

# Geography Case Study: The 2010-11 Canterbury (NZ) Earthquakes

## Answers

These answers are from the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=go9zbWYBizg> on the Canterbury earthquake of 2010.

1. Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2011. M<sub>L</sub>6.3. 185 fatalities.
2. Over 10,000 (by 2016)
3. The presenter points to a range of impacts, including: ongoing liquefaction, housing and building instability, related insurance concerns (including difficulty in settling existing insurance claims and the emergence of new ones), delays in rebuilding/reconstructing, ongoing psychosocial/psychological/mental health concerns.
4. Physical infrastructure (street names, architecture style), associated leisure activities ('punting on the river Avon'), and a place-representation of Christchurch as the 'garden city' (with imagery of cathedral and greenery).
5. Demographics of city (largely White British population, over-representation of higher-socio-economic groups); industrial past (little economic diversity, with a traditional reliance on farming/agriculture).
6. The emergence of protests/social movements formed around: government management of education, environmental management, and government handling of recovery (perceived to be reflective of the 'old ways of doing things')
7. It is important to note that there are no correct/incorrect answers here. However, given the examples presented in the video, the following themes/ideas might emerge:
  - Looking at the types of new creative organisations and social movements that emerged after the disaster. You could see how long they operate for, whether their focus changes or develops, or even talk to staff from these organisations to get a sense of how place-identity is changing
  - A geographer might look at representations of Maori heritage in the city/region. This could include elements like building names and representation in local government, but also physical spaces such as memorials and museums. One student previously thought of the idea of joining in on a local city tour being rung by a tourist guide and researched how Christchurch's history is communicated to them!
  - Explore the initial aims/goals of the protests that emerge. Were they met/did they have success? What sorts of political changes have taken place as a result of these movements?
  - Talk to residents who have lived in the city/region before and after the disaster. Has their sense of place changed? What changes have they observed?
8. Discussion here might focus on:



- The physical destruction of the disaster (opportunity to build new infrastructure and architecture)
- The fact that disasters show us the inequalities of society. They allow us to see who is most vulnerable, who is suffering most, and subsequently we may try to correct these outcomes. In some instances, this might force us to question the 'normal' way of doing things which led to this inequality.
- A disaster is chaotic! This can create opportunities to do things differently. Laws might be relaxed, people might be looking for things to do, new opportunities can arise etc. This chaos – often combined with a government who is preoccupied with recovery – might see people try new creative things. In Christchurch, the presence of physical spaces in the city (where buildings used to stand) along with the lack of things to do (no recreation spaces and a CBD that was shut down) saw creative projects emerge both out of need and a recognition of opportunity.