

National Certificate of Educational Achievement

2012 Assessment Report

History Level 2

- 91231 Examine sources of an historical event that is of significance to New Zealanders**
- 91233 Examine causes and consequences of a significant historical event**
- 91234 Examine how a significant historical event affected New Zealand society**

COMMENTARY

This was the first year for examinations to assess the new Achievement Standards. The nature of the examination reflected earlier exemplars, online and produced by the New Zealand History Teachers' Association. Certainly, the essay tasks were straight-forward, and well-prepared candidates achieved accordingly.

Candidates for Achievement Standards 91233 and 91234 are encouraged to describe the respective event. By describing the event – for example, dates, statistics, agreements and organisations or key people – the candidate establishes the context for their essay, or discussion. The description of the event, highlighted in the introduction, could occur in the first paragraph or as a bridging paragraph, for example between discussion around causes and consequences.

Comprehensively examining, required for Excellence in Achievement Standards 91233 and 91234, involves providing an insightful explanation. Insightful understanding at this level should reflect a high level of comprehension between causes and consequences and / or significance, offer a clear, supported, and specific explanation, and expound the respective links in their discussion with clarity and comprehension. Further, the Excellence candidate may make valid reference to historiography, and differentiate between – and evaluate the relative importance of – long and short-term causes and consequences.

Both Achievement Standards 91233 and 91234 require candidates, as per the Assessment Specifications, to write their response in a conventional essay format. Consideration is warranted around ensuring candidates understand, and rehearse, this skill. For example, some candidates wrote excessive introductions. Often this proved problematic, whereby the candidate did not have the time to fully expand their ideas or arguments in the body of the essay.

STANDARD REPORTS

91231 Examine sources of an historical event that is of significance to New Zealanders

ACHIEVEMENT

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

- wrote short responses, reflecting an understanding of the sources provided
- identified and explained two different historical concepts in reference to two separate sources
- provided at least one piece of relevant supporting evidence.

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:

- wrote very brief responses
- reflected limited application of the historical skills, for example, extracting meaning

- showed little comprehension of the historical concepts, for example, perspectives, reliability and continuity and change
- did not select or provide relevant supporting evidence.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

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

- wrote detailed responses for at least two of the historical concepts
- provided in-depth explanation of concepts, alongside supporting evidence
- drew relevant conclusions from the sources
- wrote balanced and convincing responses
- provided at least two pieces of relevant supporting evidence.

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:

- wrote substantial and insightful responses that were focused on the source material provided
- wrote with clarity and cogency
- demonstrated a strong understanding of the historical concepts, whereby they were addressed in comprehensive detail
- looked beyond the immediately obvious, reflecting an ability to consider the significance and meaning of evidence and/or sources
- made insightful and perceptive connections between the source material
- raised insightful questions, and conclusions, from the source material
- used a wide range of evidence from different sources to support their answer.

OTHER COMMENTS

Candidates were required to write brief notes in Part A and a report in Part B. If the historical concept, skill or evidence was not reflected in the candidate's response in Part B, then reference was made to their notes in Part A. Thus, final grades were awarded following consideration of the entire paper.

91233 Examine causes and consequences of a significant historical event

ACHIEVEMENT

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

- identified/defined the significant historical event related to their essay, affording some details connected to the historical context
- explained, and thus gave reasons for, at least two causes of a significant historical event. The links between the causes and the event was explained
- explained, and thus gave reasons for, at least two consequences of a significant historical event. The links between the event and the consequences was explained
- provided evidence in support of the causes and the consequences of the event

- wrote in an essay structure, including an introduction, ordering the main body paragraphs in a logical manner, and a concluding statement
- explained causes and consequences generally rather than specifically. For example, some candidates who explained that the partition of Vietnam in 1954 was a consequence of the battle of Dien Bien Phu, offered only a brief and general explanation of why the partition took place
- tried to cover too many causes and consequences, thereafter not offering sufficient detailed explanation to be awarded Merit.

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 a significant historical event upon which to base the essay
- did not identify, or clearly define, the significant historical event upon which the essay appeared to relate to
- had a poor understanding of the background and the context of the event
- selected events where the causes or consequences were limited in scope, or were too broad
- did not complete one of the two parts to the essay task
- did not provide evidence to support one of the two parts to the essay task
- described causes but did not explain, or link, these to an event. For example, some candidates - who had nominated Hitler's rise to power as the event – described the Treaty of Versailles at length but did not explain how or why Hitler was able to exploit it for his own political gain. Similarly, some students – who had selected the March 1917 Russian Revolution as their event – described autocracy in Russia in detail but did not explain how or why it led to revolution
- described consequences but did not afford a link, explaining how or why they resulted from an event. For example, some candidates – who had chosen the Geneva Conference of 1954 as the event – described the Diem regime in the Republic of Vietnam in detail but did not explain why it resulted from the Geneva Conference
- made major historical errors that detracted from the validity of the essay
- used hyperbole in their explanations and evidence
- did not write in an essay structure.

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 in detail at least two causes of a significant historical event. A clear and reasoned explanation of the links between the causes and the event was made
- explained in detail at least two consequences of a significant historical event. A clear and reasoned explanation of the links between the events and the consequences was made
- provided detailed evidence in support of the causes of the event
- provided detailed evidence in support of the consequences of the event.

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:

- explained insightfully, or comprehensively, at least two causes of a significant historical event. A thorough explanation of the links between the causes and the event was made. For example, Excellence candidates comprehensively explained why the Kornilov affair in 1917 increased the support and power of the Bolshevik Party in Russia which, in turn, led to the October Revolution of 1917
- explained insightfully, or comprehensively, at least two consequences of a significant historical event. A thorough explanation of the links between the events and the consequences was made. For example, an Excellence candidate comprehensively explained why and how the Nazi ideology of 'Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer' had a significant impact on German society after the Nazis came to power in 1933
- offered clear and specific explanations, well supported by valid and detailed evidence
- explained the links between the causes / consequences and the event with clarity and thoroughness
- included crucial, or fundamental, factors to an understanding of the causes and consequences of the respective event
- wrote with clarity, organisation and cogency, offering a compelling discussion.

OTHER COMMENTS

Candidates and teachers must give consideration to appropriate events for Achievement Standard 91233. The significant historical event should not be too broad in scope, or cumbersome. Similarly, the event should not be too narrow. For example, the Boston Tea Party which formed part of the American War of Independence is problematic. Certainly, the latter is the preferred choice. Further, the event must be described in the essay, affording context for discussion related to causes and consequences. Popular topics, or events, included the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917, the wars in Indo-China, 1945 through 1972, the rise of Hitler and the Nazi Party, the American War of Independence and Indian Independence. It was pleasing to come across topics that had not appeared under the previous external standards, including the French Revolution and the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943. Finally, consideration must be given to ensuring candidates explain the link between the event and the related causes and consequences.

91234 Examine how a significant historical event affected New Zealand society

ACHIEVEMENT

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

- examined an historical event that affected New Zealand or New Zealanders
- explained their chosen event in political and/or economic and/or social context(s), but usually not overtly
- gave basic coverage of the two parts of the essay task
- provided supporting evidence with appropriate accuracy
- did not answer both parts with the same detail.

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 a significant historical event upon which to base the essay
- did not identify, or clearly define, the significant historical event upon which the essay appeared to relate to
- had a poor understanding of the context of the event
- selected events where the course or consequences were limited in scope
- did not complete one of the two parts to the essay task
- did not provide evidence to support one of the two parts to the essay task, in particular in relation to the effect on New Zealand and/or New Zealanders
- made major historical errors that detracted from the validity of the essay.

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 in detail one or more feature - for example, political, economic, social or military - in either or both parts of their discussion
- provided detailed, accurate and relevant evidence
- presented their discussion of the course of the event in a chronological manner
- provided detailed coverage of both parts of the question.

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:

- provided comprehensive examination, or coverage, of both parts of the essay task, through a range of ways
- offered clear and specific explanations and evaluations, well-supported by valid and detailed evidence
- demonstrated insight by explaining their event and its effects in a wider context
- provided overt reference to long and/or short term effects
- wrote with clarity, organisation and cogency, offering a compelling discussion.

OTHER COMMENTS

Candidates produced a range of responses to meet the qualitative criteria of the Achievement Standard 91234. Selection of an appropriate event, or context, is critical. The event should enable a clear and convincing discussion, including relevant evidence, around the significance to New Zealand and/or New Zealanders