacts they have on people. These can be broken down into social and economic.
* **Explain**: This means to provide reasons for, to account for, to clarify. Logical reasons are provided
* **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 explain:** means both showing insight and the use of geographic terminology and concepts.

**DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN LEVELS**

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

* The key instruction word here is ‘explain’ whereas at Level 1 it is ‘describe’. As a result answers need to show reasons for the causes/impacts identified.
* The topic chosen. Ensure that the topic allows the depth of explanation required at this level.
* The depth of evidence provided must reflect Level 7 of the curriculum. As a result, what you expect for Level 2 for ‘describe the pattern’ is not the same as what you would expect at level 1 despite the fact the question is the same.
* 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-2-Geography> and clarifications of the standard that clearly set out what the teacher can help with. At Level 2 this states that the topic should be provided by the teacher or a list of suitable topics should be provided from which the students can choose. If students are choosing their own global topics the teacher should give guidance about suitability of the topic.
* The resources provided. Only some resources should be provided by the teacher at this level. These should be of the appropriate reading level for this year group and be of sufficient quality to enable the students to achieve at Excellence. It is important to check the resources address the aspects required and that they are up to date. Students should be encouraged to provide additional resources themselves. If students select their own topics then they should receive guidance about where to access information.

**CHOICE OF TOPIC**

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

* Start with a topic that clearly has a global spatial dimension with an easy identified pattern(s). 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.
* Ensure the topic is ‘geographic’. Many good topics are entirely 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 the cause(s) for the pattern allow the depth required for higher grades.
* Can you combine this with another geography standard to cut down on background information? An example is the 2.1 Natural Landscapes by investigating the global pattern of deserts or rainforests/ or the 2.3 Development looking at the global pattern of an indicator such as fertility/ birth rates / death rates/ life expectancy/ availability of clean water/ malaria.
* Choose a topic in the news or of interest to students. Ideas here include the global distribution of diseases or marine piracy.

**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. However, do be aware that it is your responsibility to ensure that the assessment resource meets the requirement of the standard and provides the students with every opportunity to meet the standard. 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-2-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.

**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 expected 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 and describe spatial patterns using geographic terminology. Try providing a map of an unknown pattern so students concentrate on describing a pattern rather than the processes behind it.
* How to identify and describe temporal patterns using geographic terminology
* 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**

Students may describea spatial or a temporal pattern or combine the two**.** A spatial pattern that also has a temporal dimension could add to the description provided.

The student does not have to map the global topic. An issue arises when students draw their own maps and no discernible pattern can be identified as this can impact on the next stage of the task. Instead a map(s)/graph(s) etc showing the pattern should be supplied to students and this will encourage the focus to be on the description of the global pattern. For a spatial pattern provide a map showing the global topic for students to annotate. For temporal patterns it may require 2 or more maps or the inclusion of graphs showing change over time. However, be sure that the resources address the question. For example, cartograms can confuse students if they cannot clearly identify the countries and regions concerned.

To identify patterns get students to ask the following questions

* Is there an area that is denser, with objects than others?
* Is there an area that has fewer or no objects than others?
* Are there clusters of objects?
* Is there a randomness or uniformity to the location of the objects?
* Does there seem to be a relationship between individual objects (is one object located where it is because of another)?

The description of the pattern must use appropriate geographic terminology for Merit and Excellence. For spatial patterns 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”.

For temporal patterns examples of terminology to use are constant, fluctuating, cyclic, regular, and irregular.

Students could annotate map(s) of the 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 tropical rainforests in the world for achievement the student may make the connection to a linear pattern between the tropics. The student who takes it to the next level may point out that the majority of tropical rainforests occur close to large water bodies such as oceans and river basins citing specific examples. Alternatively they may identify where the largest rainforests occur and then where the smaller exceptions exist. Be careful that this is just a description as the explanation will fall into the next aspect.

**EXPLAINING THE CAUSE(S) THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE PATTERN**

It is important to interpret this aspect correctly. It has two parts. First, there must be an understanding of the cause(s) of the pattern and secondly show an understanding of the actual processes and/or factors involved. e.g tropical rainforest growth requires hot temperatures and extreme rainfall plus a closed nutrient cycle. An answer not only requires each of these factors to be explained and how they contribute to tree growth but also why they occur in the tropics leading to this pattern. 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 tropical rainforests it is not about so much about how rainforests form but why they are in a linear pattern in the tropics. Admittedly the two are connected but it is up to the student to make that connection.

The standard indicates that either one cause or multiple causes can be explained as contributing to the pattern. If a single cause is selected it will need to be relatively complex e.g. development, climate etc. where the student can use components of the cause to respond in the depth required when fully explaining the cause(s).

Teachers can assist with this by providing a list of causes from which the student can choose which to use to answer the question. The assessment is about the links made not being able to identify the causes so do not make this more complex than is required.

This aspect is differentiated from Achievement to Excellence. In all cases it is expected that 2 or more causes or 2 or more components of one cause are used. However, division between grades is then based on the quality of the answer not the number of causes. For Achievement a cause(s) must be explained and shown to have contributed 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 explanation and linkage. This could relate to specifics of the named examples and providing more depth in the linkage between the two. Detailed evidence that the causal relationship between factors/ processes and the pattern is understood.

For Excellence again the same can be applied with a clear linkage between them and the pattern that incorporates good specifics of the named examples. Excellence should show depth of understanding by selecting the main cause(s) and fully explaining the causal relationship between factors / processes and the pattern. This could include explaining any specific characteristics of the pattern or referring to both spatial and temporal aspects of the pattern if significant.

**DESCRIBING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TOPIC FOR PEOPLE**

Unlike the previous aspect this does not relate to the pattern but the geographic topic. This must be established by explaining the impact of the topic on people by providing global evidence. This can relate to any scale – individuals /groups/ communities or whole regions.

The effects must be to do with people. References to impacts on the natural environment are only valid if they are explained as ultimately being of significance / impacting on people e.g river pollution leading to illness, soil erosion leading to declining production, poverty etc. Again global evidence must be provided.

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, a comprehensive explanation will include, use of geographic terminology, differentiation between social and economic impacts or positive and negative and evidence that links have been understood

**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 with annotated maps/diagrams and the significance to people as a power point or oral presentation.

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 judgement is based on a holistic examination of the evidence.

The quality step-ups through the grades relate to the following descriptors:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Achievement** | **Achievement with Merit** | **Achievement with Excellence** |
| Describe and Explain | Describe in detail\* incl. Geo terminology and concepts.   Explain in detail\* | Fully\* describe incl. Geo terminology and concepts.  Fully\* explain. |

‘**Detail’** relates to the use of specific detailed global case study evidence throughout the work. Geographic terminology and concepts are used appropriately when describing the pattern.

‘**Fully’** is evinced with the *integration* of global case study material and the response showing *clear understanding* of the global topic with *distinct links* between the key aspects [insight]. Geographic terminology and concepts are used appropriately and accurately when describing the pattern.

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