



New Zealand Qualifications Authority
Mana Tohu Matauranga O Aotearoa

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Assessment Report

Level 3 Geography 2016

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Part A: Commentary

Candidates appeared to respond well to the straightforward questions for the content-based standards. Not all candidates offered concise, focused responses that fully addressed the question to achieve, and should understand that rote-learned responses are unlikely to help attain higher grades. In all standards, candidates who did not understand the key command terms struggled to score above Achievement. Candidates should make use of their geographic skills, and provide annotated visuals (maps and / or diagrams), to demonstrate their understanding of their studied environments. In the skills-based standard, candidates should integrate evidence from maps and graphs, and interpret cartoons, to demonstrate that they can apply these skills.

Part B: Report on Standards

91426: Demonstrate understanding of how interacting natural processes shape a New Zealand geographic environment

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- selected to answer only one part of the question
- showed a basic understanding of the difference between temporal and spatial variations
- demonstrated knowledge of how two named places or two time periods differed
- were able to briefly explain the reasons why one variation occurred and implied an understanding of a second variation
- included some process analysis within their response, but their analysis was limited or largely descriptive
- provided an implied or descriptive understanding of how processes interact within their geographic environment
- included some case study evidence to back up their theoretical knowledge.

Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved commonly:

- did not understand what the key terms: spatial or temporal variation meant, leading to a descriptive or unfocused response
- did not identify two variations in either two named time periods (“over time” did not qualify), or two named places in their environment
- wrote a pre-prepared response that focused on how interacting processes shaped their geographic environment, which did not meet the requirements of the question
- did not provide sufficient evidence of how processes interact, or focused instead on how elements interacted
- provided little or no supporting case study evidence about their chosen setting
- named only processes, without describing or explaining their operation
- wrote descriptive answers that did not include sufficient analysis or explanation to meet the requirements of the standard.

Candidates who were awarded Achievement with Merit commonly:

- demonstrated a clear comprehension of the key terms: spatial or temporal variation, and focused their response around these ideas
- identified two variations in either two named time periods, or two named places in their environment
- focused their response around spatial or temporal variations and demonstrated an ability to analyse these
- provided clear reasoning for the given variations (often this was linked to some process analysis for at least one of the variations)
- included a detailed visual or map that was relevant to the question, which enhanced the quality of the response
- demonstrated a sound understanding of how natural processes interact within their chosen environment
- provided detailed case study evidence in most parts of their response.

Candidates who were awarded Achievement with Excellence commonly:

- demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the key terms: spatial or temporal variation, ensuring this was the focus of their response
- focused on two variations in named time periods, or named places within their environment, and comprehensively analysed the reasons for each of the variations
- provided insightful reasoning for each variation, using in-depth process analysis to help draw conclusions
- included a detailed visual or map that enhanced the quality of the response and clearly represented temporal or spatial variations
- demonstrated a sound understanding of how natural processes interact within their chosen environment
- executed an insightful, concise, and logically-ordered response, which included geographic terminology and detailed case study evidence integrated throughout.

Standard-specific comments

Candidates who clearly understood key geographic terms (such as spatial and temporal) within the question, tended to gain higher grades, as their response was more focused.

Candidates who presented pre-prepared answers, and wrote a generic formation or operation of processes answer, did not focus their response sufficiently around the requirements of this question. Candidates who chose to narrow their focus and wrote about the reasons for two to three variations in depth, tended to score better as their answer contained sufficient levels of analysis.

Most environments selected met the requirements of the question. However, some selected environments tended to focus more on the interactions of elements, rather than the interactions of processes, and meant that candidates did not meet the requirements of the standard.

Candidates who moved beyond descriptive responses to analysis in order to achieve, demonstrated their analytical ability through clear explanation of the operation of processes, and by providing in-depth reasoning for the variations.

Diagrams and visuals remain an important part of Geography and candidates should ensure that they complete both the diagram and written component of an answer, to allow them to attain higher grades.

91427: Demonstrate understanding of how a cultural process shapes geographic environment(s)

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- managed to demonstrate some understanding of the process, but analysis was limited and / or only described
- provided a diagram that did not provide any details, e.g. they drew a map, but only labelled places or features
- demonstrated some understanding of how the cultural process operated, and used some supporting case study evidence
- described the changes over time or space, but did not include how the elements, features, and / or characteristics had led to these variations.

Candidates who were assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- provided little supporting case study evidence about their chosen setting
- used very limited geographic terminology and ideas, showing a lack of understanding
- did not describe what the temporal or spatial variations were
- did not analyse the way the process operates
- provided rote-learned responses
- did not write enough content or explanation on the topic

- described how the operation of the cultural process impacted on people and the environment.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- drew a diagram that identified temporal variations and included annotations to explain the variations
- drew a diagram that identified spatial variations and included annotations to explain the variations
- included both a detailed diagram or map, and a detailed written answer
- included detailed supporting case study evidence
- analysed, in detail, how the cultural process operated to cause these variations
- used case studies that had enough breadth to provide opportunities to show their understanding
- included specific dates, place names, businesses
- used specific information and gave detailed supporting evidence about their chosen setting.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- annotated their maps or diagrams with additional information or explanations
- integrated comprehensive supporting case study evidence throughout the response
- comprehensively explained how the cultural process operated to create temporal variations, using a variety of examples with well-reasoned conclusions
- comprehensively explained how the cultural process operated to create spatial variations, using a variety of examples with well-reasoned conclusions
- effectively incorporated case study material into responses
- showed insight, by linking more than one idea, often encompassing geographical concepts.

Standard-specific comments

Candidates who performed well wrote clear and concise answers that provided specific case study evidence, using the lines provided as an indication of the expected length of the answer.

Candidates should be aware that to gain Excellence, they should demonstrate comprehensive understanding, by using geographic terminology and concepts, and showing insight in their responses, as well as integrating detailed case study evidence throughout their responses.

Some candidates wrote full and detailed answers, but did not achieve higher grades because they gave pre-learned or rote-learned answers that did not address the questions. Some wrote about impacts, or positive and / or negative social and / or economic factors, and some wrote about allocentric or psychocentric tourism, but did not relate them to spatial or temporal patterns.

Candidates should read the questions carefully and process what is being asked, planning their ideas, before writing their responses.

91429: Demonstrate understanding of a given environment(s) through selection and application of

geographic concepts and skills

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- understood how to determine size, location or extent
- used information from only one resource, rather than from several resources
- incorrectly identified a cultural process responsible for the formation of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, and described a factor
- referred to costs as a social consequence, rather than as an economic consequence, but explained the consequences
- offered only inconclusiveness or vagueness, regarding the solution to the issue
- explained, rather than evaluated the solutions.

Candidates who were assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- demonstrated very little understanding of the issue and relied on copying out resources
- described, rather than explained, when asked to analyse
- did not link their responses to the questions
- understood the causes of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, but did not analyse the processes responsible for the formation of it
- identified consequences incorrectly
- wrote about sustainability or perspectives, but did not correctly apply the concept to the consequences of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch
- described solutions to the issue, but did not evaluate them, or come to a conclusion.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- identified a range of aspects of the geography of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, using information from more than one source, including the visual resources
- incorporated a range of relevant details into their responses
- wrote more of the response in their own words, rather than copying directly from the text
- wrote in detail about one consequence for each category, rather than responding with a range of consequences lacking in depth that were sometimes incorrectly categorised as well
- evaluated two of the solutions in detail, but did not consider the shortcomings of their preferred solution.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- demonstrated geographic literacy in their understanding of key words in the questions such as analyse, processes, evaluate
- integrated specific resource into their responses to enhance their answers
- used multiple resources in their responses
- demonstrated insight by making connections, links, or showing higher level thinking skills
- applied geographic concepts correctly
- outlined the steps in the process for both a natural and cultural process responsible for the formation of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, rather than describing a factor

- demonstrated geographic skills by calculating size, or using latitude and longitude correctly, to show location.

Standard-specific comments

Candidates should seek opportunities to integrate geographic skills such as measuring distance, using latitude and longitude, direction, and interpreting graphs in their responses. Although opportunities to do this were provided in the exam, very few candidates demonstrated these skills in their responses.

Candidates that copied out extracts from the resource booklet did not demonstrate insight.

Candidates should recognise that the understanding they gain from completing internal assessments are also valuable in the skills exam. Considering perspectives, relating processes to issues, understanding geographic environments, and evaluating solutions are aspects of the discipline of geography that students will be familiar with from their course of work at this level. Transferring the understanding of the command terms used in internal assessment, may help candidates to obtain higher grades in the skills examination, within the requirements of the standard.

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