

# **National Certificate of Educational Achievement**

## **2012 Assessment Report**

### **English Level 2**

- 91098 Analyse specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s), supported by evidence**
- 91099 Analyse specified aspect(s) of studied visual or oral text(s), supported by evidence**
- 91100 Analyse significant aspects of unfamiliar written text(s) through close reading, supported by evidence**

## COMMENTARY

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

The majority of candidates wrote clear responses to aspects of texts in the essay-based standards, showing the ability to analyse effectively. Most required more than 350 words to structure and support an analytical response. Guidelines for structuring an essay were introduced into the booklets of these standards.

Questions were framed so as to discourage candidates from delivering an essay prepared by themselves or others before the examination. Candidates were encouraged by these less predictable questions to deal directly with their chosen topic by framing a clear response to its key features. This type of questioning can be seen to draw more authentic responses from candidates who are, as a result, being examined on their ability to analyse, not to recall analysis. Across all standards there has been further improvement in the percentage of candidates who achieved, and candidates who formed and justified clear opinions about aspect of texts achieved best.

In the essay-based standards, candidates are encouraged to read all questions before choosing one most appropriate to their knowledge, interest, and studied text. In 2012, most responded to questions about theme and character, however, across all three papers, questions offered candidates opportunities to respond to the four aspects of texts specified in the NZC: text purposes and audiences, ideas within language contexts, the structure and organisation of text and language features that enhance texts. In preparation for assessment, candidates should be offered exposure to all these aspects of texts.

The NZC requires the use of an inquiry-based planning approach, relying on teachers' knowledge of candidates' ability and interest in order to choose appropriate texts for study. The comments included in this report about texts which worked well for candidates are anecdotal, not prescriptive; they do not form full or conclusive recommendations, and markers consider all texts for assessment.

The standards assessed in the examination at Level Two provide opportunities for success in a range of texts and text types through a variety of high-interest questions. Preparation for these standards involves the development of analytical and written expression skills.

## STANDARD REPORTS

### **91098 Analyse specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s), supported by evidence**

#### **ACHIEVEMENT**

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

- answered both parts of the question, using key words in the opening paragraph
- used relevant examples and quotations
- wrote a more formulaic answer that mentioned aspects of the question
- made statements that covered the “how” requirement of the question
- understood the key words of the question, e.g. personal voice, structure/organisation.

## **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:**

- wrote a response that was too brief
- did not address both parts of the question
- tried to use a prepared essay
- relied on a film version of an extended text
- wrote a simplistic account of the text without showing any analysis of it
- misunderstood key words (especially personal voice or structure) and so wrote an essay that did not answer the question
- confused language techniques
- expanded too far outside the parameters of the question, often to include rote-learned material.

## **ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT**

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

- engaged with the text on a personal level
- showed some fluency and control of expression
- used structure effectively to address the question
- kept the focus on the question throughout the essay
- used appropriate quotation and/or close referencing
- showed some awareness of writer's purpose and the reader/writer relationship
- responded to the question by exploring more than one text and could explain the relevance of discussing texts.

## **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:**

- wrote with flair and fluency
- showed insight beyond the text
- demonstrated extensive knowledge of the text, as well as bringing in relevant material about the author and the social/historical context
- integrated apt quotation
- used an original viewpoint and explored possibilities of meaning
- fully understood and responded to all aspects of the question.

## **OTHER COMMENTS**

Candidates mostly selected novel, drama, short story and poetry. Extended texts were more commonly discussed and when short texts were used there were usually two or more texts discussed. In this case the answer was better when the candidate could explain the relevance of the two texts and the reasons for comparing and/or contrasting them.

Candidates who achieved showed an appropriate level of understanding of the aspects of text set out in the question. Some responses showed a very good knowledge of the text

but failed to explore the particular aspect. Candidates should be advised to avoid twisting the question to write the essay they have prepared. Some responses ignored the singular 'a conflict' or 'a main character', which tended to dilute the answer.

Text choice is significant. The majority of candidates answered using an extended text. Some texts are too simplistic to show analysis required at this level. Contrastingly, some texts proved too complex for candidates to fully understand or engage with in a meaningful way. The key to text choice is to use an inquiry approach, so that the material chosen provides engagement and a suitable level of challenge for candidates.

All of the questions were attempted by candidates and offered candidates the opportunity to achieve at all grades. For the most part, a good range of texts was studied and the majority were suitable for Level 2 English.

Texts that offered limited opportunities to achieve at all grades were: *Looking for Alibrandi*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*, *Tomorrow When the War Began*, *The Hunger Games*, *Animal Farm*, *The Geranium* and *In the Rubbish Tin*. These texts generated quite simplistic responses on the whole.

Texts that generated solid responses included: *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Othello*, *The Kite Runner*, *Mr Pip*, *Lord of the Flies*, *The Book Thief*, *Jane Eyre*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *My Sister's Keeper*, *Krystyna's Story*, *The Road*, *The Secret Life of Bees*, *Montana 1948*, and *Purple Hibiscus*.

Some more adult texts – *The Colour Purple*, *Angela's Ashes*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* – might more appropriately extend candidates at Level 3.

## **91099 Analyse specified aspect(s) of studied visual or oral text(s), supported by evidence**

### **ACHIEVEMENT**

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

- addressed all aspects of the question
- used keywords from the question to structure their response
- showed understanding of an aspect of the text
- structured ideas logically
- provided straightforward analysis
- supported ideas with relevant evidence
- showed some engagement with the text
- showed some awareness of the text being crafted for a particular purpose.

## **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:**

- did not engage with the question and showed little evidence of having engaged with the text(s)
- wrote a pre-learned response that failed to address the question
- demonstrated little understanding of the aspect specified in the question
- relied on plot
- described events as opposed to providing analysis
- wrote answers lacking in depth and detail
- did not link examples to a particular purpose or effect
- showed limited awareness of deliberate choices made by the creator of the text.

## **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 clear understanding of the question and remained focused on the question throughout
- wrote a well structured answer
- used a range of appropriate evidence to support ideas
- analysed with confidence, offering detailed explanations
- analysed evidence fully
- showed a strong sense of audience being deliberately influenced by director for a particular purpose
- demonstrated understanding of the creator's purpose and craft
- showed clear engagement with the text
- wrote clearly and with confidence.

## **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:**

- set up a personal argument in the introduction and consistently addressed the question as related to the argument established
- wrote a cohesive integrated response with apt examples
- articulated a sophisticated or detailed point of view on the text
- provided insightful analysis throughout essay
- used a wide range of evidence that exemplified several techniques
- embedded relevant quotation seamlessly into their discussion of the question
- evaluated the effectiveness of the choices made in the construction of the text
- included unique/original reflection on the director's craft
- made interesting links either within the text, or to other texts or world events
- wrote fluently; often eloquent and compelling.

## OTHER COMMENTS

A wide range of texts and text types are being used across the country. There is clear evidence of strong candidate engagement with both the ideas and the inherent characteristics of visual and oral text.

Candidates mostly understood the structure and tone required in a literary essay and tried to make clear points supported with detail. Some candidates are still resorting to description as opposed to the analysis required at Level Two.

The nature of visual and oral text makes it difficult to write successfully about creator purpose and the shaping of audience response without reference to genre specific techniques, such as film shot or use of sound techniques. Candidates should be encouraged to discuss text with reference to such techniques.

Texts that have strong stylistic elements lend themselves to a higher level of analysis and discussion. Texts that proved particularly successful at Level 2 included *Apocalypse Now*, *The Pianist*, *Schindler's List*, *The Social Network*, *The Dark Knight*, *Little Miss Sunshine*, *True Grit*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Gran Torino*, *Atonement* and *Never Let Me Go*.

Texts that appeared more limited in terms of analysis and therefore the opportunity to achieve at all grades were: *The Help*, *Tomorrow When the War Began*, *Bend it Like Beckham*, *Billy Elliot* and *Shakespeare in Love*.

## **91100 Analyse significant aspects of unfamiliar written text(s) through close reading, supported by evidence**

### ACHIEVEMENT

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

- wrote in a straightforward way using simple topic sentences
- had a more formulaic approach
- discussed a character's point of view
- referred to text purpose but did not say discuss this
- lacked depth and detail in their explanations
- addressed the specific question in the paper
- mentioned but did not fully explore techniques
- answered at a surface/literal level
- understood parts of the text
- used the support offered in the booklet like a checklist.

### 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:**

- wrote an answer that was not fully connected with the text
- summarised plot of the text instead of answering the question

- identified techniques but did not explain the effect, just gave the definition
- responded too generally or too briefly
- repeated words or phrases from the text without explaining meaning.

## **ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT**

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

- identified techniques and were able to unpack their meaning and effect
- often went beyond the text
- made connections and showed development by using more than one example
- used the bullet points in the scaffolding of the question to guide their own answers
- starting to move away from the generic response
- showed some insight into the purpose of the text, going past the obvious
- built upon their ideas so that each new point could be seen to relate to the previous point
- moved beyond basic techniques such as similes and metaphors – understood irony, for example
- had sufficient reading skills to derive word meanings even when words may have been unfamiliar.

## **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:**

- showed flair and fluency in writing
- used a wide, interesting vocabulary
- indicated a real engagement with the text
- moved beyond the text while still remaining connected to it
- showed awareness of the writer's intentional use of crafting
- understood nuances of the text and uncovered deeper meaning
- wrote with authority and perception
- presented unique and unusual interpretations
- recognised and analysed the piece in the context of its genre.

## **OTHER COMMENTS**

In general, candidates found this paper very accessible and there was a high level of engagement with it. Candidates who achieved at all grades constructed understandings of the texts and integrated their awareness of language meanings and structures into the development of well-constructed responses.

Candidates used the additional information provided in the scaffolding suggestions, glossary and text introductions to guide them in their responses. Those who did not complete three responses were disadvantaged; in Grade Score Marking, all responses can generate contributing marks.

Candidates generally did better when their responses were based on the ideas of the texts and then supported by technical and crafting analysis, rather than beginning with the

techniques and fitting their analysis of the content around them. Those who bulleted techniques without linking them to text meaning or purpose did not achieve well, whereas those who wrote structured paragraphs and provided more integrated paragraphs were better situated to provide convincing and perceptive responses.