

Assessment Report

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Part A: Commentary

Candidates in 2021 engaged with the questions and moved away from the more formulaic or rote-learned responses of past years.

A capable candidate was able to use evidence and explanation to differentiate themselves from those at Achievement and Merit level.

Candidates could improve their examination performance by reading questions closely to check for understanding, planning their responses, and making sure they used relevant supporting evidence to back up their ideas when completing all three standards.

Part B: Report on standards



91231: Examine sources of an historical event that is of significance to New Zealanders

Examinations

The examination followed a similar format to previous years. It consisted of three questions, each covering a different aspect of the standard. Candidates were instructed to examine sources using historical skills. As directed in the Assessment Specifications, candidates were provided with a broad context. Candidates were required to answer all three questions.

Question One required candidates to show their understanding of the topic through the close reading and examining of particular sources. They were directed to particular sources to help frame their response and support their answers.

Question Two required candidates to demonstrate their understanding of historical skills used to identify the concepts of usefulness and reliability by examining one of two sources.

Question Three required candidates to demonstrate their understanding of historical skills used to identify the concepts of change and continuity. They were directed to particular sources to examine as evidence and support their ideas.

Observations

Many candidates did not always understand the historical concepts, e.g. reliability and usefulness, continuity and change. The understanding of continuity was a particular issue.

Comments on usefulness and reliability were not well presented. It is not enough to say a source is reliable just because it is a primary source, or that a photograph is inherently reliable. Also, candidates should consider the purpose of the sources when assessing reliability – very few candidates did this.

A lack of general knowledge and close reading for understanding was apparent from, e.g. not knowing the Queen was still the Head of State in New Zealand, referring to Captain Cook as Captain Hook, not knowing there was no internet in the 1960s, and thinking the Decimal Currency Board was a billboard. Some of these shortcomings did impact candidates' understanding and therefore had an impact upon their written response. Candidates need to be more careful and precise in their answers.

Candidates should be encouraged to read the questions more carefully and ensure understanding of what is required of them. This will allow them to better answer the questions specifically and with purpose.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- produced a response that typically addressed all three questions, although the explanation and use of evidence from the sources was often minimal
- extracted large amounts of information directly from the sources, asked rhetorical questions within their response, or included irrelevant information which deviated away from the question being asked
- demonstrated some understanding of the key concepts but with significant limitations, specifically with the concept of 'continuity'
- provided a limited distinction between reliability and usefulness of sources.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not complete all three of the questions
- wrote a brief response that did not address the question
- did not provide suitable and relevant supporting evidence or attempted to construct an answer by direct reproduction of the source material, without providing a suitable explanation or description.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- provided a response written in their own words and used relevant and appropriate sources to support their responses
- used a variety of source evidence, although this was not always carefully selected
- had an in-depth understanding of why a source might be reliable or useful and were able to articulate this in their answer
- specifically addressed the question asked and tended to incorporate historic concepts within their answers
- demonstrated a good understanding of the application of both continuity and change within a historic context.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- provided an insightful sustained response which demonstrated a deeper understanding of the context, beyond the obvious
 - used source evidence that was selected carefully to address the question and support their argument
 - addressed and understood the difference between usefulness and reliability of a source and could identify the limitations
 - developed a clear understanding of change and continuity within the historical context.
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91233: Examine causes and consequences of a significant historical event

Examinations

The examination had one question based on the standard that was designed to encourage a more precise answer than in previous years. The question itself focused on how the consequences of an event made it historically significant. Historical significance is defined in the Achievement Standard and candidates needed to relate their consequences to this historical concept.

The question was worded in a way that gave plenty of scope to differentiate those at Excellence level from others. It was accessible to candidates at all levels.

Observations

Candidates seemed to be able to evaluate the significance of their consequences well, e.g. many labels ascribed to them included long-term, short-term, unintended, political, social, and economic.

The question asked for analysis from a slightly different angle, and this was not always handled confidently, e.g. candidates would determine which of their chosen consequences was more significant, without attributing it to making the event itself historically significant. Understanding the explanatory notes and clarifications continues to be important, specifically in 2021, where the notion of significance was an important part of the question. Candidates that were able to

examine significance (EN 4) rather than just state something was important/significant were rewarded.

Candidates should be clear about their key points. Many wrote a great deal of background, and this added little to their response. Two or three sentences are sufficient to provide the context of their event. Candidates should also clearly explain how the consequences relate to the event.

Choosing any historical event requires knowledge of details specific to that event. A higher graded essay would often use dates, quotes, and case examples, and from there, be able to evaluate not only the evidence but also what they were being used to argue.

Some candidates' insistence on historical events that are wider in focus meant that they were not able to attain a higher grade, e.g. World War I or the Holocaust. Unfortunately, candidates that used these events did not tend to develop them to the point where they were able to convincingly explain why they were historically significant. Aside from the obvious, e.g. "six million Jews died", candidates seemed unable to drill down into how this is significant. The use of consequences such as "loss of life" and "mass death", while obviously significant, must be explained and supported using direct and detailed evidence.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- described two consequences of a historical event
- used a limited range of evidence to justify a point
- assessed the significance of their chosen consequences (rather than the event as 'historically significant')
- examined at least two consequences of their significant historical event although the supporting detail and evidence had some limitations.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- explained just one consequence
- did not develop an idea over three or more points – therefore, not enough to even 'describe'
- attempted to develop a point without evidence, or very limited evidence

- did not examine at least two consequences with enough supporting evidence to achieve the standard, with some writing about causes without examining the consequences the question asked for
- included irrelevant information
- lacked specific detail or “knowledge dumped” pre-prepared responses that were not shaped to the requirements of the question
- did not write in a cohesive manner.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- argued that the consequences of their historical event contributed to its historical significance
- explained what their chosen consequences were in a developed paragraph
- used pertinent evidence
- used a range of different types of evidence
- provided a detailed explanation of their consequences and often of the event itself
- provided cohesive responses that reflected sound understanding of the historical period/event
- demonstrated a depth of understanding by shaping knowledge to the specifics of the question.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- used a range of evidence to justify points
 - showed insightful understanding of their chosen historical event through a detailed explanation of consequences
 - made direct reference to the question
 - provided a comprehensive, insightful response that examined at least two consequences of a significant event
 - utilised the language of significance
 - integrated the notion of significance throughout using examples and evidence
 - developed their ideas with fluency over the entire response.
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91234: Examine how a significant historical event affected New Zealand society

Examinations

The examination focused on how a significant historical event affected the lives of individuals and/or groups in New Zealand society. This relates directly to the standard specifications.

The essay task/question directed candidates to look at the how the event affected people in two different ways, which was accessible for all candidates and enabled a range of responses. Candidates were able to demonstrate and apply legitimate knowledge and understanding. The variation – reference to two impacts – addressed rote-learned responses. The number of rote-learned responses continues to trend downward.

Observations

Candidates, with support of their teachers, should choose an event that is relevant to New Zealanders. Further, the event should be both manageable and offer sufficient breadth, e.g. considering the impacts of the event over a period. Moreover, the chosen event needs to have a historical context. Choosing a recent event can be problematic and is discouraged.

Candidates need to be flexible and adapt their learning to the essay task. This requires the candidate to have a detailed understanding of their event to apply their knowledge and learning. Rote-learned or pre-prepared responses are discouraged.

Candidates are advised to:

- address the essay task / question
- identify the key terms and expectations
- limit their response to these terms / parameters
- plan and structure their response around these key terms only.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- examined an appropriate historical event that linked to the essay task
- identified and explained two impacts
- incorporated some relevant historical evidence
- provided relevant ideas and generalisations but may have used limited evidence to support their discussion
- provided a narrative account of their chosen historical event, ahead of outlining impacts
- provided a response in an essay structure.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- provided a narrative of an event, discussing causes and consequences
- did not provide accurate historical evidence to support their discussion
- provided major historical errors that detracted from the validity of the essay
- did not write in an essay structure
- provided a very limited response
- discussed an event with no significance to New Zealanders and/or no historical context.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- planned their response
- examined a well-defined topic that allowed an in-depth response
- reflected a good understanding of their event
- responded to the key words of the essay task, discussing two different impacts
- supported their key ideas with detailed, accurate, and relevant historical evidence
- applied an effective essay structure, writing in a logical and organised manner.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- planned their response and presented it in a concise and cogent manner

- demonstrated a comprehensive and insightful understanding of the impacts that the historical event had on New Zealand society
- incorporated historical evidence to produce an insightful, reflective response.

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Previous years' reports

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[2019 \(PDF, 255KB\)](#)

[2018 \(PDF, 126KB\)](#)

[2017 \(PDF, 49KB\)](#)

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