

## GEOGRAPHICAL IDEAS

### Relevance of Important Geographic ideas (IGIs)

Knowing and understanding the relevance of Important Geographic Ideas (IGI) is a crucial skill for any geography student and need not be difficult. The 11 main ideas (which explain the natural and cultural environment and how they affect one another – what geography is all about) are:

- Location, Distance, Accessibility
- Interaction
- System
- Pattern, Processes, Region
- Change
- Culture, Perception

### **Location, Distance, Accessibility**

**Location** is where things are found on Earth's surface.

**Distance** can be measured in meters/kilometers, but could be given in travel time (e.g. It is about 3 ½ hours from Auckland to Sydney by plane). The location of places will affect their distances from others.

**Accessibility** is about how easy is it to get to something (a place, information, expertise). A range of factors can affect how easily accessible something is – e.g. peak-hour traffic, altitude, depth of rock, climatic conditions, lack of funding.

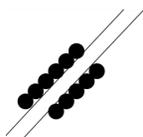
Location and distance affect accessibility, which is the measure of the ease of movement of people, objects and ideas.

### **Pattern, Processes, Region**

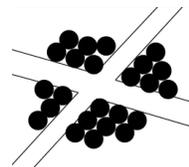
**Patterns** are seen on maps of all scales and sizes. They can be natural and/or cultural features.

The patterns can be: Examples

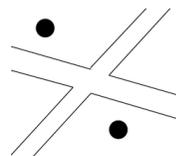
#### **Lines/ Linear**



#### **Concentrated/ Clustered/ Nucleated**



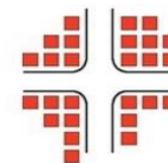
#### **Dispersed**



### Activity

Draw arrows to match the three types of settlement patterns to their diagrams and then to their real-life examples.

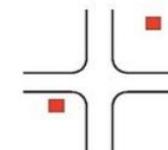
Dispersed



Nucleated



Linear



**Processes** (natural or cultural) are sequences of related events or happenings that often modify or change the environment- ie. one event led to something else happening, which then resulted in something else ('X' led to 'Y' which led to 'Z'). Features in the environment (eg. Eroded soil, new areas of housing, new education programmes for small communities) are evidence of what has happened or is happening. These features can form patterns when seen on a map.

There is a relationship between Processes and Patterns.

'All spatial patterns, whether natural or cultural are as a result of processes.

Example \_\_\_\_\_

The global patterns of tropical rainforests found between 23°N and 23°S of the equator is a result of processes such as convectional rainfall and nutrients cycling.

**Region** is an idea that is associated with areas that have common characteristics or features and so are identified as a region. Areas with a similar climate and vegetation type (such as tropical rainforest areas) would be an example of a region.

## Interaction

Interaction is about when there is a (two-way relationship between things (phenomena) – 'A' affects 'B' and 'B' affects 'A'

Remember to always write both parts of the two-way relationship

### Example

#### *Soil affects vegetation*

Nutrients available only in the top layer (O horizon) of soil encourage vegetation to develop shallow lateral roots to take up the nutrients.

#### *Vegetation affects Soil*

Long roots in some tree species will encourage more illuviation (upward movement of water and dissolved nutrients) – as a result, upper soil horizons become more fertile.

## Change

**Change** is when something alters or become different. Changes can be positive and/ or negative (often depending on your perspective).

There is a specific link between Interaction and Change – often if things within an environment are affecting each other (ie. there is interaction) this can lead to change:

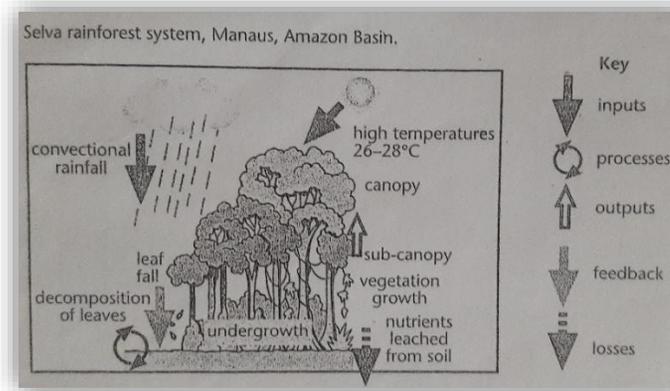
As people interact with their environment, both are changed.

## System

Systems have **inputs** (natural and/or cultural things that go 'in' to them, eg rainfall, fertilizer, machinery). To make the day-to-day **processes** happen and to create **outputs** (positive and/or negative things that come 'out') out of the system.

- Some outputs are used again (eg. Profit is reinvested)-as a result of being fed back into the system, these things are known as **feedback**.
- Some outputs are lost from the system (eg soil is washed away) – these are therefore called **losses**.
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Examples of systems include farms, mines and natural landscape.



## Culture, Perception

A **culture** exists when a group has common beliefs and ways of life. Culture can exist within small communities, amongst an age group or profession.

**Perception** is about how an individual or group perceives ('sees') something, their opinion, their perspective.

### ❖ HOW TO WRITE AN ESSAY

When writing an essay you need to have:

#### 1. Introduction

- The introduction moves from general to specific. This is where you:
  - Open with a short orientation (introduce the topic area(s) with a general, broad opening sentence (or two);
  - Answer the question with a thesis statement; and
  - Provide a summary or 'road map' of your essay (keep it brief, but mention all the main ideas).

#### 2. Body

- The body of your essay consists of paragraphs. Each is building block in the construction of your argument. The body is where you:
  - Answer the question by developing a discussion.
  - Show your knowledge and grasp of material you have read
  - Offer exposition and evidence to develop your argument
  - Use relevant examples and authoritative quotes.
- If your question has more than one part, structure the body into sections that deal with each part of the question.

#### 3. Conclusion

- The conclusion moves from specific to general. It should
  - Restate your answer to the question;
  - Re-summarise the main points and;
  - Include a final, broad statement (about possible implications, future directions for research, to qualify the conclusion etc).
- However, **NEVER** introduce new information or ideas in the conclusion – its purpose is to round off your essay by summing up.