



New Zealand Qualifications Authority
Mana Tohu Matauranga O Aotearoa

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Assessment Report

New Zealand Scholarship History 2016

Standard 93403

Part A: Commentary

The Scholarship History examination was disrupted due to a severe earthquake affecting many parts of New Zealand. The examination was postponed for the majority of candidates. New questions were written for the later examination to ensure that candidates who had inadvertently seen the initial questions and resource booklet and/or sat the initial examination were not disadvantaged or advantaged.

The Assessment Specifications clearly defined the context of the paper and it was clear that most candidates were prepared to write about 'Turning Points', as they wrote full responses.

The sources provided plenty of scope for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding and appeared to guide them in what they should cover in their article.

The Assessment Specifications and the paper itself clearly identified the need for candidates to include their own content knowledge. Many students failed to do this and relied on the sources.

Part B: Report on Performance

Candidates who were awarded **Scholarship with Outstanding Performance** commonly:

- planned their response using the planning pages provided to outline the main idea for each paragraph, the sources they would use in that paragraph and the historical narrative that was appropriate. Their plan demonstrated a clear understanding of the context, the question, and intention to have a balanced use of the sources and knowledge and a focused, independent argument
- understood the scope of the question and wrote a balanced response to the question they selected rather than a learnt response to the context of 'turning points' that was outlined in the Assessment Specifications

- communicated a very strong understanding of the context of the examination, ie 'turning points', through their explanation of the key ideas relevant to this context
- argued a case in a sophisticated and coherent way
- presented a clear, accurate and sustained argument, evident in each paragraph
- synthesised the sources and their own detailed content knowledge from topics studied during the year in a balanced and effective manner
- may have referred to historical theories but did so to support their detailed content knowledge not instead of it
- wrote with perception and flair
- structured their response effectively
- demonstrated their understanding of the historical relationships by using detailed examples from their own content knowledge or from the sources
- evaluated historians' narratives in the sources within the paper and historians from their own knowledge
- judged the validity, reliability and usefulness of source material in relation to the question and their argument. These judgements were accurate and based on their informed knowledge of the topic(s) they had learnt during the year as opposed to historical theories they had memorised.

Candidates who were awarded **Scholarship** commonly:

- planned their response using the planning pages provided to outline the main idea for each paragraph, the sources they would use in that paragraph and the historical narrative that was appropriate. Their plan demonstrated a clear understanding of the context, the question, an intention to have balanced use of the sources and knowledge and a focused, independent argument
- understood the scope of the question they selected and wrote a clear response to the question and not a learned response to the context of 'turning points' that was outlined in the Assessment Specifications
- communicated a strong understanding of the context of the examination, i.e. 'turning points', through their explanation of the key ideas relevant to this context
- made direct reference to the key words/phrases in the question
- wrote clearly, including an introduction to their argument, substantiated argument and a conclusion
- argued their case strongly throughout their article
- supported their argument with accurate, detailed content knowledge and accurate, relevant evidence from some of the sources provided, demonstrating strong understanding of the topic(s) they had studied and an ability to unpack the sources provided effectively
- synthesised the sources and their own detailed content knowledge from topics studied during the year in a balanced manner
- may have referred to historical theories but did so to support their detailed content knowledge not instead of it
- structured their argument logically, ie chronologically or thematically
- critiqued historians' interpretations as presented in the sources and from their own knowledge in relation to their argument
- demonstrated a strong understanding of the historical arguments related to the topic(s) they had studied

- judged the validity, reliability and usefulness of source material in relation to the question and their argument. These judgements were accurate and based on their informed knowledge of the topic(s) they had studied as opposed to historical theories.

Other candidates commonly:

- failed to write a clear introduction that presented their own argument
- addressed the context signalled in the Assessment Specifications rather than the question they selected when developing their argument
- wrote a narrative or descriptive response based on the source material with little or no awareness of the need to present an argument in relation to the question asked or to include knowledge from their own study
- communicated a simple argument but did not support this with evidence from the sources and/or their own knowledge
- did not balance their own content knowledge from topics they had studied with content and ideas from the sources
- used quotes and theories that appeared to be rote learned and therefore had insufficient understanding to integrate with the sources in the paper and/or their argument. They tended not to integrate content knowledge from topic(s) they had actually studied
- chose to use content knowledge from topics of study that could not be effectively applied to the years specified in the Assessment Specifications, e.g. wrote about 1914 only and could not integrate their knowledge with any sources as there were not sources on 1914
- showed poor ability to read sources and summarise key ideas accurately
- showed poor ability to unpack sources, especially basic analysis such as source details, and use these in their discussion/argument
- showed little understanding of the nature of history; the role of an historian as opposed to a journalist or a novelist
- demonstrated an inability to explain and develop the key ideas related to the context
- did not have a good understanding of the key historical arguments related to their topic of understanding and were unable to apply the historical arguments to their individual response to their argument
- did not refer to the contemporaries or historians in the paper or bring in any from their own knowledge
- did not comment on the usefulness and reliability of sources in the paper
- did not utilise the titles and references of the sources in the Resource Booklet to inform the judgements they make about the source
- relied on pre-prepared judgements of evidence such as “photos are unreliable”.

Further comments

It was pleasing to see the significant number of candidates who were so well prepared for the demands of the exam. Candidates had carefully considered possible responses to the notion of ‘turning points’ and were able to structure a thoughtful response to either of the two questions.

Scholarship allows the best and brightest to test their ability to argue across a range of contexts and complexities. That so many could do this suggests that teachers and students across the country continue to be engaged in examining and discussing the challenges of history.

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