New Zealand is made up of two major landmasses and a number of smaller islands. The North Island and South Island are separated by the Cook Strait.

**North Island**
The North Island is less mountainous than the South Island. Its central area is dominated by the North Island Volcanic Plateau and the steaming geysers and volcanoes of the Rotorua region.

**South Island**
The South Island is divided by the Southern Alps that loom over the fiords and glaciers. The South Island is larger than the North Island, but less populated.

**Climate**
New Zealand's climate is subtropical in the far north but temperate and cool further south. The warmest months are January and February; the coldest are July and August. New Zealand's average rainfall is high (640–1,500 millimetres) and evenly spread throughout the year.

**Forests**
Forestry is a huge industry in New Zealand and has destroyed much of the original native forest cover. The temperate forests of the South Island of New Zealand form one of only five large temperate rainforests in the world.

**Glaciers**
New Zealand contains many slow moving rivers of ice, called glaciers. There are over 3,000 smaller glaciers on the North Island, but the truly stunning ones are on the South Island, around the Southern Alps. Tasman Glacier, near Mount Cook, is 27 kilometres long.