Exemplar for Internal Assessment Resource

English Level 2

Resource title: Dissenting Voices

This exemplar supports assessment against:

Achievement Standard 91105

Use information literacy skills to form developed conclusion(s)

Student and grade boundary specific exemplar

The material has been gathered from student material specific to an A or B assessment resource.

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Extracts from the student report have been exemplified here. Process documentation has not been reproduced: some examples of student selection and evaluation comments are given in the commentaries.
### Grade Boundary: Low Excellence

1. To achieve this standard at Excellence the student needs to: use information literacy skills to form developed conclusion(s) perceptively.

The student uses information literacy skills to form developed conclusion(s) perceptively by:

- framing the inquiry around a relevant context: selecting appropriate sources and evaluating their reliability and usefulness in relation to the inquiry. For example: *old article therefore facts may have changed; opinion, some facts may been omitted to help the writer convey her message; supports details with statistics; used to attack the government (she works in politics); directed towards farmers, rather than public (in student process notes).*

- formulating a convincing conclusion by:
  - building on the statement that the *way we treat animals isn’t humane – or pure – at all*; (Paragraph 1)
  - providing referenced details, *2.4 million battery hens … every single one of these birds is unable to walk*; (Paragraph 2)
  - pointing out the irony of the situation (perception): *The ironic aspect of the whole debacle is that treating animals this way is 100% legal*; (Paragraph 3)
  - making a reasoned, perceptive judgement: *affordable during tough economic times. This basically summarises all that farmers are concerned about*; (Paragraph 4)
  - making perceptive judgements about the political aspect: *The farming industry plays a very important role in New Zealand’s economy, and no one is more aware of this than the Government.* (Paragraph 5)

To meet Excellence more securely the statements:

- *… risks consumers take when they eat animals or eggs produced in unsanitary conditions* could be more perceptively developed by exploring the links between unsanitary conditions transmitting disease to animals and ultimately to humans. (Paragraph 6)

- *What we need is equal weight on both sides of the scale* could be developed to show some insight into possible ways forward. (Paragraph 7)
New Zealand. 100% pure. That is how we sell our country – as a clean, green nation. It has been a successful campaign – so successful that other countries view us as a clean green nation, a leader in all things environmentally friendly. However, this 100% Pure tourism campaign makes no mention of our treatment of animals. It couldn’t, could it? Because the statistics indicate that the way we treat animals isn’t humane – or pure – at all.

Pigs and chickens face the full brunt of it. 2.4 million battery (chickenrescue.net.nz) hens are farmed each year, and every single one of these birds is unable to walk or stretch her wings and her living space is merely the size of an A4 sheet of paper (chickenrescue.net.nz). She spends her entire life cooped up inside a cramped cage, standing on mesh floors, her beak cut off at just five days old. Pigs don’t fare any better. They too, are confined to a small area of space, unable to sit down, screeching and even lying in their own excrement. In fact, the situation for the pigs is almost worse. Thanks to the bold actions of activists, New Zealanders have become more aware of the battery hen situation, while many believe pigs wallow around in an open field all day long.

The ironic aspect of the whole debacle is that treating animals this way is 100% legal. Current laws condone this treatment of animals. The Government is advised by the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee on the minimum legal standards for animals, both farm and domestic. By law, a farm animal must be able to exhibit its natural behaviour. Cunningly this committee is instructed to take economic consideration into account in its decision making, meaning, in the case of chickens and pigs, it may be legal for them to be cooped up in tear jerking conditions if having to exhibit ‘natural behaviour’ becomes ‘difficult’ for a farmer.

While this may shock us, it is not news for animal welfare campaigners. Organisations such as the SPCA and WSPA have been campaigning for years, publicising footage of suffering animals in the hope that New Zealanders open their eyes to their living conditions. Think back to February, when animal rights protestors spent the night chained to silos on a battery hen farm south of Auckland. They were aiming to raise awareness about the proposal to change battery hen cages to ‘enriched colony systems’ (nzherald.co.nz). Yes, the quotation marks say it all. Basically the conditions would remain; all these ‘systems’ are doing is changing the name with complicated synonyms. Strangely enough, the Egg Producers’ Federation is in favour of the new system, stating that the colonies meet the requirement of the law and ensure eggs remain affordable during tough economic times. This basically summarises all that farmers are concerned about– did the Federation ‘accidentally’ omit the fact that hens would continue to live the majority of their lives on an area the size of this page? As Ms Sims, one of the protestors, said, “A cage is a cage no matter how the Egg Producers’ Federation tries to spin it.” (nzherald.co.nz)
So what is stopping us from making a change? The farming industry plays a very important role in New Zealand's economy, and no one is more aware of this than the Government. If we were to increase standards for animal welfare, the prices of products would rise, and this no doubt would affect growth in the sector. A change could force farmers to expand or alter their plant, and this could cause issues with the economy, as well as firing up tempers left, right and centre.

Like everything these days, there is a political angle to the issue. The very idea of having to tell farmers they have to alter facilities is a politician's worst nightmare. Parliament is seeing hens as producers of eggs instead of living creatures. The politicians, instead of taking the time to review the code of animal welfare, sit down at the dinner table every week to enjoy poultry and pork. Maybe they are not aware of the risks consumers take when they eat animals or eggs produced in unsanitary condition.

What we need is equal weight on both sides of the scale. Currently, a life of suffering is ignored because it saves a couple of cents on an egg (greens.org.nz), and Parliament is more interested in looking after the economy than responding to animal welfare campaigns. The suffering of animals should not be ignored in order to save money and bring higher profit to egg and poultry producers, but on the other hand we need to bear in mind the key role farming plays in the New Zealand economy.
Grade Boundary: High Merit

2. To achieve this standard at Merit the student needs to: use information literacy skills to form developed conclusion(s) convincingly.

The student uses information literacy skills to form sufficiently developed conclusion(s) convincingly by:

- framing the inquiry by exploring reasons for and against; reaching a decision: How are we going to keep the lights on without causing even more damage to our environment? The answer, plain and simple: wind turbines. (Paragraph 1)

- selecting and using a range of sources, including experts, community sources, overseas experiences, scientific facts, and environmental organisations e.g. public opinions, people in Europe. (Paragraph 2)

- evaluating the reliability of the material (incorporated both in the report and in process notes).

- building to a convincing, perceptive conclusion by dismissing counter arguments with clear details and evidence:
  - companies have installed and integrated beneficial local environment measures into their construction and operational activities followed by details of bird monitoring and building efficiency; (Paragraph 3)
  - sound emitted is barely audible and is to be less than that … nature in general, preceded by convincing details of technological advances in New Zealand and reference to WHO guidelines. (Paragraph 5)

- making a clear, reasoned judgement: “There are a whole lot of myths … not until you start building, … fears start to dissipate.” (Paragraph 7)

- reaching a convincing decision: to put it in perspective for the effects of the renewable energy resources; How do wind turbines sound now? (Paragraph 8)

To meet Excellence the report needs to further develop statements such as:

- … need high maintenance needs further details in order to be a “perceptive” conclusion. (Paragraph 6)

- I would like you to weigh the options again of global warming against that of a wind turbine: student needs to compare the effects of each of these two options more convincingly and link comments made in more specifically to the effects of global warming. (Paragraph 6)
New Zealand without the $5 lunch deal at Maccas

New Zealand. First 10 iconic features that would come to mind: All Blacks (the dreamy Sonny Bill Williams!), footrot flats (“sheep shagger”), John Key, Tip Top ice cream, pohutukawa tree, gumboots, The Flight of the Concords, Peter Jackson and the Lord of the Rings movies, ‘green, clean’ countryside and the windy climate. New Zealand has a sufficient resource that is being under-utilized — wind. We’ve had electricity shortages in the past and demand is continually growing (about 2% per year) with New Zealand’s aging population threatening to consume a lot more. How are we going to keep the lights on without causing even more damage to our environment? The answer, plain and simple: wind turbines.

Currently, wind turbines contribute to only 2% of our countries electricity supply, whereas in other countries such as the UK, wind turbines are a whopping 37% of their electricity supply. We all know global warming is approaching, but what we should be using is wind. When the average wind speed in Wellington is 15 knots per hour, we should be wind fanatics! C’mon New Zealand! What’s stopping us??

Over the years, public opinions have shown a consistently high support for the development of wind farms in New Zealand. The minority who do not like wind farms are often very vocal in the media, giving rise to the misconception that wind energy is unpopular and unwelcome. If you ask people in Europe what they think of wind turbines, opinion improves dramatically after the wind farm has been built. New Zealand is 10 to 20 years behind Europe, where wind energy has been widely embraced. It’s not new and we need to stop being so scared of them. I am pro wind turbines.

Now, to be fair, I will take a step into the opposing boots. Overall, the main arguments of this group of people are as follows: high risk factors for birds and bats, such as proximity to migratory paths, lattice turbine towers encouraging perching etc. Companies such as Meridian and Trust Power have installed and integrated beneficial local environment measures into their construction and operational activities; this can include avoiding citing wind farms on migrating routes, and implementing a bird monitoring programme to improve the understanding of any potential mitigation measures. Also, wind turbines are now built bigger and more efficiently, so they can move much more slowly, making it easier for birds to fly through them. In conclusion, bird deaths from wind energy are unlikely to be ever more than a small fraction of the bird deaths caused by other human related activities, such as predation by cats and collision with windows, building and cars.

Next on the list: the complaints about the noise. Many people are against wind turbines because they “emit a lot of noise and are very disturbing”. Whether you
agree or not with wind turbines, please get your facts right. Technological advances by Meridian and Trust Power enable more wind to be converted to rotational torque, which results in less noise. The World Health Organization has implemented a guideline noise limit recommended to companies to provide protection against sleep disturbance and maintain a reasonable amenity at locations surrounding a wind farm. It has been demonstrated that the sound emitted is barely audible and is to be less than that of the sea, the wind on the trees — nature in general.

And finally, opponents believe that wind turbines disfigure the countryside and are generally ugly and need high maintenance. Many people feel that the countryside should be left untouched and the landscape should be left in its natural form for everyone to enjoy. For these people, I would like you to weigh the options again of global warming against that of a wind turbine. Eyesore or the future of electricity generation?

This “nimby” attitude (not in my backyard) has gone too far people. I agree completely with what Robert Batters (senior relationship manager of Meridian Energy) stated: “There are a whole lot of myths and it is human nature that there’ll be a fear of the unknown. It’s not until you start building, and get the wind farms up, that peoples’ fears start to dissipate” New Zealand should seriously consider changing their “nimby” attitude to that of “Itrb” (listen to Robert Batters) or “dimby” (definitely in my backyard).

The New Zealand public as a whole needs to put it in perspective for the effects of the renewable energy resources such as thermal, that New Zealand is ignorantly continually using: your food will be harmed and made more expensive there will no longer be the $5 lunch deal at Maccas, catastrophic hurricanes are more likely to hit your home, you will suffer from a longer, more intense allergy season than before as plants will bloom earlier and produce more pollen — imagine the amount of money spent on Claratyne. Also, you may not have enough water — because of the intensely hot seasons there will be less snow falling and therefore melting and this is where 75% of water supply accumulates from, and lastly, deadly smallpox could re-emerge as permafrost melts. This layer of permanently frozen soil beneath the ground’s surface is thawing. Not only could this destroy buildings and railroad tracks, but as the ground thaws, corpses buried long ago could get discovered and end up infecting you with a devastating disease that could lead to death. How do wind turbines sound now?

New Zealand needs to get real. Where to from here: wind. In 10 years’ time, first thing that should come to mind for a tourist that has never visited New Zealand before: wind turbines. Then the All Blacks, then The Flight of the Concords and so on...

Two words. WIND TURBINES. I rest my case.
3. The student uses information literacy skills to form sufficiently developed conclusion(s) convincingly by:

- framing the inquiry around three questions which investigate apocalyptic predictions, the preparations for the “end of the world” and scientific research.

- selecting and using a range of sources, which cover different perspectives/viewpoints, and evaluating the reliability and usefulness of selected information in relation to the inquiry. For example: useful background information… scientific factual information… personal viewpoints of those who believe…only from one country, therefore restricts my inquiry… how scientists are rejecting the notion… (in student process notes).

- building to a convincing conclusion by questioning interpretations and referring to “experts”: Not even the Maya themselves … Dr Anthony Aveni, an expert in Mayan culture, tells us that… (Paragraph 2)

- forming a forceful judgement regarding the mis-interpretations of scientific information: not even science can stand behind this prediction. Scientist Brian Dunning … the same apocalyptic prediction was made in 2003. Planet X was due to arrive in the May of 2003, but, unfortunately, never showed up. (Paragraph 3)

- formulating a reasoned conclusion as to why this may be the case: We do not look at the lack of scientific evidence,… but we are instead appealed by the option of having a life, in a new and different world, that may be better than the life we are experiencing today. (Paragraph 4)

To meet Merit more securely some statements need more convincing development. For example:

- The worrying part ie the effect or significance of the acting out of these beliefs (It is one thing to believe in such ridiculous claims, but a whole other to act on this belief, could be further developed as a convincing “debunking” of the idea that Geryl could start a new civilisation. (Paragraph 5)

- No colossal earthquakes, no worldwide floods, no apocalypse is the student’s prediction that there will be no apocalypse, which obviously cannot be supported. This could be seen as exactly the same as prophesying an apocalypse, which the student has set out to debunk. (Paragraph 6)
20/12/2012: The End of the World or a Fear of Repeating Numbers?
A wise old man once told me that “all good things come to end”. If this is so, then I must regretfully inform you that the world is not classified as good, as it is, most definitely, not coming to an end anytime soon. Not in 2012, not ever. So why is there so much hype surrounding 2012? Well, it all comes down to an ancient tribal calendar, a rogue planet that goes by the name of X and a recent cinematic release. An odd trio you may think, yet they have the power to inspire doubt in the minds of many around the globe.

First and foremost we are able to look to the ancient Mayan Calendar as a reason behind the 2012 prediction. This calendar has a 5125-year-long cycle that ends on the 20/12/2012. However, what’s to say that it points to the end of the world? Not even the Maya themselves believe that the calendar signifies an apocalypse — but why should we agree with the creators? That would just be foolish! Dr Anthony Aveni, an expert in Mayan culture, tells us that that calendar simply points to the “idea that time gets renewed, often after a period of stress, the same way that we renew time on New Year’s Day or even on Monday morning”. A fact that even a 6 year old could tell you! Rather, the western world needs to start recognising that not all cultures work on the same calendar as we do. Realising that flipping the page of a calendar, not matter how old it is, will not cause earthquakes the world over and the eventual end of our planet, would be a good place to start.

As for the rogue planet hurling our way, not even science can stand behind this prediction. Scientist Brian Dunning will be quick to tell you “The Planet X legend got started by misinterpretations of astronomical observations combined with an ancient Sumerian carving that has been erroneously interpreted to depict a solar system with ten planets.” Hence, one is quickly able to discover that realism is a characteristic that is soon becoming lost in this generation due to our infatuation with creating propaganda. If we take a trip down memory lane, we will notice that the same apocalyptic prediction was made in 2003. Planet X was due to arrive in the May of 2003, but, unfortunately, never showed up. Time management is not its best trait. The date of its arrival was then moved forward to 2012, which ‘coincidentally’ was the same year that the Mayan Calendar ended. Funny that. But don’t worry world, we also have it on good authority from a woman in Wisconsin, USA, who is in contact with extraterrestrials, that Planet X is on its way to earth and will arrive in 2012. Thank goodness for such clear lines of communication!

To top off these already bogus claims, a movie was released in 2009 that was simply called ‘2012’. Instead of extinguishing the already ramped rumours about the end of the world, the movie only ignited them further. No matter the lack of scientific reasoning behind each prediction, all doubt was erased once we are told in surround sound. We should never underestimate the power of Paramount movie. However, it is clear from the reaction of audiences to this cinematic
interpretation of the 2012 predictions, that the world is looking for something to give us hope that there may be a new beginning for us, a chance for a fresh start. We do not look at the lack of scientific evidence, or the obvious flaws in each prediction, but we are instead appealed by the option of having a life, in a new and different world, that may be better than the life we are experiencing today.

However, the most worrying part of these predictions is not the nature behind them but rather the people who have begun preparing for the end. It is one thing to believe in such ridiculous claims, but a whole other to act on this belief. People like Patrick Geryl, a French oil worker, for example. Two years ago, Patrick quit his job after saving enough money to last him until December 2012. He then began preparing for the end; firstly by putting together an 11 page long survival list and starting a ‘survival group’ of like-minded people. It is men like Patrick that need to take a hard look at the facts and rethink their actions. Geryl was recorded to have said “you have to understand, there will be nothing left... we will have to start an entire civilisation from scratch.” Although he may believe that his actions will save his life and help to re-build the planet, his ravings really just seem like that of a madman. But one thing is for sure, come 20/12/2012, Patrick Geryl is going to be seriously kicking himself.

So, what's really going to happen in 2012? Well, the Olympics will take place in London and the US will elect a new president. Queen Elizabeth II will celebrate her 60th year as monarch and my passport will expire. Planet X will stay in its rightful place in outer space and the Mayan Calendar will begin its second 5 125-year cycle.

No colossal earthquakes, no worldwide floods, no apocalypse. Looks like the movies aren't always right after all.
4. To achieve this standard at Achievement the student needs to: use information literacy skills to form developed conclusion(s).

The student uses information literacy skills to form developed conclusion(s) by:

- framing the inquiry within a relevant context (*the impact advertising has on society*) and posing three specific questions; selecting and using a good range of sources; evaluating the reliability and usefulness of selected information: *offers only one perspective…; an example of how forceful advertising can be…; qualified practitioner in her field…; shows techniques that are used to manipulate (in student process notes).*

- building to a conclusion by providing researched examples by:
  - using World Vision advertisements… good example of how idea-based advertising can influence people; (Paragraph 3)
  - quoting experts: According to Art Gibb of Ezine Articles, advertisers will pick a target audience — a main group of people to whom they want the advert to appeal to. They then find general traits or weaknesses that their target has; (Paragraph 5)
  - relating the concept to everyday life: Therefore most adverts aimed at this easy target will essentially show teenage girls a fun, lively, social and fashionable … (Paragraph 5)

To meet the standard at Merit some conclusions need to be more convincingly developed. For example:

- The student needs to unpack the significance of using the word “mate” as a cultural endearment in New Zealand so when his name, “Dave”, (Paragraph 7) is used, he is disconnected from their affections – because he is responsible for drinking and driving. So it is a form of advertiser manipulation: if you drink and drive you won’t be a “mate” anymore. This would lift the conclusion made in They are designed … They are highly effectual,… therefore doing exactly what the advertiser manipulated them to do (Paragraph 6) into a “convincing” conclusion.

- Although the student begins to develop a convincing conclusion about the long term effect and impact of advertising, the point ends rather abruptly. The statement this “ideal woman” is completely unreal (Paragraph 8) needs to be further developed: This can have an effect on society as the male gender may then believe and promote the stereotype … – their bodies are the only valuable aspect that a woman possesses (Paragraph 9) is reasoned and clear, but it seems disconnected from the preceding paragraph. The two paragraphs need to be restructured and linked together, in order to form a more convincing conclusion: this would take the work into the Merit category.
I’m not affected by Advertising— Yeah Right
You remember that time sitting down in some dreary reception room? And all you could do was sit down and pick up one of those old magazines with the faded cover and ripped edges. With every flip of the page all you could think to yourself was boring, boring, booooooring, bor— whoa that’s cool. All of a sudden you had found something worthwhile to pay attention to. In fact, because that advert saved you from the utter depression of waiting. Every time you later saw any related material to that one advert, you would immediately associate that material to be that knight in shining armor who was there for you in a most dire time of need.
Nah, that’s never happened to you?

Fine! The simple fact of the matter is; everybody has in some way been affected by advertising. Whether or not you like this is well totally irrelevant. As long as you chuckled at that humorous slogan, considered taking that long vacation over to Fiji or obsessed over that hot new clothing line; as far as advertisers are concerned - they have you wrapped around their pinky.

Elizabeth Schram, of the Yahoo! Contributor Network, believes that today’s society considers it acceptable to conform and follow the crowd to buy a product. Furthermore, society proves that they are susceptible to not only product advertising, but also advertising that promotes services or ideas. Take for example, charitable adverts on t.v like the World Vision adverts. They use children, whose lives have been afflicted with disastrous conditions in third world countries, to plead for financial aid that cannot be provided by their own governments. These types of charitable adverts are definitely not to be scoffed at, however they are a good example of how idea-based advertising can influence people.

Just as the World Vision ads manipulate society’s compassion, advertisers influence society’s mindset all the time by taking advantage of people’s feelings and emotions. Schram says, “massive amounts of time and money” have been spent on “learning our weaknesses.” Time and money can pretty much be interpreted simply as; Research.

Ah, research — that thing we all had to do at school. That thing that nobody could be bothered with, until they realized that they know nothing about their task. Advertisers are much smarter than that. According to Art Gibb of Ezine Articles, advertisers will pick a target audience — a main group of people to whom they want the advert to appeal to. They then find general traits or weaknesses that their target has. Once this is done, advertisers proceed to manipulate these traits to form adverts that will appeal to the target. For example, teenage girls are generally energetic, loud, talkative and of course concerned with how they look. Therefore most adverts aimed at this easy target will
essentially show teenage girls a fun, lively, social and fashionable front. To say that I am not attracted to this type of advert is a lie. I can’t help it, they’ve caught me out! That research that I never did has obviously taken its revenge!

Advertising companies have another powerful tool in their arsenal of weapons. Persuasion. It’s the foundation of their life’s work. They deliberately try to get the target to buy into the product, service or idea. To do this advertisers experiment with and use a huge range of methods. Some adverts use “scare” tactics to send a message or idea — much like the New Zealand Police’s anti drink driving adverts on t.v. They are designed to have a lasting psychological effect where society can view the terrible ramifications that are possible from drink-driving, discouraging the idea of drinking while intoxicated. They are highly effectual, as people definitely remember the terrible factors in the advert. This makes them scared of drink driving, therefore doing exactly what the advertiser manipulated them to do.

One of these adverts consisted of only the word “mate” throughout the entire dialogue and “Dave” right at the end of the advert. This ad was especially tailored to New Zealander’s, with how we generally compress meaning into a short amount of words. It sounds silly but “mate, mate, mate, mate, mate, mate, mate, mate, Dave” really got to the average New Zealander. Where on hearing “Dave,” after watching a car crash, he or she would have felt an cold chill down their spines.

Clean Cut Media say, “advertisements make us long for things that we don’t have, whether or not that they are realistic.” When I hear this, the term “Sex Sells” came to mind. Many a magazine, poster, newspaper, billboard, pamphlet and t.v advert have all had the beautiful, size 2, scantily-clad sex siren grace their surfaces. Men find this “ideal” profile of a women attractive, hence advertisers exploiting this general trait. Clean Cut Media’s perspective can be considered fairly correct, when you realize that although every male will be attracted to the “ideal” woman, this “ideal woman” is completely unreal.

Despite this, men still buy into the adverts, which also benefits the advertisers. Yet, women are left empty-handed in this situation. They are left having been exploited only for their bodies. This can have an effect on society as the male gender may then believe and promote the stereotype that because women are only used for their bodies in adverts — their bodies are the only valuable aspect that a woman possesses. Dr Jean Kilbourne believes that the “ideal woman” image, can actually cause woman to obsess over and try to be the “ideal woman.” This then has negative effects of issues such as dieting, body image, insecurities, violence and domestic abuse.
5. The student uses information literacy skills to form just sufficiently developed conclusion(s) by:

- framing the inquiry within a relevant context based on specific questions. (Paragraph 1)

- selecting and using a range of strategies and sources of information and evaluating the reliability and usefulness of selected information by, for example, commenting on facts and statistics provided from credible sources.

- making a judgment based on information gathered:
  
  - *It is very hard then, after looking at this evidence, to say that the children in the situation are in fact negatively affected by their parent’s lifestyle choice.* (Paragraph 6)
  
  - *Providing additional support: Recent research concludes that homosexual parents are no less fit to be parents than heterosexuals.* (Paragraph 4)

- building a developed conclusion: *However, this by no means proves that all homosexuals will make good parents, just as not all heterosexuals do. But there is no evidence to suggest that gays and lesbians are worse at parenting than straight couples.* (Paragraph 7)

To meet Achievement more securely the work could:

- use New Zealand rather than American research: *Many researches have been conducted on the issue of foster care … In the USA roughly only 54% …* (Paragraph 5) A link between USA research and NZ research would be useful, so that the research becomes relevant to the initially stated country of choice.

- make a clearer link between fostering and adoption: *As a result many of these children will never be adopted and therefore never have a family to care for them.* (Paragraph 4)
Question one: Are homosexual couples unfit to be parents?

Question two: To what extent are children raised by homosexual parents negatively affected?

Question three: How does denying gay couples to adopt affect the children in foster care?

Living in New Zealand many people turn away from the issue of same sex parenting and even say that homosexuals living in our country have equal rights. This however is completely incorrect.

One central example of this discrimination in our country is in relation to adoption. Although currently there are no specific barriers stopping gay individuals from adopting children, homosexuals cannot adopt as couples, and gay men are not permitted to adopt female children. Some argue that gay couples shouldn’t become parents because children need both a mother and father but why isn’t this issue argued in relation to single parents? Single parenting is not seen as a major issue even though the child will only have one parent while homosexual families have two.

Recent research concludes that homosexual parents are no less fit to be parents than heterosexuals. As a direct result, child welfare organisations in America have even gone so far to retract former claims that same sex parents shouldn’t be permitted to adopt. In New Zealand there is an estimated 10,000 foster families and in America alone there are more than 118,000 children waiting to be adopted. These enormous amounts of children in foster care are a huge problem both in New Zealand and globally. Eliminating homosexual couples reduces the number of good parents, potential adoptions and also denies children from having loving, stable families that they are in need of. As a result many of these children will never be adopted and therefore never have a family to care for them.

Many researches have been conducted on the issue of foster care of which all results show that children who live in foster care are statistically more likely to become unemployed, drop out of school, and become involved in criminal activities. In the USA roughly only 54% of foster children graduate from high school, 25% become homeless, and over half become unemployed. By permitting gay couples to adopt more children, it would result in a healthier life for them when they are older. Excluding same sex couples throws away qualified parents and takes away a potential family from a child. Instead of excluding parents from adopting just because of their sexual orientation, adopting should be a case by case program which looks at the best interests of the child.

In actual fact same sex couples may be far more prepared for parenthood than many heterosexuals. While gay parents plan adoption and parenthood carefully,
many children are accidents, their parents not expecting or wanting to become pregnant. Despite all the research that has been conducted on this issue, there has not been a single study which proves that the children raised by same sex couples have any long term problems as a result of their family situations. In fact, Girls raised by lesbian mothers were rated above average in academic and social abilities in a recent survey targeting lesbian parents and their children. The 17 year old girls also had lower aggression and behavioural problems than children raised in an ‘average’ family. In the same survey, the children themselves said that they did not feel disadvantaged by having two lesbian mothers. It is very hard then, after looking at this evidence, to say that the children in the situation are in fact negatively affected by their parent’s lifestyle choice.

However, this by no means proves that all homosexuals will make good parents, just as not all heterosexuals do. But there is no evidence to suggest that gays and lesbians are worse at parenting than straight couples. Not everyone, no matter what their sexual orientation, will be perfect parents but homosexuals should not be denied the chance to have a family. Gay couples make just as good parents as straight couples and therefore why should heterosexuals be able to have children if homosexuals can’t?
Grade Boundary: High Not Achieved

6. The work demonstrates the use of information literacy skills by:

- framing the enquiry, with some sense of direction for investigation: *It is sometimes seen by its members as the only way to succeed in life, which is why many people join gangs, but we know this is not true.* Although three specific questions were posed, the piece does not retain a clear focus. (Paragraph 2)

- selecting and using 10 appropriate sources of information. However, much of the report consists of information only, rather than the development of conclusions. For example, paragraph beginning: *While everyone wants to see ...* (Paragraph 5)

Although information has been selected, gathered and evaluated, most of the conclusions, decisions and opinions presented in the report are not sufficiently based on information gathered in the inquiry. For example:

- *However, we all know that these “family” gangs are centred around the desire to control what happens in their societies.* (Paragraph 2)

- *They fought to control the “underworld” of society, just like the gangs in New Zealand do nowadays.* (Paragraph 3)

- *More often than not, a child’s education is cut short when they have gang links ... should have to go through.* (Paragraph 4)

To meet Achievement, all decisions and conclusions must be more clearly linked to research (see above). Some conclusions do not appear to be directly linked to the information provided. For example: *I believe adults ... should be held accountable for their actions just like everyone else in society.* (Paragraph 6)
Gangs influencing our society
Look at what you are wearing right now, is there a person nearby who is wearing something similar? Chances are you have been influenced into sporting those very items of clothes. Many people are unknowingly being affected, as they do not notice that media, friends and family influence what we wear, how we act and what music we listen to. Think to yourself, can a community be controlled by just one body of people? If you answered yes, you are one of the few that notices how gangs can have an influence on society. If you answered no, read on.

Gangs are seen by their members as a big family, somewhere they can fit in. However, we all know that these ‘family’ gangs are centred around the desire to control what happens in their societies. Some gang activities, mostly illegal in my opinion, often give some members the chance to earn money, power and status within the gang. These gangs give members a chance to earn respect of those below, and sometimes above them, to help increase the quality of their life. It is sometimes seen by its members as the only way to succeed in life, which is why many people join gangs, but we know this is not true.

Gangs came around in the USA in the 1970s during a time in which the US economy shifted away from manufacturing which had originally given jobs to low-skilled workers. This resulted in a large part of the population being cut off from good, well-paid work. With little chance to improve their living standard, many of these people in this group turned to petty theft and drug dealing in order to get by. Gangs then fought to control the drug trade and gang members involved with the dealing were more likely to carry guns with them. They fought to control the ‘underworld’ of society, just like the gangs in New Zealand do nowadays.

Children have grown up knowing the rivalry between Black Power and the Mongrel Mob, right here in our own backyard. We don’t have to look far back in history of the world to see other gang rivalries that have influenced society such as the Bloods and the Crips in the USA. We have known about the ‘colours’ and the ‘patches’ for as long as we have learnt to recognise the gangs; but can we say that this has not had an influence on our society? No. We have seen in the news, the fights between gangs, the shootings. And yet, our children want to ‘be in’ on these gangs? The gang lifestyle also affects the members’ children in more ways than one. More often than not, a child’s education is cut short when they have gang links. This lack of education can then snowball into so many more problems later on in that child’s life, such as early pregnancy and childbirth, and also a failure to establish a stable working life. These after-effects are also associated with an increased likelihood of being arrested as an adult, something no child should have to go through.
While everyone wants to see an end to gangs, yet, nothing seems to be happening. I would like to introduce you to two tools who hope to see the end of gangs. Their names are Suppression and Prevention. Suppression works by putting a halt to gang activity, mostly with the help of aggressive law enforcement officers. Many followers of Suppression favour tougher Police crackdowns which aim to increase the imprisonment rate of gang members. These people also support heavier sentences for gang-related crimes, such as shootings and drug dealings. Prevention works in another way. He aims to discourage young people from joining gangs in the first place, or to encourage them to drop out of gangs. One of Prevention’s techniques is to use school programmes to educate young people about the dangers of gang life. Another strategy Prevention uses is to provide meaningful alternatives to street crime, which is what many youth gang members invariably are caught up in. Lastly, Prevention uses programmes in schools, religious institutions and community centres to teach young people new skills, find jobs, make friends and stay active in their communities.

There is a Bible passage which goes “When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.” Are these gangs getting away with activities in society because people are letting them? Just because they are a gang, does that mean they can use that as an excuse to do wrong? I don’t know about you, but this does not give you an excuse. It’s like the Bible passage blaming everything they did because they were a child. It doesn’t make sense, as I believe adults — gang members to be specific — should be held accountable for their actions just like everyone else in society. This brings us back to my original question of “is it right for a society to be influenced by a gang?”

I agree with the song which goes “I believe the children are our future, teach them well and let them lead the way.” When we teach our children what to do, they can make the right decisions themselves, and — hopefully — choose to stay out of gangs. To fix a society, I believe we need to fix the groups, and to fix a group, such as a gang, we need to fix its members. If we can do this, then we can prevent our societies being controlled by the gangs in them.