

Assessment Report

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Level 2 English 2018

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Part A: Commentary

In 91098 and 91099, candidates who showed engagement with the text(s) and the essay question(s) were successful. Candidates' responses were generally focused and concise and the best responses showed independent thinking and a clear awareness that the text(s) is a deliberate construct. In both essay papers the term "language features" is used, since this is one of the aspects in the New Zealand Curriculum. Since 91098 is a written text(s) examination, it is clear that this term refers to written language features; accordingly, in 91099, the term refers to visual and/or oral language features. Further teaching and learning around this term could benefit candidates.

The essay questions are developed from the four aspects specified in the curriculum: purpose and audience, ideas, language features and structure. Candidates who narrowly prepare to answer on only one aspect are likely to be disadvantaged. A small but significant number of candidates chose an essay topic that was not well suited to their chosen text(s). Further teaching and

learning around question selection will benefit candidates. Some candidates seem to have a weak understanding of what structure means and further teaching and learning around this aspect could benefit candidates.

Candidates are reminded of the statement in the assessment specification, 'The quality of the candidate's writing is more important than the length of their essay. Candidates should aim to write a concise essay of no more than five pages (or about 750 words) in length'.

Candidates must ensure they write in the appropriate answer booklet. NZQA may not transfer candidate responses from the written standard to the oral or visual standard, or vice versa.

Part B: Report on standards

91098: Analyse specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s), supported by evidence

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- selected a question suited to their studied text
- wrote on a text with suitable depth for Level Two
- understood and referred to the key words of the question
- addressed the question, but this may have been unbalanced
- provided a straightforward response
- used a straightforward essay structure to organise their ideas
- showed knowledge and understanding of text
- understood that a text is crafted for a deliberate purpose
- provided some evidence and comment
- limited the focus to only one or two language features.

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

- wrote too briefly, or did not finish the essay
- did not address the question sufficiently
- did not understand key words in the question, e.g. structure
- produced a rote-learned response not linked to the chosen topic
- chose a question unsuited for the studied text.
- wrote about a text unsuitable for Level Two study
- wrote shallow, undeveloped answers with a lack of suitable evidence
- lacked analysis of the author's purpose or of key elements of the question
- summarised the text(s)
- showed little awareness of author's crafting.

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

- selected questions that best suited the genre / specifics of their text
- answered all key parts of the question convincingly
- engaged with the text(s) and the question and developed their responses
- built a logical argument
- discussed material convincingly and linked this to the question
- planned well-organised answers
- analysed techniques showing awareness of the author's crafting
- made relevant comments about the author's purpose
- integrated quotations and evidence fluently
- displayed some appreciation of the text's context, and its relevance without contrived links 'beyond the text'.

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

- understood both the text(s) and the questions showing an ability to combine these
- selected content to answer key parts of the question carefully
- established a focused argument in the introduction and sustained this focus

throughout

- incorporated a sense of maturity / personal responsiveness to the text(s)
- showed a clear appreciation of author's purpose
- used precise language features unpacked in detail and linked to the author's purpose, displaying an appreciation for how and why language is used in a text
- discussed with originality and insight
- integrated perceptive analysis into paragraphs, rather than an add-on at the end of a section
- wrote a confident, fluent and articulate argument, often using sophisticated and precise vocabulary.

Standard specific comments

Question choice was again a key factor in a candidate's success. Most questions were well handled but some candidates misunderstood important words in the questions. A significant number of candidates lacked a secure understanding of the term "structure".

There were again several pre-learned responses that seemed to rely on summarising class notes or commercially produced resources. Although these essays may achieve, they rarely are convincing or perceptive because they do not address the question well.

Similarly, some essays drew on 'beyond the text' material that seemed to be part of candidates' broader learning and assessment, such as work submitted for AS 91104.

Beyond the text comments are encouraged, however the response should primarily focus on addressing the question. Any discussion of wider contexts should be relevant and framed by the question, the text and the author's purpose.

Some candidates wrote excessively long responses, particularly in the digital version of the examination. A significant number of such answers digressed from a clear focus on the essay's intent. Candidates will benefit from further teaching and learning around the Achievement Objectives in *The New Zealand Curriculum*, particularly the need to "show a discriminating understanding."

Popular texts and authors that worked well included: James K. Baxter, poetry of Maya Angelou, poetry of Hone Tuwhare, short stories of Katherine Mansfield,

Carol Ann Duffy, *Lord of the Flies*; *I am the Messenger*, *Jasper Jones*, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, and Shakespearian texts (mainly *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Othello*).

Some texts did not allow candidates to reach the required depth for Level 2. These included: *The Hunger Games*, *Feed*, *Montana 1948*, contemporary song lyrics, “On the Sidewalk Bleeding”, “The Lottery”, and “Lamb to the Slaughter”.

91099: Analyse specified aspect(s) of studied visual or oral text(s), supported by evidence

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- understood the meaning of their selected question and addressed both parts of the question although, were at times, repetitive and/or imbalanced
- used key words from the question in their response
- used language feature(s) reasonably accurately
- provided relevant though sometimes, basic examples to support their response
- included techniques which were unpacked in a straightforward way
- approached systematically the response in a formulaic way
- displayed a basic understanding of language techniques but had limited understanding of the implications of their use.

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

- understood and showed some engagement with their text but did not understand the question
- did not sufficiently address the question and/or provided insufficient detail

- did not identify specific language features or responses when the question clearly called for such, e.g. a “powerful emotional response” required some unpacking
- demonstrated insecure understanding of terminology
- focused on summarising the plot
- often wrote about visual / oral text(s) as if it were a written text.

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

- wrote a focused essay which addressed both parts of the question
- showed convincing engagement with the text and sometimes included a personal response
- analysed the text(s) in some depth, rather than just describing
- used analysis-related terminology securely and included apt examples from the text(s).

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

- had a secure understanding of the director’s purpose in terms of how language features were used for effect
- showed a high level of maturity both in their writing skills, and in recognising how the text (and their response) illustrated an important aspect of society
- provided an original viewpoint on the text
- went beyond the text by making pertinent and insightful comments, thus demonstrating higher level thinking
- showed evidence of independent research by using material that reflected sophisticated and sometimes unique perception
- wrote a confident, fluent and articulate argument, often using sophisticated and precise vocabulary.

Standard specific comments

The assessment specifications name many “features”. Candidates need to understand this term so that they can provide a range of language features if that is the requirement of the question. Many candidates who wrote about structure did not have a secure understanding of this aspect. Further teaching and learning

around understanding the demands of the questions will benefit candidates.

Many candidates wrote on the ever-popular *V for Vendetta* and *The Shawshank Redemption* showing understanding and engagement with the texts.

Texts that worked very well included: *The King's Speech*, *Suffragette*, *A Beautiful Mind*, *The Dressmaker* and *The Dark Knight*. Other texts that worked well included: *Gran Torino*, *The Dark Horse*, *Children of Men*, *Tsotsi*, *Heavenly Creatures*, *Hidden Figures*, *Gattaca* and *Crash*.

Less successful texts included: *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Remember the Titans*, *127 Hours*, *The Social Network* and *Rabbit Proof Fence*. *Shutter Island* and *Inception* proved challenging for some candidates as they tried to explain plot as well as provide analysis.

91100: Analyse significant aspects of unfamiliar written text(s) through close reading, supported by evidence

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- answered all three questions
- provided some language techniques in support of their answer
- unpacked one or more language techniques to help develop an answer
- showed understanding of the text or of the techniques (or both)
- may have shown a misunderstanding of part of the text, producing an inconsistent answer
- did not develop an in-depth answer
- looked with reasonable depth at only one part of the text so didn't assess the whole text, or how parts of the text related to one another.

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

- missed out at least one of the questions

- did not give language techniques in support of their answers
- gave a basic summary or paraphrase of the text
- were unable to demonstrate any analysis of techniques used in the text
- did not identify a specific reaction or unpack the question when providing an answer
- wrote bullet points that were not related to the question
- did not develop the answer, or did not develop the answer with evidence.

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

- addressed the questions with a clear focus
- showed a confident knowledge and understanding of language techniques
- analysed how techniques created ideas and/or effects, unpacking in some detail how the techniques contributed to the impact of the text
- showed a clear understanding of the text
- showed some awareness of the writer's purpose and deliberate crafting of the text
- made connections across the text
- wrote fluently.

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

- analysed and interpreted the text with originality or insight
- demonstrated insight in their explanation of key ideas, techniques and examples, and how these worked together
- demonstrated a clear, mature understanding of the ideas in the text, often going beyond the text, linking the ideas to other relevant contexts
- discussed ideas beyond the text and acknowledged either their personal response to it and/or made a link to human experience
- appreciated the choices made by the writer and how they impacted the reader's understanding/experience of the text
- presented an integrated discussion that valued the text as a whole.

Standard specific comments

Candidates engaged positively with the texts provided, with many candidates completing the whole paper. Those who responded with an in-depth analysis were rewarded; the quality of the response is more important than the quantity of language features identified.

At Level 2, candidates must discuss how techniques individually or collectively work to achieve a certain purpose. It is important that candidates relate their discussion directly to the question posed in the examination and that they focus their discussion on the techniques employed by the writer.

As previously mentioned, the number of techniques mentioned in an answer is less important than the quality of discussion attached to each technique; fewer techniques and more analysis of how they work in the context of the text, and in relation to the question will advantage candidates.

Candidates should be encouraged to attempt all three questions. Teachers and candidates should note that a candidate cannot achieve Excellence if only answer two questions are answered.

[English subject page](#)

Previous years' reports

[2017 \(PDF, 57KB\)](#)

[2016 \(PDF, 246KB\)](#)