

Assessment Report

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Level 1 Geography 2021

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Part A: Commentary

The overall level of performance in the 2021 Level One Geography external standards was pleasing.

Candidates who used relevant geographic concepts appropriately tended to score higher grades. These candidates demonstrated a thorough understanding of the concepts by not only explicitly referring to them in their responses, but also using relevant key terminologies within the concept and how this applied to a particular setting.

Candidates who restated the geographic concept definition rarely showed that they had any understanding of these concepts as they were unable to apply that in their chosen setting.

Candidates are encouraged to use resource materials provided within their responses. Those who were able to do this in detail made strong links between theoretical ideas and real-world settings. This also applies to the use of case study examples. Candidates who obtained higher grades referred to a wide range



of case study information that enabled them to showcase a deep understanding of their chosen setting.

When using diagrams and/or maps to support a response, candidates who explained the key ideas through detailed annotations to clarify their drawings showed a deeper understanding.

Candidates who scored higher grades were precise in their responses, provided sufficient and relevant detailed case study evidence, with specific quotes and or facts from the resources provided. These candidates also gave precise and accurate responses when locating features on a map.

Part B: Report on standards

91007: Demonstrate geographic understanding of environments that have been shaped by extreme natural event(s)

Examinations

This was a one question examination with three parts that covered aspects of the standard specified in the 2021 assessment specification.

The three parts included:

- processes that cause the extreme natural event
- one effect the extreme natural event had on the cultural environment
- one response to the effect on the cultural environment.

The questions required candidates to apply their understanding of an extreme natural event by applying it to one or more chosen case studies.

Observations

Candidates were asked to answer part (a) in diagram format. While most candidates were able to draw a relevant diagram(s) to show the processes that produced their chosen extreme natural event, many included basic labels that only showed rather basic understanding. Those candidates who supported their diagrams with detailed annotations and linked to a case study(ies) were better able to show a comprehensive understanding.

In part (b), candidates who only engaged with ‘an effect on the cultural environment’ provided a rather narrow response and struggled to achieve higher grades. Candidates were expected to show a deeper understanding of one effect, rather than a surface understanding of multiple effects. Therefore, the effect on the cultural environment needs to be carefully selected to allow candidates to show the level of depth that is required. For example, candidates who discussed the effect on communication networks were usually not able to score as well as those who chose infrastructure (communication, roads, power, sewerage etc.).

It should also be noted that the *effect on the environment* is different to the aspect of the standard that refers to *factors that make people more vulnerable* to that effect. For a tsunami example, an effect on the cultural environment may be transport links damaged or washed away – an appropriate factor in this examination to discuss. Transport links are more vulnerable to this effect if they are located on low-lying coastal areas, which, in this year’s examination, would not have been an appropriate response. Care needs to be taken when responding to the question being asked.

For part (c), candidates were required to discuss a human response to the effect discussed in part (b). This was signaled in the instruction for part (b), but some candidates did not fully read the question and therefore missed this important point. Candidates who showed a holistic understanding of the extreme natural event discussed a major effect and the subsequent responses to that effect. For example, candidates who discussed the Kaikoura earthquake and used *damage to the infrastructure* (closure of SH1) as their response, and made relevant links to show its relevance and application, demonstrated a deep understanding of the extreme natural event.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- attempted all parts of the examination
- described generalised case study evidence
- labelled rather than annotating their responses in part (a)
- did not make links between effect on the cultural environment and a related response.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not attempt all parts of the question

- did not include case study evidence in their response
- did not understand the difference between an effect and what makes people more vulnerable to that effect.

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

- included detailed case study evidence in their responses
- used some annotations to help explain their diagram(s) and supported the main points with a written explanation
- linked an effect the ENE had on the cultural environment to the subsequent response.

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

- explained the main points in their responses in full
- included detailed case study evidence throughout
- annotated effectively and thoroughly to support their diagram(s)
- applied at least one geographic idea by unpacking its key parts and using these in a response
- clearly and effectively linked the effect the extreme natural event had on the cultural environment and its subsequent response
- used relevant case study(ies) that were significant events from which they could integrate a range of detailed and relevant information.

91008: Demonstrate geographic understanding of population concepts

Examinations

This was a one question examination with two parts that covered population concepts outlined in the standard specified in the 2021 assessment specification.

The two parts included:

- population distribution
 - population diversity.
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The questions required candidates to apply their understanding of these population concepts by applying them to one or more chosen case studies.

Observations

In part (a)(i), although not required, several candidates chose to supplement their answer with a map. This tended to work well when the maps included annotations rather than simple labels. Annotations allowed candidates to add further understanding rather than merely identifying features.

A population pyramid was supplied in part (b) to assess candidates' application of the concept of population diversity in terms of gender and/or age. Those candidates who identified and applied specific information from the diagram tended to score higher than those who made only general references.

Coupled with this, candidates who used a wide range of detailed and specific evidence from their case study, both in relation to the question and the case study in general, were better able to show a comprehensive understanding of that case study. These candidates generally scored higher grades.

Those candidates that had a clear understanding of the key terminology in the standard were also advantaged. For example, terminology such as natural, cultural, gender, pattern (spatial), dependant, distribution, and diversity needed to be unpacked and clearly used in the responses for candidates to show a comprehensive understanding.

Case studies that showed clear patterns and could be supported with a range of specific relevant data such as New Zealand, India, and China, produced the most successful responses.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- attempted all parts of the examination
- used generalised case study evidence or used the given resource for supporting evidence
- were descriptive but lacked explanation in their responses
- showed a basic understanding of population concepts relating to distribution and diversity.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- failed to attempt all parts of the question
- did not include any case study evidence
- showed a lack of understanding of the geographic terms distribution and/or diversity.

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

- used detailed case study evidence in their responses and supported the main points with a written explanation
- showed a clear understanding of population concepts of distribution and diversity, but did not unpack or use correct terminology
- used specific information from the given resource
- included annotated diagrams or maps to enhance their response.

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

- fully explained the main points in their responses using detailed case study evidence throughout their responses
- annotated any supporting maps and/or diagrams effectively and thoroughly
- applied at least one geographic idea by unpacking its key parts and integrating these in a well-constructed response
- referred to the population concepts of distribution and diversity throughout their responses
- effectively interpreted a supplied resource, and used specific information from it to explain and compare with their selected case study
- wrote responses using subject-specific language and terminology, reflecting knowledge of the wider subject.

91010: Apply concepts and basic geographic skills to demonstrate understanding of a given environment

Examinations

This was a one question examination with multiple parts that assessed geography concepts and basic geographic skills. These were:

- Geography concepts
 - location
 - perspectives
 - sustainability.
- Basic geographic skills
 - written resource interpretation
 - precis mapping
 - map interpretation
 - graph interpretation
 - pie chart construction.

The setting was based on an international environment as stated in the 2021 assessment specification.

The question required candidates to apply their understanding of these concepts by applying them to one or more chosen case studies.

Observations

As stated in the standard, the application of basic skills is a requirement of the Achievement and Merit criteria. When using basic geographic skills there are two aspects that are assessed:

1. The level of precision in the response.
 - While many candidates supplied answers that were relevant and showed their understanding of the Hoi An environment, they did not include detailed specific references from the resource booklet to support their response. This prevented them from displaying precision – a requirement of a Merit level response. Additionally, when constructing the precis map and/or pie chart, candidates who took the time to accurately interpret the associated resources were better able to locate features or complete the chart with precision.
2. The use of conventions.
 - Candidates were prompted to use conventions when completing both the precis map and the pie chart. While a number of candidates attempted to use conventions, in some cases not all were included. For example,

when completing the precis map some responses may have included a title but not included a north point, used a key, or supplied a scale. Candidates who use a range of conventions are more likely to obtain a Merit level response.

- Additionally, candidates are encouraged to use precision when using geographic conventions. For example, map or graph titles that are detailed and clearly link to the intent of the question will generally score higher than a generic title that only refers to the environment setting.
- Candidates who used colour when constructing the precis map and pie chart produced responses that were generally easier to read. This allowed them to show a better understanding of the Hoi An environment with ease.

Those candidates who showed a clear understanding of geography concepts were more likely to gain Merit and Excellence grades. They were able to apply concepts to the Hoi An environment by unpacking their key terms (from the definitions) and use these in their responses. These responses tended to show a deeper understanding than those that merely repeated the main concept. Candidates are also encouraged to re-read their geography concept answers, to check whether or not they clearly answer the question and that they have followed all the instructions given (relating to using specific evidence, geographic terminology etc). Candidates who followed a methodical approach by including all instructions tended to score higher grades.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- showed an ability to interpret different resources
- used a range of basic geographic skills, but lacked precision
- used generalised references from the resource booklet
- used some geographic conventions
- showed understanding of a geographic concept by linking it to appropriate resources.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not interpret given resources well enough to provide valid responses

- did not use enough of the basic geographic skills
- did not clearly communicate understanding of the geographic concepts.

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

- used a range of geographic skills with precision
- constructed a precis map and pie chart that showed they had clear and detailed understanding of the geographic environment
- used a range of conventions, most of which were used with precision
- showed an in-depth understanding of more than one geographic concept, by linking them to the appropriate resource evidence.

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

- showed a comprehensive understanding of more than one geographic concept, by unpacking the key terminology in the concepts and linking them to a range of appropriate and specific resource evidence.

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