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Assessment Report

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Level 3 English 2019

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Part A: Commentary

As in previous years, regarding studied texts it was a pleasure to see candidates respond as individuals to the prompts offered. Understanding, enjoyment, critique and thought were all in evidence in candidates' scripts. In many cases, teachers had been successful in finding engaging texts for their candidates or in offering candidates the opportunity to seek these out for themselves. Although levels of response varied, texts with a depth of ideas generally provided candidates with material appropriate to the examinations. In a few cases the choice of text left candidates short of worthwhile points to make.

It is worth noting that candidates who offer an essay prepared before the examination put themselves at a disadvantage. This is because such essays rarely fully address the statement selected and thus are hard to reward. In contrast, where a statement is used as an opportunity for fresh thinking employing studied material, knowledge and skills often combine to produce worthy scripts. Teachers and candidates alike might spend useful time dealing with the skills of selecting and responding to new and unexpected questions.

The level of essay writing skills varied enormously across the cohort. An introduction and conclusion are helpful tools, especially when these deal with the

chosen statement rather than solely with the text. Often the best scripts spent time addressing the words or phrases of the statement, providing a frame for the argument to be developed in the essay. Weaker scripts generally took the statement at face value and either agreed or disagreed without further exploration.

Some candidates provided more evidence than was needed, at the expense of developing their argument fully. 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.” It is a myth that lengthy essays and / or massive amounts of evidence necessarily produce higher grades.

Responses offered to unfamiliar texts suggested that the poem and article were accessible to candidates. Teachers and candidates might spend useful time on reading beyond the literal. Although Question Three asked for a comparison of the two writers’ approaches, some candidates did not integrate observations across the texts. This is another skill worth preparation time during the year.

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 visual or oral standard, or vice versa.

Part B: Report on standards

91472: Respond critically to specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s), supported by evidence

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- stated ideas appropriate to the statement chosen, but did not develop these
- addressed some aspects of the statement without addressing all elements
- provided links to things beyond the text as comparison and not analysis.

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

- provided limited or simplistic responses
- ignored or subverted the intent of the statement, perhaps when offering a prepared essay
- offered no evidence or gave generalisation only.

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

- engaged in depth with both statement and text
- provided a critical response to the text through the statement
- offered significant amounts of evidence but often without sufficient discrimination.

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

- demonstrated their engagement with the statement, text and relevant issues
- wove evidence into their response judiciously
- employed the language and structure of academic writing successfully.

Standard-specific comments

While some New Zealand texts were used such as Katherine Mansfield's stories, many texts used for this assessment were from elsewhere. Popular texts included *The Handmaid's Tale*, *The Great Gatsby*, *The Road*, Shakespearean drama and Carol Ann Duffy's poetry. Song lyrics generally provided little scope for success.

91473: Respond critically to specified aspect(s) of studied visual or oral text(s), supported by evidence

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- discussed straightforward ideas
- used a basic essay structure
- paid some attention to the statement but missed opportunities for further development.

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

- summarised the plot
- selected a statement inappropriate to their text and / or argument
- used irrelevant pre-prepared material.

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

- showed some confidence in addressing the statement

- provided analysis that was generally sound but not often sophisticated
- offered relevant and sufficient evidence but often did so indiscriminately.

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

- developed a strong and layered argument
- wrote in concise and focused ways
- discussed key words from the statement as part of an argument.

Standard specific comments

Many films were used for this assessment, often dark and sometimes violent. Although many candidates offered critical and / or biographical information, this was not always integrated into an argument based on the statement.

Using more than one episode from a series is an acceptable approach, but for some candidates multiple plot recall resulted in a thin coverage of ideas. Video games generally produced poor results.

Apocalypse Now, *Atonement*, *Schindler's List* and *Psycho* were popular successful films but others such as *Hunt for the Wilderpeople* proved hard for candidates to write about in depth.

91474: Respond critically to significant aspects of unfamiliar written texts through close reading, supported by evidence

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- unpacked superficially relevant language techniques and evidence
- focused on sections of the texts at the expense of the whole.

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

- did not attempt all answers, or did not address the questions when attempting their answers
- relied on repeating information from the texts without commentary or analysis
- provided personal experiences without providing convincing links through details to the texts.

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

- identified two or more relevant aspects of the text for each question
- explained the relevance of identified aspects to each question
- provided a range of supporting evidence.

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

- wove a response to the question throughout the relevant answer
- took a holistic approach backed by specific detail
- synthesised material from two texts in their answer to Question Three.

Standard specific comments

Familiarity with language techniques is helpful for this assessment. It is not advisable to spend time on broader social issues at the expense of a tight focus on the texts. The most successful candidates completed balanced answers to all three questions.

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Previous years' reports

[2018 \(PDF, 137KB\)](#)

[2017 \(PDF, 60KB\)](#)

[2016 \(PDF, 249KB\)](#)