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Assessment Report

Level 2 English 2016

Standards **91098 91099 91100**

Part A: Commentary

In the studied text standards, 91098 and 91099, students who presented a focused argument were rewarded. A concise argument is more likely to achieve well than elaborate summary and examples which do not further a case. Five pages is a recommended maximum length. The Level 7 New Zealand Curriculum Achievement Objectives state that students will "show a discriminating understanding…" and candidates who demonstrated this did well.

Questions in all standards are developed from the four aspects specified in the curriculum: purpose and audience, ideas, language features and structure. Candidates who prepared to answer on only one aspect, such as symbolism, were at a disadvantage.

Part B: Report on Standards

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

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- understood their selected question
- addressed the question rather than presenting a pre-prepared response
- structured their essay with clear introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion, often with one point or example per paragraph
- addressed all parts of the question, sometimes inconsistently
- provided relevant textual details that supported their points
- showed some understanding, often implied, of the author's purpose.

Candidates who were assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not address the question
- presented an essay that had been pre-prepared and memorised
- showed limited understanding of the text

- described rather than analysed specified aspect(s) of the text
- wrote very brief, simplistic responses
- did not show sufficient command of English writing skills to communicate a clear argument.

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

- demonstrated convincing knowledge and understanding of the text
- maintained a well-structured, focused argument that closely addressed their chosen question
- developed their argument with a range of supporting evidence
- convincingly analysed the evidence they presented
- showed a clear understanding of the author's purpose and its effect on readers.

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

- wrote a fluent, articulate argument, frequently using sophisticated vocabulary
- connected maturely and perceptively to the text, often in an original way
- maintained a strong thesis throughout their essay
- integrated a wide range of evidence
- included reflective comments that showed complexity and were well-developed.

Standard-specific comments

Question choice was a key factor in success. Most questions were well handled by candidates but some struggled to fully address the questions.

The answers were notably more focused and more concise than those in recent years. Excessively long answers often did not go beyond Merit.

There were still too many examples of pre-prepared responses that were re-organised to meet the requirements of the question. Examination questions are written to discourage this practice. Such essays rarely achieve well.

Popular texts and authors that worked well included Paper Towns, The Book Thief, Mr Pip, Lord of the Flies, The Kite Runner,Year of Wonders, Feed, The Things They Carried, The Road, To Kill a Mockingbird, Macbeth, I am Messenger, andMaya Angelou, Katherine Mansfield, and Carol Ann Duffy. In general, markers commented that original texts make for interesting answers.

Some texts did not allow students to reach the required depth for Level 2. These included The Lottery, Examination Day, and Whale Rider.

While it is good that candidates use the wider world as context, the response should primarily focus on their text and the author's purpose – any discussion beyond the text should be framed by the question, the text and the author's purpose.

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

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- addressed both parts of the question, using key words in the opening paragraph and as "signposts" throughout the essay
- wrote a straightforward essay that mentioned aspects of the question but did not fully engage with those aspects
- at least referred to the "how" part of the question
- described in detail, rather than analysed.

Candidates who were assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- wrote a brief essay which did not answer the question
- used a prepared essay that did not answer the question
- relied on summarising or describing the text
- did not understand the question or its intention
- did not show sufficient command of English writing skills to communicate a clear argument.

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

- maintained the focus of the exam question throughout the essay
- engaged with the text on a personal level
- effectively structured their response
- showed an awareness of the text's purpose and the audience's response
- responded to the question by convincingly analysing the deliberate use of techniques.

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

- wrote with flair, fluency and precision
- did not necessarily write a lengthy essay (it is possible to achieve Excellence in five pages)
- fully understood the text and used their response with skilful integration of examples and, the purpose or the intention of the director
- adopted an original viewpoint and explored other possibilities.

Standard-specific comments

This paper was different from previous years in that the questions were quite specific in their demands (e.g. not just "an idea" but "the idea of succeeding against the odds") which meant that candidates needed to apply their learning rather than present a pre-prepared essay.

Films which are adaptations of written texts (e.g. Shakespeare or Austen) did not always seem to show evidence that the students had done more than watch them to support the understanding of the written text. Most stayed at the narrative level and there was no sense of the film in the answer.

Popular texts that worked well included *V for Vendetta, Gattaca, Schindler's List, Atonement, Little Miss Sunshine, Tsotsi, Gran Torrino, Into the Wild, The Truman Show, Heavenly Creatures, Pleasantville,* and *The Dark Horse.*

Some texts worked less well. These included *The Help,The King's Speech,* and *Where the Wild Things Are*. Markers also noted that the unceasing popularity of *The Shawshank Redemption* made it harder for candidates to demonstrate originality, insight and perceptiveness. The more complex the text, the better the responses.

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

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- addressed the question using the key words in the question
- showed some understanding of the text
- supported their thinking with appropriate evidence
- provided a rudimentary connection between technique(s), example(s) and idea(s)
- briefly and simply analysed techniques
- used some analysis related terminology
- tended to discuss techniques in isolation.

Candidates who were assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not address the question
- summarised the text without referring to techniques or ideas
- did not connect techniques to a relevant idea within the text
- did not provide examples to support their comments
- showed little understanding of the text
- wrote very brief or incomplete answers
- did not show sufficient command of English writing skills to communicate a clear response.

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

- addressed the question with a clear focus
- showed knowledge with confidence and a good understanding of techniques
- analysed how techniques created ideas and / or effects, unpacking in some detail how the techniques worked
- 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 and / or insight
- demonstrated insight in their explanation of key ideas, techniques and examples and how these work together
- demonstrated a clear, mature understanding of the ideas in the text, often going beyond the text and linking the ideas to other 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 interpretation of the text
- presented an integrated discussion that valued the text as a whole.

Standard-specific comments

This standard assesses a candidate's ability to analyse previously unread texts across a range of genres and purposes. At this level, candidates must discuss how techniques work, individually or collectively, to achieve a certain purpose. It is vital 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. Candidates should aim to connect the chosen techniques to specific evidence related to the question. While it is acceptable in some instances for candidates to refer to line numbers only, reference to techniques should be specific.

Candidates are not required to write three "literary essay"-style answers. Rather they should focus on examining the effect of the choices made by each writer, in the context of the question provided. Lengthy introductions and conclusions do not always add to a candidate's result. Candidates should be encouraged to focus on fewer, carefully selected, techniques (again "show a discriminating understanding…") so that they can develop their discussion in more detail.

Candidates must carefully manage the time they have available, so that that they answer all three questions. A candidate cannot achieve Excellence if only answer two questions.

Some answers were strongly directed by a formula (e.g. PILATES or PATMI) and were at risk of following the formula rather than answering the question.

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