

# Assessment Report

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## On this page

[Level 3 History 2020](#) ▾

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Standards [91436](#) [91438](#) [91439](#)

### Part A: Commentary

Many candidates are writing excessively long essays that lack analysis. Candidates are advised to prioritise the relevant information to answer the essay questions at this level.

### Part B: Report on standards

91436: Analyse evidence relating to an historical event of significance to New Zealanders

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- understood the historical concept in the question

- interpreted the sources accurately, although usually only on a surface or textual level
- responded with a brief explanation of their understanding of the historical concept
- incorporated evidence from the sources into the response.

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

- did not complete all three questions
- misinterpreted the sources
- did not understand the historical concepts being assessed
- did not use relevant evidence in their responses.

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

- understood the historical concepts in the questions and were able to accurately apply them to the source material
- considered the sources in both their textual and contextual levels
- used several accurate examples and evidence to support their explanations of the historical concepts
- wrote responses that moved beyond a narrative or a sequential examination of the sources
- identified potential issues with sources or the evidence contained in them.

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

- established an argument or made a generalisation, supported with evidence and insightful explanations
- demonstrated a high degree of engagement with the sources and the historical concepts being assessed
- used carefully selected evidence to support an argument or generalisation
- offered solutions or 'next steps' to issues presented in the sources, or by the evidence, as a historian.

### Standard specific comments

Many candidates engaged with the topic. The shorter length of the text sources prevented too much regurgitation of the sources by less able students and contributed to a wider range of responses from candidates.

Successful candidates (across all criteria) regularly demonstrated evidence of planning that improved the depth and comprehensiveness of their responses. This was most notable in the reliability and usefulness question but was applicable across the entire examination.

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## 91438: Analyse the causes and consequences of a significant historical event

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- chose an event that was not suitable for the complexity required of this standard
- discussed at least one cause or consequence that was detailed, but overall, the answer was unbalanced; or discussed basic causes and consequences that lacked detail and specific supporting evidence; or wrote in a descriptive manner, unnecessarily using detailed facts to the detriment of developing an in-depth argument, in relation to the importance of the causes and consequences
- did not develop valid causal links and/or explanations for the chosen causal factors, and/or between the event and the consequences
- chose indirect consequences, often later events too far into the future, thereby making it difficult to explain the link to the event
- showed a lack of prioritisation/evaluation
- did not address the statement, or addressed the statement but made little attempt to develop an argument around it
- formed responses attempting to link their chosen event to New Zealand(ers) that was dubious or lacked conviction.

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

- did not understand or directly answer the question

- chose an event that was not significant and thus were unable to reach the depth required at Level 3
- did not use a clear event
- gave a response that contained only one cause and/or consequence
- discussed a narrative account of the event with no analysis of the causal factors or consequences
- showed a lack of understanding of the event and how their chosen causes led to the event
- chose causes that did not lead to the event or consequences that were not linked to the event
- did not establish any causal links
- did not include sufficient direct evidence
- did not develop their analysis beyond a brief description of their causes and consequences.

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

- chose important causes and consequences as required by the question
- used a clear structure with understanding of historical chronology
- developed an argument around the statement with some good analysis interwoven in parts
- provided detailed analysis of causes and consequences (although not all may have had the same depth of analysis)
- developed clearly explained causal links
- attempted to prioritise their causes and/or consequences by assessing their importance or significance to the event.

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

- chose a suitable significant event with a clear specific time frame allowing for the scope of analysis required at Level 3
- planned a response carefully, unpacking both the question and the statement
- chose confidently no more than two to three important causes and consequences that tightly linked to the historical event

- showed excellent understanding of the complexity of the historical event, its important causes, and consequences
- wove the statement throughout their argument with sound understanding of the nature of causation and the challenges for historians in trying to assess it
- answered “to what extent”, taking each cause and consequence on its merits rather than making a general overall assumption of causes and consequences
- prioritised and justified clearly the importance of the chosen important causes and consequences relative to each other
- included well-considered relevant evidence that supported the argument being put forward
- used historiography judiciously to support their own argument
- wrote concisely (although given the question required the statement to be addressed across causes and consequences, they were unable to write ‘short’ essays).

### Standard specific comments

The question and statement were accessible to candidates and there continues to be improvement in the responses in terms of addressing the statement, with fewer rote-learned essays. However, some candidates were too focused on the statement, which detracted from the key skill required for Merit and Excellence – prioritisation (as per the explanatory notes for 91438). The question specifically asked for the important causes and consequences, therefore indicating that prioritisation should be integral to the candidate response.

Candidates are advised to make their choice of historical event a key consideration. Some candidates choose events that are not suitable at Level 3. An example of events that were chosen in 2020 which made it difficult for candidates to develop an in-depth analysis included: brain injuries due to repeated concussions in the NFL in 2016; the “hand of God” goal; the Wāhine disaster; the Grenfell Tower Fire; and Jesse Owen’s Olympic medal performances.

Other events that did not work well in this standard in 2020 were those where the event was too broad or vague. Candidates seemed to find it hard to successfully argue causal links where causation or consequences fall inside the time frame of an event that stretches into years, decades, or even centuries. Candidates appear

to have a lack of clarity as to when broad events began and finished, with consequences often blurring into the event itself. Such events included: the rise of the British Empire (candidates attempted to cover a 300-year period for their event but outlining 'the rise' is tricky, given that the British empire rose and fell and rose); the Women's Suffrage Movement; prohibition in the United States; the American Eugenics movement; and anti-Semitism in Europe.

Candidates are advised to learn the difference between comprehensive detail and the requirement of comprehensive analysis of the chosen important causes and consequences. Candidates should be selective about causation and consequences and provide the best supporting evidence that will make their argument convincing.

A significant number of candidates appeared to be basing their response to the 91438 question on the historians they have studied for the 91437 internal standard. These responses tended to put forward alternate historians' views rather than answer the question. Candidates must answer the specific question and may use historiography to support their own argument.

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## 91439: Analyse a significant historical trend and the force(s) that influenced it

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- wrote in a coherent and structured style
- addressed the forces with some supporting detail
- explained in a limited way how the force influenced the trend
- wrote an unbalanced essay focusing more on the forces than the continuity and changes they engendered
- used some relevant historiography
- used dates and statistics as evidence
- wrote an essay that was clearly rote learned, which may have limited their capacity to directly address the question
- wrote about three or more forces, which indicated breadth rather than depth
- did not prioritise the changes/continuities.

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

- did not acknowledge the essay task
- wrote an unbalanced essay
- did not prioritise the changes and continuities involved in the trend
- wrote about only one force or wrote about many forces
- wrote a narrative of historic events rather than an analysis of the events
- wrote about a person or event as a force
- did not address the connection between the force and the trend
- summarised historiography rather than using it to advocate a perspective
- tried to cover too wide a time period and got lost in the narrative.

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

- stated their perspective clearly using correct conventions
- used relevant, detailed, and accurate supporting evidence to support their analysis of the force/trend
- wrote an unbalanced essay focusing on either continuity or change (but not to the complete exclusion of the other)
- used rote-learned evidence to write their essay but were cognisant and able to address the task in a focused manner
- wrote about long- and short-term changes/continuities
- evaluated and explained the force and trend
- understood that some forces were more important than others and clearly stated this but did not explicitly prioritise them
- used some historiography to support their perspective.

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

- wrote fluently and persuasively
- relied on knowledge and understanding which they applied effectively to address the essay task
- prioritised the changes and continuities

- addressed the essay task in a balanced manner
- understood the complexity of the forces and the trend
- used a sustained and fluent writing style
- used historiography to advance their perspective.

### Standard specific comments

The question allowed candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of particular time frames, as well as their ability to write using the correct conventions of history as a discipline.

However, it was clear in 2020, many candidates relied on rote-learned essays and there was a notably heavy reliance on exemplars in many of the weaker responses.

Many candidates wrote about significantly more forces than they were asked to, which limited their capacity to analyse fewer forces in depth, or comprehensively.

## [History subject page](#)

### Previous years' reports

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