

GEOGRAPHY TIPS 3.2

A CULTURAL PROCESS (AS 91427)

Demonstrate understanding of how a cultural process shapes geographic environment(s)

**WHAT IS THIS ASSESSMENT ABOUT?**

The aim of this standard is to explore aspects of cultural geography and how one named process helps to shape an environment or environments. It is linked to the following AO for Level 8:

- *Understand how interacting processes shape cultural environments, occur at different rates and on different scales, and create spatial variations.*

**CHOOSING A CULTURAL PROCESS**

There are several factors that need to be considered when choosing the most appropriate cultural process.

The process must be of a **scale** that allows you to adequately apply the criteria. This means you should be able to see the outcomes of it as distinct spatial patterns; it should have changed significantly over time (temporal variation) and had an impact on people and an environment.

It is easier to choose a process that occurs worldwide as this allows more opportunity to get **resources** on it.

The environment should be **meaningful** to the students. In most cases it is best if students are able to visit the environment to familiarize them with it and allow for fieldwork to back up evidence. It is possible to combine this with the 3.5 internal so that such fieldwork can be justified.

**Examples** of cultural processes that are used include: Tourism Development (the most popular by far!), migration, dairy farming, viticulture, and industrialization. Others that could be considered are mining, aquaculture, forestry and urbanization. Because Tourism Development is the most popular examples will be provided from this to explain what is required. These can easily be adapted to fit other cultural processes.

**CHOOSING A SUITABLE ENVIRONMENT(S)**

Once you have chosen your cultural process you need to decide on how many environments to cover. The choice here is:

* **One** only
* **Two** that allow different factors to be used
* **Several** so you can draw on many different examples

There are pros and cons of each of these. Studying one environment is useful in that students can write about it in depth and it allows them to appreciate how the different parts act together. In all cases it is advisable that one environment is chosen as the core. However, doing only one environment can be a problem if it does not show a full range of the process at work. Waitomo as an example of Tourism Development does not give the student a full appreciation of what an environment is like where tourism is at a more advanced stage like the Gold Coast. The more examples used the better their understanding but it has to be balanced by an overload of information. Therefore, consider:

* What is the **ability** of your students? How much information can they cope with?
* Is it an environment of **interest** to your students? Something familiar (Rotorua), exotic (Bali) or tied in with a possible field trip (Gold Coast or Hawaii) will bring it to life.
* If you do study only one environment then ensure it does act as a **good example** of the process at all stages. Just covering Vietnam or Antarctica for tourism will not work well when it comes to temporal variations.

If you do decide to study more than one environment you then need to decide whether to teach them together based on the criteria eg spatial variations in TD in Rotorua are like this – can we now see the same in the Gold Coast? Alternatively you can teach everything about one environment first and then do a second. The latter has the advantage that if you run out of time you are not sunk! Do be aware that comparisons between settings are not a requirement of the standard. There is however nothing stopping a student doing this to show the linkage required for an excellence grade.

**TERMS THAT MUST BE TAUGHT**

The following terms are essential to ensure an understanding of this standard. It is best to define these in context.

**Analyse**: Both say what (describe), why (explain) and categorize in a meaningful way.

**Environment**: A section of the earth with common natural and/or cultural characteristics

**Element**: Input into an environmental system. The nouns or things that are found eg tourists.

**Process:** The actions or verbs that occur eg tourist development.

**Operation of a process**: How the process works as a series of steps eg. An attraction is discovered and tourists visit, they tell others who visit, this generates a need for tourist facilities.

**Shape:** How the environment has come to look like it currently does. To what extent has the cultural process resulted in specific characteristics of the environment? How important is it in shaping this region?

**Different rates of processes:** Some processes sometimes occur at a slow rate while other times they occur quickly. Tourist development is slow in the early stages until the environment is known after which it occurs rapidly.

**Spatial Variation:** A difference between 2 or more locations in an environment. Eg most tourist attractions are concentrated in the centre and dispersed in the periphery. Tourist accommodation is in a linear pattern on main roads but clustered close to some attractions.

**Temporal Variation:** A difference between 2 or more time periods of one location. Eg tourist development was slow in the 1940’s due to the war while it was rapid in the 1960’s when air travel became more widespread.

**Impacts:** These are the consequences or effects the process has on the environment. Impacts can be categorized into social, cultural, economic or environmental as well as long term or short term or positive or negative.

**People:** In the case of Tourism Development it refers to the tourists, the local residents, the tourist operators and the regulators such as government.

**Environments:** It is important to distinguish between the **natural** environmentand the **cultural**. The latter includes buildings and infrastructure such as roads, services, electricity, water etc.

**SUGGESTED APPROACH**

Unlike other Achievement Standards at other levels of geography this standard does not include a neat list of aspects to be covered. Instead you have to take the standard title as the clue of what to cover. As a result there are several different approaches that can be used. The following approach acts as a general template for any process.

Each bullet point is a study outcome. Some of them will be very quick while others may take a week or more to cover.

* Do an overview of the standard. How to break down environments into **Inputs (Elements), Process (Actions) and Outputs (patterns)** - (*see examples below*)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **INPUTS** | **PROCESSES** | **OUTPUTS** |
| **Meaning** | The **elements** needed for the process to occur | The **interaction** between the elements  The stages of the process (**how it operates)** | What results from the operation of the process? This is what you can see (**spatial patterns**), **impacts** (people and place) and **change (temporal variations).** |

* Identify the main **elements** involved. Give the main characteristics of eachone in a given environment.
* Look at how these elements **interact** with each other. How are they related?
* Look at the stages in the **operation of the process**. What happens leading to what next?
* Look at the **outcomes** or results of this process on the environment. What can you see? What are the **spatial patterns** identified? What are the reasons for this **spatial variation?** Why is the process happening more or differently in some parts compared to others?
* Look at how the process has shown change over time (**temporal variations**). What are the patterns of each stage? When is the process happening at a fast rate and when at a slower rate? What are the factors causing a **change** in the operation of the process at these times? What factors could cause a change in the future?
* What are the **impacts of this process** on **people**? Break this down into social, cultural, political and economic affects. Include both positive and negative and long term and short term. How has this effected the operation of the process?
* What are the **impacts of this process on place**? Break this down into the natural and the cultural environment (the buildings and infrastructure). Include both positive and negative. How has this effected the operation of the process?

**SUGGESTED APPROACH FOR TOURISM**

* Identify the main elements involved. (tourists, tourist attractions and tourist facilities) Give the main characteristics of each **one.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| TOURISTS | TOURIST ATTRACTIONS | TOURIST FACILITIES |
| Numbers  Origin  Length of Stay  Type | Natural Attractions examples  Cultural attractions examples | Accommodation (type)  Retail  Transport  Services |

* Look at how these elements interact with each other. How are they related? Certain attractions target certain type of tourists, some tourists target certain types of accommodation.
* Look at the stages in the operation of the process. What happens leading to what next?

Facilities set up to cater for increased tourists needs - **supply**

More tourist attractions set up to cater for **demand**

Some people visit

Tell others who also visit

Initial Tourist Attraction

* Look at the results of this process on the environment. What can you see? Map the attractions, accommodation, CBD retail and transport facilities etc. for each environment used. What are the spatial patterns identified? Where is the core of tourism development and where is the periphery? What are the reasons for this spatial variation? Link it to history, accessibility, geographic location, cumulative causation, tourist type and needs of different phenomena like those needing more land.
* Look at how the process has shown change over time (temporal variations). What are the patterns of each stage? Link it to the four stages of the Butler model (early stage, pioneer, mature and saturation). When is the process happening at a fast rate and when at a slower rate? What are the factors causing a change in the operation of the process at these times? What was the trigger that made it move from one stage to another?
* What are the impacts of this process on people? Break this down into social (eg trends, crowds, attitudes), cultural (eg commercialism, cultural promotion) political (eg visa and airport restrictions, planning zones) and economic affects (eg jobs, investment, transport). Include both positive and negative. How has this effected the operation of the process?
* What are the impacts of this process on place? Break this down into the natural (water, air, land and visual pollution, ecosystems) and the cultural environment (buildings, shopping centres, transport, infrastructure). How has this effected the operation of the process?

**SKILLS THAT NEED TO BE COVERED**

As well as the content there are several geographic skills required that could be examined. These include:

* Drawing a geographic map of an environment using mapping techniques such as the use of a frame, arrow, appropriate colour, key, scale (may need to be an estimate but must be provided) and title (where it is and what showing). These can be easily abbreviated – many use the term FACKTS.
* Being able to annotate maps or diagrams. This means to put simple notes by the appropriate spot that allow analysis or explanation to occur. It is more than being able to label.
* Being able to write essays. While they are not marked on their structure it is a good habit to provide a simple introduction (what you intend to cover), body and conclusion. Use of a plan helps an answer to flow, which gets better marks.
* If an essay asks to include maps or diagrams then you draw them where appropriate to your answer and refer to them in an answer. These can be very simple and do not have to have all the mapping/diagram techniques.
* Know the requirements to analyse. You must say **WHY or HOW** something happens not just describe it and put into a logical order. Not ‘tourists occur mainly in the CBD’ but ‘tourists occur mainly in the CBD as this is the most accessible and where facilities catering for them are found”. The link between the process and the outcome must be clear.
* Know the different requirements for ‘achievement’, ‘merit’ and ‘excellence’. This relates to the amount of technical detail given as well as the linkage between the elements involved in the process. It does not rely on the number of environments referred to.
* Appreciate the importance of referring to a specific environment all the time. The title is about SPECIFIC environment(s) so this must be the focus. If you do not name an environment in each answer you will not pass the standard. You are able to mention as many as you like. Learn a few statistics you can quote to back up answers.

**WHAT** **THE ASSESSMENT IS LIKE**

Because of the time constraints of this standard it is likely to only be ONE essay style question. Students must therefore be prepared for how to write good essays.

This will either be broken up into parts or will be an illustrated essay (essay with maps/diagrams included). The parts may or may not be linked together so it could consist of a map/diagram that supports a written answer or could be a diagram on a separate criteria to the essay question. Assessment specifications generally give an idea of what is expected. If it is broken into parts then the whole question is marked holistically to give a mark out of 8. This means that students will have to complete all parts to get maximum marks. It also means there is no point in repeating information from one part into another.

As from 2016 students are only given ONE question although it is not impossible for this to include some choice within it.

There are really only 4 possible criteria that can be examined. These relate to:

* How the cultural process has resulted in spatial variations in the environment
* How the cultural process has shown variations over time in the environment.
* How the cultural process has impacted on people and/or environments.
* A general question that is the title of the standard ‘How the cultural process has shaped the Environment”. This question can include ALL of the above or just one or two of them. Since the cultural process will occur over a long period of time you can include in this answer how the operation of the process resulted in spatial variations at different time periods or caused different impacts at different stages. The criteria are all related together so such a question will allow these links to be made clear.

Care should also be taken if the question asks about ‘operation of the process’. Inclusion of this term indicates that students must show how the cultural process works over time as a series of steps or actions.

The standard for Excellence also states that at this level clear links between elements must also be explored.

**COMMON ERRORS IN ASSESSMENT OF THIS STANDARD**

* Students not answering the question. Questions are written in such a way to assess student understanding so it is imperative that students adapt their knowledge to individual questions rather than giving a rote learnt answer. Teach students to identify the key words of a question to focus their answers on.
* Not showing sufficient depth of answer required to ‘analyse’. This requires more than ‘describe’ but also to give reasons for what is happening and to show a logical order.
* Not understanding common terms such as the difference between ‘spatial patterns’ and ‘spatial variation’. A spatial pattern is naming and describing a type of pattern that exists or what is there (eg a linear pattern exists of attractions along the main state highway). Spatial Variation is comparing at least 2 places in an environment and saying why the patterns are different in those 2 places (the linear pattern is because of the accessibility it allows. This compares to the periphery of the environment where attractions are more scattered and remote as they are hard to reach.)
* Not showing any linkage between elements for excellence. This is a specific requirement for this standard and must not be forgotten. The term ‘analyse’ also involves linking elements together.
* Failure to adapt diagram answers to a question. A map showing the distribution of elements in an environment may appear ‘relevant’ but not if the question asks to show spatial variation. Maps at this level should be annotated to show the link to the question.
* Treating the environment as static rather than constantly changing due to the operation of the process. The process must be a focus of the answer.
* Wrote answers that were either too brief or too long. The best answers used the planning page provided so that they flowed well.

**OTHER STANDARDS THAT APPLY TO THIS TOPIC**

As previously mentioned it is common practice to combine this standard with the 3.5 research as this gives the opportunity to visit the environment and to gain more in-depth knowledge about it by carrying out the necessary fieldwork.

In the same way the topic can also be expanded globally so that the same information can be applied to the 3.7. Again this cuts down on the time needed for the theory required.

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