

Assessment Report

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Part A: Commentary

In 91098 and 91099, candidates who engaged with the texts and the essay questions were successful. The best candidate responses were focused, concise and showed independent thinking as well as a clear awareness that the texts are deliberate constructs.

Candidates would benefit from a greater understanding of the distinction between written language features, as used in 91098, and visual or oral language features, as used in 91099.

The essay questions are developed from the four aspects specified in the curriculum: purpose and audience, ideas, language features, and structure. A 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. Candidates who had a clear understanding of the various terms used in the questions, (e.g.: structure, place, setting), were more successful in their result.

Many essay questions contain broad phrases designed to make the question accessible (e.g. “positive or negative qualities”). Further teaching and learning around how to develop a focused, precise response out of these broad phrases

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 in length.”

Candidates must ensure they write in the appropriate answer booklet. As the examination questions differ in each standard, NZQA will 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 an appropriate question for their text(s)
- used key words to frame their responses, and repeated them frequently to appear to be on topic
- understood and addressed the selected question
- linked the answer to the topic
- made straightforward statements rather than developing a full discussion
- used examples that were quite often limited
- used references to language features in a clear but straightforward way
- included some planning, showing intent to structure the essay
- used a basic essay structure (introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion).

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

- selected an inappropriate question for their text(s).
- addressed only part of the question
- did not understand key words in the question
- presented an essay that had been pre-prepared and memorised

- wrote brief, simplistic responses
- described rather than analysed the text
- did not demonstrate an understanding of the author's purpose
- did not link text features to effects or purposes
- showed limited understanding of purpose and audience, language techniques, structure and ideas
- provided little or irrelevant supporting evidence.

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

- wrote responses that were planned and well organised
- showed comprehensive knowledge, understanding and personal engagement with the text
- explored the writer's purpose or use of language features in some detail
- provided commentary and reflective thinking on ideas, although not always fully sustained
- maintained a well-structured, focused argument that closely addressed the selected question
- went beyond the text in a relevant way that enhanced the response
- selected a range of evidence to support their analysis
- analysed the evidence they presented by "unpacking" it convincingly (for example by discussing connotation)
- wrote fluently and coherently, demonstrating control of language.

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

- presented a cogent, organised argument that closely addressed the question
- wrote confidently and fluently, often using sophisticated and precise vocabulary
- demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of aspects of the text and how they contributed to the author's purpose
- interpreted text and question with insightful analysis
- selected a range of evidence that was carefully integrated into the essay, rather than stand-alone quotations

- gave clear evidence of personal voice and understanding.

Standard-specific comments

Question choice remains a key factor in success. Most questions were well handled but some candidates misunderstood important words in the questions. A surprising number of candidates misunderstood the terms “places” and “structure.”

Popular texts and authors that worked well included Shakespeare (*Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*), war poetry (Wilfred Owen and others), Owen Marshall, Maya Angelou, Carol Ann Duffy, Katherine Mansfield, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Lord of the Flies*, *1984* and *Frankenstein*. It was pleasing to see a significant number of candidates writing on New Zealand and Pasifika poetry.

Some texts did not allow candidates to reach the required depth for Level 7 of *The New Zealand Curriculum*. These included: Wikipedia entries, magazine articles, short online texts, Teen fiction (e.g. *Hunger Games*, *Feed*), “In the Rubbish Tin”, “On the Sidewalk Bleeding” and various song lyrics.

Some candidates appeared to have re-used material from internal assessments, re-working it to fit one of the questions. Such an approach disadvantaged candidates because the question was not addressed closely enough.

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

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- selected a suitable essay question for their chosen text(s)
- understood the selected question
- wrote a straightforward three-point essay with appropriate evidence
- relied on “dialogue” as a language technique
- referred to the “how” part of the question, using a limited number of language features accurately
- described in detail, rather than analysed.

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

- did not understand the question or its intention

- wrote a brief essay which did not address the question
- used a pre-prepared essay that did not address the question
- relied on summarising or describing the text
- did not include examples of language techniques
- did not support points with evidence or analysis
- did not show a sufficient command of English writing skills to communicate clearly.

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

- wrote a coherent, focused response that wholly addressed the question
- wrote responsively, showing an appreciation for how they were positioned to respond to the events, characters and ideas
- referred to a range of oral and visual language techniques and provided detailed analysis
- showed an awareness of the text's purpose and the audience's response
- responded to the question by convincingly analysing the deliberate use of language techniques
- made relevant connections beyond the text and commented with their own judgements and reflections.

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

- wrote fluently, in an engaging style with sophisticated vocabulary and a sense of personal voice
- wrote an essay which showed a comprehensive appreciation of the text as a whole, weaving their analysis of the chosen aspect through a discussion of how the text develops
- fully understood the question text and used their response to show that understanding, with skilful integration of examples and language techniques
- debated and critiqued the ideas in the text, or the merits of the film's crafting
- used language features confidently and judiciously to support the argument (technical analysis was not always extensive, but was carefully chosen and apt)
- adopted an original viewpoint and explored multiple interpretations and / or

nuances of meaning.

Standard-specific comments

The term “language features” is used in the essay questions because that is one of the four aspects of English as detailed in *The New Zealand Curriculum*. Teachers can refer to the [Assessment Specifications](#) for a list of some commonly used visual and oral language features.

Popular texts that worked well included *Gattaca*, *Suffragette*, *The Dark Knight*, *The Dark Horse*, *Hidden Figures*, *The Dressmaker*, *Bridge of Spies*, , *Gran Torino*, *Children of Men*, *Heavenly Creatures* and *Tsotsi*.

Less successful films included *Boy*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *Rabbit Proof Fence*.

Some texts seem very bleak for candidates at this level, such as *Once Were Warriors* and *American History X*.

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

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- identified one or two language features and explained how they were used to create effect
- used examples from the texts to support their answers
- used key words from the question in their answers
- displayed a basic understanding of the text and the author’s purpose
- began to focus on the effects of the language features
- provided some analysis, perhaps with some weakness, but did answer the question
- did not develop their answer with an understanding of the purpose of the technique or how it achieved this purpose
- may have not achieved all the questions but attempted an answer to each one.

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

- did not identify language techniques

- did not provide examples (or examples were not relevant)
- did not show understanding of the main idea other than to repeat the words from the question
- made inaccurate reference to language techniques (often those suggested in the question were referred to, but with inaccurate examples or evidence)
- listed language techniques and examples, with analysis either absent, or only using words from the question
- summarised the text
- omitted one question, instead of attempting all three
- did not use key language from the questions
- did not understand the text or the author's purpose.

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

- answered questions fully
- developed their answers further, showing some understanding of the purpose of the author or text
- showed a sound knowledge of language techniques and wrote with a level of confidence about their effects
- gave more than one example of techniques that worked together to create an overall effect
- were confident in their naming and analysis of techniques
- provided accurate evidence and unpacked it clearly
- used analysis-related terminology to make their answers convincing
- wrote a developed answer succinctly
- chose their own language features, rather than using the "might include" hints
- used and linked several examples of a feature.

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

- began strongly and with originality
- were forthright in discussing ideas, often linked to specific and relevant events in the real world

- had a wide range of imagery, structures, and sentence types in their toolbox
- used terminology accurately
- peeled the text back just that bit further, showing appreciation of how language was used in patterns / motifs and explaining how each example added a little more
- wrote fluently without repetition
- used a sophisticated vocabulary to express their ideas
- evaluated the techniques
- appeared to enjoy answering the question
- attempted all questions and often wrote a significant amount about the texts, using a good number of language techniques to illustrate how the author achieved their purpose
- showed insight into the wider purpose of the text or how the author achieved this purpose.

Standard-specific comments

Lengthy introductions including the title of the text and the author are unnecessary.

Candidates must ensure that they use their own words to analyse the text, and should avoid rephrasing the quotation.

Candidates are using the keywords from the question in their opening lines which helps to start them on the right path. It is important that these keywords are then continued throughout the response.

Some candidates received Merit or Excellence grades on individual questions but didn't go on to answer a second or third question and left the examination early. This resulted in a mark that did not appear to reflect the ability of the candidate. Excellence can only be awarded if all three questions are attempted.

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Previous years' reports

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

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