

## **Writing for Excellence:** **A guide to writing Geography essays by Mr Cranston**

When writing geography long answers there are a few things to keep in mind.

In NCEA geography we don't want you to spend time developing an elaborate introduction or conclusion. This is because you don't get marked on style - you get marked on content. So it makes little sense to spend time in tests and exams on these.

If your topic is:

*"How do urban settlements interact with their hinterland and other settlements"*

Then it would be fine to begin your answer like this:

*There are several ways that urban settlements interact with their surrounding areas and other settlements. These can be shown using examples from Singapore and Wellington. Cities affect the hinterland by providing.....*

You should write your answer in paragraphs or chunks. Each paragraph should have a statement, explanation, and an example. Use a code and underline any statements, explanations, or examples you can find in the following paragraphs:

*Wellington is a city of national importance. It provides specialised services that are not provided in other parts of the country, e.g. the Parliament, the Meteorological Centre, National War Memorial*

*The size of a city's hinterland changes depending on what good or service is being used to measure it. Specialised services draw people from a large area while commonly provided services draw people from a small area. For example the hinterland for Wellington's Te Papa museum is the whole country, whereas the hinterland for Wellington Hospital is only the Wellington region, because other regions have their own hospitals.*

Using details from your case studies leads to good marks. Things like named places, years, and statistics. You can also lift your grade by including diagrams and referring to the IGI's.

You must write a balanced answer. This means if the question has two parts you should write about the same amount for each.

Only answer the question asked. You do not get credit for writing all you know about a topic. Every paragraph should be directly relevant to the question.

It is important that your paragraph ideas are organised in a logical way. This is usually done by having 'positives' grouped together and then 'negatives' grouped together OR :

- ◆ Social, Economic, Political, Environmental
- ◆ Order of importance or significance, high → low
- ◆ Chronologically (the order that they happen)

Obviously this requires your essay to be planned and not just written off the top of your head!

### **Summary**

- ◆ Read the question carefully and make sure all your information is relevant to the question being asked.
- ◆ Simple introductory sentence
- ◆ Balanced answer
- ◆ Use details
- ◆ Use paragraphs with

Statement  
Explanation  
eXample