

Characteristic Features Explained

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A characteristic feature helps identify and distinguish a place. It can be natural or manmade. It could assist someone to determine the location of the area. The characteristic feature would provide clues as to where the image was taken. It might be a natural rock-formation, a manmade structure or even a plant/tree that is endemic to a region. A characteristic feature could provide information about a culture such as the Sheik Zayed Grand Mosque with its domed roofs, arches and minarets.

Is it not necessary for the judge to know where the place is. The characteristic feature/s would help someone recognize the scene if they were to visit the location they had seen in an image.

If the judge considers an image provides no characteristic features and/or culture, they would score the image low.

The following examples are provided for you as a general guideline.

Mountains: An image that includes a very distinctive mountain would be considered to have a strong characteristic feature. Whereas, an image of a fairly nondescript mountain range, that could not be easily identified, would be considered to have weak characteristic features and might not score well.

Forest: If the image is solely of a forest with no identifiable landmarks it would be considered to have nil to weak characteristic features. The composition should ideally include something that is distinctive or identifiable. If the image were of trees that only grew in a specific region then the image would be suitable for Photo Travel (if the trees were unique to that area.) For example, the giant sequoias in California are distinctive and unique.

Road: An image of a road that provides no identifiable features does not help locate an area. Ideally there should be some clue, perhaps some distinctive landmark, as to where the image was taken.

Fields of canola flowers, sunflowers, wheat, poppies, corn, rice or ploughed fields: Unless these fields are specific to any region, such images would not score well unless there were identifiable or unique landmarks in the scene. Geological signs could offer information about the land such as chalk downlands or limestone hills and some judges would recognise some tell-tale farming techniques that would assist in identifying a region.

Seascapes: Images of seascapes would score well if the images included information that would help identify a place. Generic beach/sea scenes do not define or help us recognize a place.

Graffiti: Generally, graffiti would not be a strong PT image, with the exception of some famous ones (My Gold help me to Survive this deadly Love). Preferably, there should be some identifiable elements in the image other than just the graffiti.

Minimal sections of the structure: When the image displays a very small section of a building (a roof line, a door or a relatively small part of the façade) then this very limited information might not help to identify a location. This is especially true of western architecture which is found throughout the modern world. The more information provided the better to help recognize the scene.

Underwater shots that show some particular species/coral or plant life could be considered for an Acceptance if those animals or plant life are very specific to an area. But generally, underwater shots are not suitable for PT, especially if there is no distinctive and specific species to identify the area. Example: Images of Green Sea Turtles or Loggerhead Turtles without any identifiable feature around them (specific local plant life/specific local coral/identifiable shipwreck) would not fit the PT definition because their migration patterns are far-reaching.

Air Show images without identifiable features provide no information about the location and are not suitable for Photo Travel. A distinguishable aircraft or one that has insignias would not help identify where the mid-air performance is happening. Neither would the colored smoke that the planes stream behind them point to a certain country because in most cases the colors could refer to many nationalities. (Flypast)