

National Certificate of Educational Achievement

2011 Assessment Report

History Level 1

- 91003 Interpret sources of an historical event of significance to New Zealanders**
- 91005 Describe the causes and consequences of an historical event**
- 91006 Describe how a significant historical event affected New Zealand society**

COMMENTARY

The overall calibre of candidate responses in this examination was high. It was obvious that candidates came into their examination well-prepared and able to write with breadth and depth in the standards they attempted. This was particularly clear in the essay standard where more than ever before candidates achieved at Excellence level. Students are keen to show what they learned during their years study and how well they know it. They definitely wrote more than in previous years.

While Grade Score Marking (GSM) was used in all three external standards, AS91003 was the standard best able to take advantage of the system in 2011. Although the standard has only one achievement criteria for students to meet, the external assessment task had three separate questions. All responses were awarded a score from 0 to 8. This generated a score out of 24. Students who faltered in one question still had the ability to register a total sufficient for Achieved or Merit, as it was the total score that counted in the end. Many candidates getting Merit and Excellence level scores in two questions compiled a total score that allowed them to achieve even if they left a question blank or got a low score.

Some candidates showed they had a sense of what primary and secondary sources are, what information and evidence they can provide, and how historians use them. The frequent assertions that secondary sources cannot contain facts and are less reliable than primary sources because they were not the accounts of eyewitnesses showed that some candidates used rote answers rather than looking at the sources in front of them. From the other side, reducing the number and, where consistent with meaning, the length of the resources will help provide more time for students to move from reading to analysing the material in front of them for the first time.

STANDARD REPORTS

91003 Interpret sources of an historical event of significance to New Zealanders

ACHIEVEMENT

Question One

Candidates who were awarded Achievement for this standard demonstrated the required skills and knowledge. They commonly:

- showed a sound but basic understanding of the resources, the issue, and the intent of the question
- made simple generalisations that correctly identified why conscription was introduced and supported these with evidence from the sources that was generally relevant
- often relied heavily on quoted material from the sources
- identified key pieces of information from the resources and related them to the question but examination of that material was limited or further evidence was provided that was not relevant
- cited one or two examples of evidence from the resources provided.

Question Two

Correctly identified the perspective of a person or group and covered most aspects of these perspectives but were often less confident at explaining them, leading to the practices described below:

- answered the question by extracting relevant information and/or relied heavily or exclusively on quoted material that was generally relevant
- demonstrated understanding of the responses with little analysis into the causes of or reasons for the perspectives.
- identified two perspectives but did little more than quote directly from the sources or closely paraphrase the sources with no inference or explanation drawn from the evidence
- identified the perspective(s), then used a number of direct quotes to present the viewpoints with little or no examination of these viewpoints beyond a sentence summary or introduction such as “women were against conscription”
- accurately identified (with evidence) only one perspective correctly. This was frequently because students did not read closely enough or identify perspectives carefully enough. A common practice was to confuse the Waikato iwi with “all iwi”, failing to see that the Waikato iwi had quite a different perspective to other iwi.

Question Three

- Used Source G, and to a lesser extent Source H, as a basis to assess the reliability of Source F, using some evidence from each to support their answer. Most commonly, they used the numbers of those who resisted conscription in Source G to support the generalisations about the Waikato iwi’s reluctance to participate in the war in Source F
- showed they understood the need to fill information “gaps” in Source F by comparing it to other sources. The most commonly suggested sources were primary source evidence from Māori perspectives such as interviews or diary entries or more statistical data such as records of enlistment from Māori iwi
- worked their way through the suggested bullet points which meant they focused much of their answer on assessing limitations, usefulness, or reliability. If they presented these as reasons for needing to check the source, and ways to do this, they still achieved
- made a justifiable comment about the reliability of the source and suggested a valid source to check reliability
- used a pre-learned response to “scaffold” answers that covered “usefulness” and “reliability” but did not fully answer the specific question in front of them
- showed some critical insight into the reliability of the source without going into any real depth
- understood how the question required them to respond: that is, they needed to make some reference to “how a historian researching Māori reactions to conscription could check the reliability of Source F”
- provided a general example of reliability that could be checked with limited reference to other sources such as diary entries and little analysis of how these sources could actually be used.

NOT ACHIEVED

Question One

Candidates who were awarded Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They commonly:

- did not answer the question, focusing instead on how the government implemented conscription, or how groups reacted to the introduction of conscription without connecting any information to *why* the government introduced conscription
- did not interpret the requirements of the set question correctly. Many respondents simply copied large tracts of information from the resources in the hopes that some of it would answer the question
- gave answers that were not based on the sources at all, but were a guess by the student as to what they thought the answer might be
- gave their personal opinion on whether New Zealand's participation in World War I and /or conscription were valid /moral without explaining the government's reasoning for introducing conscription
- did not clearly identify factors influencing the government's decision
- did not show evidence of understanding the concept of conscription despite it being defined in the introductory material
- showed little comprehension of cause-effect relationships in history
- often attempted to answer the question from the introduction alone and did not read the other sources
- took little or no notice of the introductory material, which set conscription in its context.

Question Two

- did not answer the question and/or understand how to identify or explain a perspective
- did not select or present relevant information, often just provided random quotes with no explanation or demonstration of understanding
- did not identify what the groups' viewpoint/perspective was – often candidates simply provided a piece of evidence without explaining the relationship of that evidence to the perspective/viewpoint
- attempted to paraphrase or exhibit understanding but had the 'wrong end of the stick.' This was especially the case with attempts to explain the perspectives of the delegation of mothers
- incorrectly identified a group or perspective
- gave answers that were not based on the sources at all, but were a guess by the student as to what they thought the answer might be. Usually this came in the form of assuming that women were protesting for the right to be able to fight in the war themselves.

Question Three

- showed a poor understanding of how a historian could use other resources to contradict or support the claims made in a text
- showed no clear sense of what reliability was or how to check it
- talked about usefulness and limitations but didn't actually answer the question
- focused on all the information in Source F and what it told us about reactions to conscription without actually answering the question

- provided only generic descriptions of why any historical source might be unreliable that contained no reference to Source F
- did not make any attempt to explain how an historian might check the reliability.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Merit commonly:

- answered the question with clarity and identified how the question required them to respond, backing up with direct quotes, or reference to support material
- attempted to critically examine the information provided, though limited in depth, and quoted, or more rarely, paraphrased
- demonstrated a sense of structure in their written response
- where quotations were relied on, selected them with discrimination and supported by a measure of explanation
- moved beyond the most obvious sources and material, and included explanations that showed an understanding of the material in a wider range of sources, citing reasons such as the commitment made to Britain or the rising number of casualties.

Question Two

- identified how the question required them to respond and were able to back their responses up with direct quotes, or reference to support material and attempted to critically examine the information provided, though the examination was often limited in depth
- moved beyond identifying or paraphrasing perspectives to infer from the evidence and put it into their own words
- understood the differing perspectives on conscription
- could back points up with relevant information from the sources and were able to refer to more than one source and provide evidence and analysis that pulled together points and evidence from different sources
- where quotations were relied on, selected them with discrimination and supported by a measure of explanation
- typically used at least two/three points of supporting evidence.

Question Three

- showed an understanding of what aspects of Source F an historian might need to check, and ways in which to go about this
- went beyond merely identifying gaps in the source's information and identified possible limitations in the creation of the source that may need to be investigated (the perspective of the author and publishers, date of publication, the reason for the source's creation etc) and suggested ways to check these limitations
- demonstrated an understanding of why it is important for an historian to check a number of resources rather than take a piece of evidence at face value and gave specific examples of how to check for reliability. Responses focused on at least one area in sufficient depth to show a critical understanding of the question
- wrote with some clear understanding of historical method, often suggested crosschecking, finding statistics and/or undertaking interviews or surveys without being clear on how the information found could be used.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH EXCELLENCE

Question One

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement with Merit, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Excellence commonly:

- synthesised the information into their own words to explain why the government introduced conscription. Explanations contained detailed and insightful analysis of the sources
- supported their explanation with evidence that drew on a wide number of sources, was chosen with discrimination demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of the sources and used effectively to directly address the question
- demonstrated evidence of being highly literate, and wrote with clarity, and in many cases, with sophistication flair and concise, with little or no digression from the question
- covered more than three main points in detail with supporting evidence from the sources, showing sophistication in the manner they linked the discussion back to the question consistently.

Question Two

- identified two perspectives and were specific about the group referred to (e.g. Waikato iwi (instead of just iwi), the Women's Anti-Conscription League (instead of just women)
- explained the perspectives in depth and selected, and summarised and established the relevance of statements and actions
- supported their explanation with evidence that was chosen with discrimination and used effectively.
- were able to select and integrate information from a number of sources

Question Three

- understood the importance of not taking information at face value, displaying a clear sense of the general limitations of evidence and how historians typically address it
- addressed the question directly. They focussed on answering the "how" aspect of the question by clearly linking discussion of limitations to justifications for the methods of checking reliability that the student suggests
- displayed a clear sense of methodology in checking the reliability of a source that included a range of factors such as investigating the author, consulting more recent publications on the subject, and verifying generalisations using primary source documents
- wrote with clarity and formulated a persuasive argument about how and why, a historian researching Māori reactions to conscription would need check the reliability of Source F
- gave numerous specific examples of how to check for reliability and showed a high level of critical thinking
- suggested valid ways in which an historian could check Māori reactions to conscription with examination of how other sources could be used to support or contradict the evidence within the text.

91005 Describe the causes and consequences of an historical event

ACHIEVEMENT

Candidates who were awarded Achievement for this standard demonstrated the required skills and knowledge. They commonly:

- described at least one cause of an event
- described at least one consequence of that event
- used appropriate supporting evidence in their description
- responded with a meaningful historical narrative (in a logical order etc). This last point was a consideration only for candidates who got a 4 or above
- a relationship between the event and the causes and consequences was drawn.

NOT ACHIEVED

Question One

Candidates who were awarded Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They commonly:

- answered only half of the question
- wrote only on causes or only on consequences
- did not describe the causes or consequences
- just listed consequences and no matter how numerous and how accurate they are
- focused on a historical narrative without describing in any form causation or the consequences of an event
- wrote as if anything that happened before an event it made it a cause or just anything happening after an event made it a consequence.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Merit commonly:

- described some causes of an event in detail
- described some consequences of that event in detail
- used appropriate supporting evidence in their description
- responded with a meaningful historical narrative.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH EXCELLENCE

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement with Merit, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Excellence commonly:

- described a range of causes of an event in comprehensive detail
- described a range of consequences of that event in comprehensive detail
- used appropriate supporting evidence in their description
- responded with a meaningful historical narrative.

OTHER COMMENTS

It is very important that in Achievement Standard 91005 teachers carefully select events with their students. In AS91005 specifically, the causes of the 1981 Springbok Tour were technically – the invitation offered by the NZRU and the history/love of rugby, amongst other more minor ones. However, the causes of the protests during the Springbok Tour can widen to include apartheid in South Africa, the Gleneagles Agreement etc. This is an important principle for teachers as students who did not understand this failed often to show causation. It is important to note that those who focused on the 1981 Springbok Tour as their event still achieved, they just did not do as well as they were not so focused.

What scope should be covered by an historical event are best suited to preparing for this external standard?

Contexts like “The Origins of the Second World War”, “Black Civil Rights”, or “New Zealand’s Search for Security” provide valid and popular studies, but students attempting to write essays on the causes of consequences of such broad studies are unnecessarily complicating and compromising their performance in the external. A more specific and “contained” event is better suited. Discussions around this will provide rich opportunities for discussing the nature and variety of causation and consequence and how to establish categories and links.

91006 Describe how a significant historical event affected New Zealand society achievement

ACHIEVEMENT

Candidates who were awarded Achievement for this standard demonstrated the required skills and knowledge. They commonly:

- described an event and supported the chosen event with appropriate supporting evidence, however this may have been limited or had too much focus on irrelevant background evidence rather than specifically discussing the event
- identified two groups and/or individuals and used some supporting evidence
- gave evidence that was limited or placed too much emphasis on the actions that the groups and/or individuals took rather than how they were affected by the event.

NOT ACHIEVED

Candidates who were awarded Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They commonly:

- identified an event but did not describe the event in any detail or provide evidence to support the chosen topic
- identified and described a movement rather than a specific event
- identified and described an event that was not of significance to New Zealanders
- wrote responses that did not demonstrate understanding of the chosen topic
- did not attempt all parts of the paper.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Merit commonly:

- demonstrated a clear understanding of the chosen event and used specific evidence to support the understanding
- demonstrated a clear understanding of how groups and/or individuals were affected by the chosen event and these were supported with specific evidence
- explained at least one valid point with supporting evidence on how the chosen event was of significance to New Zealanders.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH EXCELLENCE

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement with Merit, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Excellence commonly:

- demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of how the chosen event was of significance to New Zealanders by writing responses that covered most of the points
- supported by a range of evidence that was not just a rerun of the information that had been used in the previous parts of the paper
- demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of how the chosen event continues to affect New Zealand society today and supported the statement with a range of relevant evidence.

OTHER COMMENTS

If students choose an event that has occurred overseas, there must be clear and convincing reference made to its significance to New Zealand and New Zealanders – therefore ensuring that they can meet the criteria.

Candidates who used different contexts, specifically chosen for the standards, are more prepared in approaching AS 91005 and AS 91006.