

# **National Certificate of Educational Achievement**

## **2011 Assessment Report**

### **History Level 2**

- 90467 Examine evidence in historical sources**
- 90469 Examine how a force or movement in an historical setting influenced people's lives, in an essay**
- 90470 Examine individual or group identity in an historical setting, in an essay**

## COMMENTARY

This was the final year for examinations to assess these achievement standards.

**90467:** The questions for the last year of the standard were a straightforward reflection of the second and third criteria of the standard (historical relationships – cause / effect, past and present, continuity / change – and usefulness / reliability), with the evidence required providing coverage of the first criteria (facts / ideas / points of view).

**90469:** The format of this paper has not changed from the previous three years. The layout of the paper offered candidates a great deal of advice and guidance about completing the essay. This included a list of forces and movements, advice about structuring of essays, and essay planning. The essay plan encouraged candidates to identify the force / movement, the topic / setting, and the specific group / individual, and also encouraged them to cover both parts of the essay topic. A new feature was the inclusion of the Introduction guidelines on the first page on which candidates write.

**90470:** The format of this paper has not changed from the previous three years. The question was structured to be answered in a range of ways by candidates with a range of ability and a variety of topic knowledge.

## STANDARD REPORTS

### 90467 Examine evidence in historical sources

#### ACHIEVEMENT

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

- completed most questions
- backed up their ideas with a single piece of evidence from the given source(s)
- provided accurate but straightforward responses to the questions
- responded with statements that tended to describe rather than explain to show depth of understanding.

#### NOT ACHIEVED

**Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They typically:**

- showed a lack of strategic awareness by not attempting required combinations of questions
- wrote very brief responses to the questions and did not support ideas with evidence from the sources
- misunderstood the questions and wrote confused responses
- misinterpreted the sources and wrote confused responses
- made a limited attempt at answering the question or did not complete the answer
- made sweeping generalisations not directly linked to the topic
- did not provide supporting evidence or refer to sources

- provided supporting evidence that was not relevant or sufficient.

### **ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT**

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

- explained more than one key idea per question
- showed solid understanding of each question and wrote detailed and accurate answers
- referred to all of the sources needed to answer each question and quoted from these sources
- provided in-depth explanation with supporting evidence
- wrote balanced and convincing responses, just short of going into the depth required to show perceptiveness
- made multiple references to sources when relevant, often with direct quotes where required.

### **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 typically:**

- used a range of sources to back up their ideas, which demonstrated strong understanding of each historical relationship and the requirements of usefulness/ reliability question
- identified insightful ideas with the given sources and communicated them effectively
- looked beyond the explicit ideas in the sources and identified implicit ideas
- showed perceptive understanding of each question and showed an ability to think more deeply about the significance and meaning found within sources
- wrote with clarity, logic, and cogency to provide a compelling response
- raised insightful questions that stemmed from the source material.

### **OTHER COMMENTS**

It was difficult for candidates to show Continuity in Question Five in a great deal of perceptive detail. Candidates tended to compare only a few sources and show a series of continuities rather than an ongoing theme of continuity over all the sources. Elsewhere, candidates tended to refer to usefulness in their reliability question and reliability in the usefulness question. They need to be able to identify that they are different and will, therefore, have different responses/ answers to show this.

## **90469 Examine how a force or movement in an historical setting influenced people's lives, in an essay**

### **ACHIEVEMENT**

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

- had read and understood what was required in the exam essay topic
- identified an individual or specific group upon which to base their essay
- clearly identified the force or movement upon which they were basing their essay, either explicitly or implicitly

- described (but did not explain) how the ideology of the force or movement influenced the individual or specific group (to attempt to change the political / social situation) but did not explain the influence of the force / movement
- described (but did not explain) the consequences of the attempts of the individual / specific group (to attempt to change the political / social situation)
- wrote their essay with a clear structure, including an introduction, a logical sequence of paragraphs and a concluding statement
- supported most generalisations with evidence
- gave some details of the historical context
- did not cover all aspects of the essay topic sufficiently. This was quite possibly due to a failure to understand the differences between the terms force / movement, attempt, and consequences. Lower-performing candidates did not distinguish between an attempt and a consequence of that attempt, for example. This problem was exacerbated when the topic they chose was too large, especially if it included a series of attempts
- chose topics that were too large (too complex, or covered a time period which was too long) or where the force / movement and the individual / group were too closely connected.

## **NOT ACHIEVED**

**Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They typically:**

- did not identify an individual or specific group upon which to base the essay
- did not clearly identify and define a force of movement upon which to base the essay, either explicitly or implicitly
- did not describe how the ideology of the force or movement influenced the specific group or individual to attempt to change (the political / social situation). May have stated or listed relevant ideas but there was no amplification of them
- did not describe the 'attempts' of the individual or specific group to change (the political / social situation). May have stated or listed relevant ideas but there was no amplification of them
- did not describe / explain the consequences that occurred because of the attempts of the individual or specific group (the political / social situation)
- did not do one of the two parts to the essay topic
- made major historical errors that detracted from the validity of their essay
- wrote a narrative of 'all I know about' type essay or simply repeated a sequence of events that did not address the essay topic
- appeared not to have fully understood the essay topic and wrote a great deal of irrelevant material (even though, in some cases, they clearly had considerable historical knowledge of the topic).

## **ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT**

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

- explained (gave reasons for) how the ideology of the force or movement influenced the specific group and / or individual to attempt to change the political / social situation
- explained (gave reasons for) the consequences of the attempts of the individual / specific group to change the political / social situation

- defined and explained an appropriate historical force, often in the second paragraph, putting it into its historical context
- understood the terminology used in the essay topic quite well. For example, they were able to indicate when the ‘attempts’ stopped and ‘consequences’ began, often by using the phrases like ‘as a consequence ...’
- did not offer an adequately detailed explanation for one or both of the parts of the essay.

## **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 typically:**

- comprehensively explained (gave reasons for) how the ideology of the force or movement influenced the specific group and/or individual to attempt to change the political/social situation
- offered an explanation that included plenty of specific details
- comprehensively explained (gave reasons for) the consequences of the attempts of the individual/specific group to change the political/social situation
- organised the essay well with paragraphs in a logical sequence. Clear references back to the essay topic and clear delineation of which part of the essay topic was being answered
- demonstrated a thorough understanding of the topic and kept the essays relevant and focused. Showed an understanding of the history
- made frequent references back to the question
- understood the terminology used in the question very well e.g. the differences between the ‘attempt’ and ‘consequences of the attempt’
- made distinctions between different types of influences, and/or different types of consequences. These points contributed to the ‘comprehensiveness’ of their answers.

## **OTHER COMMENTS**

In the first part of the essay topic, the candidates needed to describe/explain how the force ‘influenced’ the ‘attempt’ (to change the political/social situation). Some candidates described/explained the influence of the force/movement in detail but then made no reference to any ‘attempt’ by the specific group. Some other candidates did the opposite and described in detail the ‘attempts’ by the specific group (to change the political/social situation) but made little reference to the influence of the force/movement on these attempts.

Candidates should signal which part of the essay they are writing about by referring to key words in the essay topic like ‘influence’, ‘attempts’, and ‘consequences’. Good essays always signaled the second part of the topic by referring to ‘consequences’. Unfortunately, some candidates wrote the second part of the essay with only rare usage of the word ‘consequences’, which made these essays difficult to mark. Higher-performing candidates made it clear where the ‘attempts’ finished and the ‘consequences’ began.

The range of topics being written about by candidates for this standard continues to be low. The vast majority of candidates (at least 75%) write about one of the following topics: ‘Vietnam and the Conflict in Indo-China 1945–1975’, ‘Revolution in Russia’, ‘The Weimar Republic and the Nazi State’, and the ‘Origins of World War I’. Smaller numbers of candidates wrote about the ‘American Revolution and the Making of the Republic’, ‘Gandhi

and his Contribution to the Independence of India', and 'Superpower Rivalry'. A few other topics that were covered by low numbers of candidates were: 'Women's suffrage', 'Black Civil Rights in the USA', the 'Hungarian Uprising of 1956', and 'Imperialism in Samoa in the Twentieth Century'.

## **90470 Examine individual or group identity in an historical setting, in an essay**

### **ACHIEVEMENT**

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

- identified a sufficient amount of factors and actions
- described valid but basic facts relating to their chosen individual or group
- organised essays using an acceptable but basic structure. Introductions and conclusions were often vague but sufficient.

### **NOT ACHIEVED**

**Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They typically:**

- identified only one factor or action. Often there was imbalance – too much information for the first component and insufficient for the second
- wrote about ill-defined groups e.g. German people
- wrote completely unstructured prose i.e. no paragraphing at all
- did not provide a sufficiently discrete introduction and conclusion
- did not address the requirements of either the question or the AS.

### **ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT**

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

- explained sufficient factors and actions to satisfy 'range'
- sufficiently related evidence to an individual or group identity
- linked evidence to characteristics
- used sound essay structure
- factual accuracy.

### **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 typically:**

- candidates provided a wealth of information, which demonstrated their depth of knowledge
- used detailed evidence and plentiful, convincing links to identity
- explained the characteristics of either individual or group identity in a meaningful manner that demonstrated deeper understanding
- developed a reasoned argument that retained focus on the essay question

- wrote with flair e.g. used paragraph introductions that were less programmatic than ‘another factor’
- high degree of historical precision
- no repetition or unnecessary material.

### **OTHER COMMENTS**

- less range in topics than previous years
- more incomplete essays
- more essays that were 2–3 pages in length but yet did not meet criteria
- development in the schedule and its implementation this year meant that the standard of all levels of achievement was appropriately high
- very few New Zealand topics encountered.