

2025 NCEA Assessment Report

Subject:	Geography
Level:	3
Achievement standard(s):	91426, 91427, 91429

General commentary

Candidates are encouraged to read all parts of each examination question carefully before beginning their responses. Answers that relied on rote-learned material were often less successful than those that were tailored to the specific requirements of the question. Candidates also benefited from using the planning pages to organise their ideas and structure logical, detailed responses.

Report on individual achievement standard(s)

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

Assessment

The question asked candidates to analyse how interacting natural processes create two different natural features in a New Zealand geographic environment. Candidates were expected to draw a diagram to explain how one natural feature formed, and compose an essay response to analyse how their second, different, selected natural feature was formed from interacting natural processes.

Commentary

The two-part format of the question was not acted upon by the majority of candidates, even though the questions clearly stated that one feature must be explained in part (a) and a different feature in part (b). Most candidates focused their written response in part (b) on reinforcing the diagram from part (a), which restricted opportunities to demonstrate the depth required for higher grades.

Many diagrams continued to be minimally labelled and lacked supporting case study evidence. This remains an area that needs greater emphasis for candidates.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- addressed all aspects of the question
- provided a clear analysis of the operation of processes and how these interact
- included visuals that were brief and referred to limited case study evidence
- included at least some specific evidence about the interacting processes that operate to shape a feature.

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

- addressed both parts of the question by selecting two different natural features, annotating diagram(s) in part (a) to explain one feature and analysed, in detail, a second, different feature in part (b)
- analysed the interactions between processes in detail
- produced complete responses, with an appropriate level of supporting case study evidence
- showed solid understanding of the interaction of processes and how they operate to shape features with a New Zealand geographic environment.

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

- annotated diagram(s) in part (a) and comprehensively analysed a second separate feature in part (b)
- included comprehensive evidence throughout both parts of the question
- showed clearly within their diagram(s) the interaction of natural processes and included detailed case study evidence
- clearly articulated their written response and made links between interacting processes and the shaping of features throughout to demonstrate their insight.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not address the requirements of the question in their response or wrote incomplete responses
- provided insufficient case study evidence for their named New Zealand geographic environment
- did not clearly describe the interaction of natural processes
- labelled their diagram only with names of features and locations.

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

Assessment

The assessment consisted of one question with two parts that required candidates to in part (a) annotate a map to explain how a selected cultural process had impacted their geographic environment(s) and in part (b) analyse how their selected cultural process had impacted on people in their geographic environment(s). For the diagram in part (a), impacts on the environment could be broken into the cultural and natural environment. For the purpose of this question, impacts on people and spatial patterns were accepted as part of the cultural environment. Candidates were expected to draw on relevant case study evidence to show their geographic knowledge and demonstrate understanding of a specific geographic environment and the cultural process impacting it.

Commentary

Candidates who provided pre-learned responses describing temporal or spatial variations in the operation of the process tended to score poorly, as their answers did not address the requirements of the question unless they explicitly linked changes in the process to the resulting impacts on people over time or space. Responses that contained technical detail such as the use of models like the Butler Model, theory like the Bid-Rent Curve, cumulative causation and geographic terms like allocentric/psychocentric showed a higher level of understanding.

Some responses discussed the impacts of COVID-19 but did not explain how this external factor changed the operation of the cultural process and, in turn, affected people. These candidates tended to attribute impacts directly to COVID-19 rather than to changes in the operation of the process.

A lack of clear identifiable elements within a cultural process was an issue for candidates that selected to write about migration or urban development. While these answers could be comprehensive, they lacked clear links between elements at times and/or development of how the process operates. This limited the quality of their response. Candidates who selected cultural processes with clearly identifiable elements were better able to produce insightful analysis by examining the relationships between these elements and drawing supported conclusions. This level of analysis aligns with the Excellence requirement of the achievement standard, which was difficult to achieve with some of the cultural processes chosen by candidates this year.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- identified a cultural process and a clearly defined geographic environment
- tended to focus more on describing impacts than on explaining how the operation of the process caused those impacts
- provided basic reasoning that linked the operation of the cultural process to impacts on people
- outlined a range of impacts on people, though most were described rather than analysed in any depth.

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

- named a cultural process and a clearly defined geographic environment
- constructed a relevant map or diagram that described impacts of a cultural process on their environment
- demonstrated a detailed understanding of how a cultural process operates to cause impacts on people. These impacts were often categorised into groups such as social, cultural, and economic
- produced in-depth analysis of a range of impacts on people, showing how the operation of the cultural process led to each impact; however, the clarity and depth of analysis varied across the impacts discussed.

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

- specified the cultural process and a clearly defined geographic environment
- integrated detailed case study evidence relating to their selected geographic environment to support answers and some limited technical language to develop their reasoning
- constructed a relevant map or diagram that explained impacts of a cultural process on their environment
- demonstrated a comprehensive and insightful understanding of how a cultural process operates to cause impacts on people
- provided a comprehensive analysis of how impacts on people were created because of the operation of the cultural process in a geographic environment
- included an analysis of the links between elements of the cultural process, which were then clearly connected to the outcome of impacts on people
- expressed ideas logically and fluently by organising impacts into categories such as social, economic, short term, long term, positive, and negative, and in some cases evaluated the significance of these impacts or considered ways in which they could be mitigated.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not specify a cultural process or a defined geographic environment, and neither was evident in the written response
- did not include any map or diagram
- attempted only part of the diagram and/or essay components of the question

- focused solely on how the cultural process operated over time, with no or limited explanation of how this operation caused impacts on people
- focused solely on how the cultural process operated differently from place to place, with no or limited explanation of how this operation caused impacts on people
- provided insufficient analysis, offering only implied reasons for how the cultural process operated to impact people
- wrote descriptive responses that outlined impacts without linking them to how the operation of the cultural process caused these impacts
- did not explain a sufficient range of impacts (i.e. fewer than two)
- selected a cultural process that was not suitable for analysing how its operation leads to impacts on people.

Achievement standard 91429: Demonstrate understanding of a given environment(s) through selection and application of geographic concepts and skills

Assessment

The case study presented a clear and relevant geographic issue that candidates could readily understand, regardless of whether they had encountered it previously. Candidates who integrated specific evidence from the resource booklet throughout their responses, rather than confining it to one section, were more likely to achieve Merit or Excellence.

Commentary

While the questions were generally accessible to candidates, this did not always translate into higher-level responses. Many candidates demonstrated limited understanding of key instructional terms, particularly 'evaluate', which resulted in answers that did not fully meet the requirements of the question. Candidates need to ensure they understand command words and provide complete, well-supported responses, offering sufficient evidence throughout rather than partial or under-developed responses.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- described the location and/or environment of Borneo only partially, either by providing detailed information on one aspect while giving minimal detail on the other, or both with very little detail. Some candidates focused predominantly on biodiversity rather than the expected physical or climatological features of the environment.
- presented uneven responses on the natural and cultural factors affecting Jakarta. Natural factors were generally addressed more effectively. However, many candidates confused natural and cultural factors within the same response.
- demonstrated difficulty in part (b) by focusing on the impacts of relocating the capital city rather than identifying and explaining a challenge related to cultural factors
- provided only partial analysis of the geographic impacts associated with shifting Indonesia's capital city. Responses were either overly general and lacking in specific supporting detail, or contained limited, implied evaluation of the significance of different impacts.

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

- described both the location and the physical environment and biodiversity of Borneo with detail, with material from the resource booklet evident in the response and answers structured in a logical manner
- explained both natural and cultural challenges faced by Jakarta, with detailed supporting evidence from the resource booklet to support statements; this often consisted of two connecting challenges, such as subsidence and sea level rise
- analysed the geographic impacts of shifting Indonesia's capital city through statements supported by evidence from the resource booklet but did not demonstrate insight by making inferences or drawing deeper connections beyond the materials in the resource booklet
- organised their responses in a logical order, systematically working through each impact category; what was missing at this level, however, was an overall evaluation weighing the relative importance of the impacts linked to relocating the capital city.

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

- provided comprehensive descriptions of Borneo's location and environment, outlining both its regional and global context. They frequently linked the island's geographic position to its climatic conditions and the resulting diversity of tropical ecosystems. Biodiversity was described in connected groups rather than lists, with statements supported by evidence from the resource booklet.
- explained, with detail, natural and cultural challenges faced by Jakarta, making connections between factors and processes that led to the challenges they were describing. This gave context to the challenge they were explaining and demonstrated geographic understanding.
- analysed, with detail, the geographic impacts of shifting Indonesia's capital city
- presented responses written in a logical order. These progressed through each category of impact, while simultaneously making judgements as to the strength of that particular impact in comparison to others, or reaching another form of evaluation (such as comparison between long- and short-term impacts).
- concluded their response with a summary, making some form of judgement as to the overall impact of the relocation.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not provide complete responses for all parts of the examination
 - provided responses with insufficient detail and explanation throughout the examination
 - used bullet points to answer questions
 - wrote overly general statements for all parts of the examination, with insufficient inclusion of material from the resource booklet, and demonstrated limited geographic understanding
 - reproduced a large amount of material from the resource booklet without providing any of their own analysis.
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