

National Certificate of Educational Achievement

2012 Assessment Report

History Level 3

- 90656 Analyse and evaluate evidence in historical sources**
- 90657 Examine a significant decision made by people in history, in an essay**
- 90658 Examine a significant historical situation in the context of change**

COMMENTARY

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

STANDARD REPORTS

90656 Analyse and evaluate evidence in historical sources

ACHIEVEMENT

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

- demonstrated an understanding of the source's context and relationship to the question
- identified the historical relationships of cause and effect, and past and present, and were aware they needed to address both aspects of the relationship
- demonstrated an ability to make basic judgments about usefulness and reliability of source material rather than just making generalised comments
- used the language of the question to guide their response
- analysed the source at a basic level, even if they were not able to put the source into an historical context or demonstrate informed knowledge.

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:

- described the source or provided extensive quotation without referring to the question
- did not use information from the resource to support their ideas eg made generalisations, but did not refer to the resource in any meaningful way or give any contextual information about the resource
- did not address both parts of the historical relationship questions
- provided generalised, prepared responses without reference to specific evidence from the resources themselves
- did not answer a question from one of the three sections of the paper (a-b, c-d, e-f).

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 in a structured, reasoned, and analytical manner, providing a generalisation supported by evidence or examples
- demonstrated an understanding of the context by utilising their own knowledge to provide examples or to extend on ideas contained in the sources
- used key terms (such as cause and effect, change and continuity, usefulness and reliability etc.) to explain and analyse the sources in some depth
- provided sound judgement and reasoning about the usefulness and/or reliability of the source material
- provided (parts (e) and (f)) with specific supporting evidence
- demonstrated an understanding of historical skills and transferred that in their answers to specific questions.

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:

- structured their responses to ensure that they had covered what was asked, using examples from the resources and integrating their own wider knowledge
- provided lucid and perceptive answers that demonstrated greater depth of analysis /evaluation and explanation of context
- integrated their own knowledge effectively into their answer and displayed a detailed understanding of the wider historical context of the resource
- demonstrated sophisticated understanding of what the resource showed an historian, how an historian might use the resource, and what additional information an historian might need to find out
- made reference to the ideas and views of well-known historians supporting their argument, where appropriate.

OTHER COMMENTS

Some candidates were still seemingly unaware of the requirement of this standard to introduce their own knowledge into their responses. Too many candidates simply paraphrased the sources or offered extensive quotation with little or no contextualisation or demonstration of a wider understanding of the ideas and issues relevant to the sources and questions. Well prepared students who used the sources as a starting point for their response, rather than being limited by the content of the source performed best.

90657 Examine a significant decision made by people in history, in an essay

ACHIEVEMENT

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

- balanced their response across both question parts
- structured their essay to include an introduction, a series of linked paragraphs and a conclusion
- supported general ideas with some relevant examples/evidence
- wrote in a mainly narrative or descriptive style with some evidence of analysis or evaluation
- demonstrated a basic knowledge of the factors and consequences of the selected issues/events/decisions
- described in outline, key factors and consequences.

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 plan their essay to ensure that both parts of the question were covered
- did not structure the essay with an introduction and conclusion directed to the question, or with a series of linked paragraphs

- made generalised statements that did not relate to the specific question or had little supporting evidence
- wrote sections that were vague, irrelevant or highly repetitive
- lacked understanding of features, events, and personalities that could be used towards explaining the factors in the decision and its consequences
- used a prepared essay without adapting their knowledge to fit the question
- did not conform to the time parameters of the question.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

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

- made a sustained, well supported and logically developed argument using an essay format e.g. provided links between paragraphs, used topic sentences related to the essay question
- planned and provided a reasonably balanced coverage that linked to both parts of the question
- used detailed or comprehensive examples/evidence reflecting familiarity with a greater range of factors in the decision and its consequences
- explained and evaluated factors in the decision, and the consequences, though may have been stronger in one over the other.

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:

- were well organised, often with a very detailed planning page
- had a fluent and articulate writing style that accurately explained and evaluated both the factors in the decision and the consequences
- wrote a clear argument supported by a convincing amount and depth of detail that directly answered the question
- wrote answers that were perceptive and/or comprehensive in scope, many demonstrating evidence of wide reading and understanding of contemporary historical interpretation.

OTHER COMMENTS

The best candidates provided specific, well substantiated responses to what was asked, especially the evaluative section, and made excellent use of the planning page to help structure the response.

90658 Examine a significant historical situation in the context of change, in an essay

ACHIEVEMENT

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

- provided basic understanding of some concepts
- demonstrated some awareness of context in their answer

- addressed both questions within the essay
- wrote without a convincing understanding of the complexity of the topic
- wrote shorter paragraphs with few or no specific detailed examples in support
- some appeared to have a bland, generalised 'one-essay-fits-all' model which they regurgitated onto the paper, but were able to show an understanding of the topic and relate it to some aspects of the question.

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 write a plan
- failed to address one or other of the questions
- demonstrated no understanding of context
- dumped everything they thought they knew about a topic into the one essay
- lacked adequate preparation for the essay
- tried to write last year's essay and fit it into this year's question
- wrote too little to convincingly show an understanding of the demands of the question.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

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

- demonstrated awareness of some of the concepts relating to the topic
- revealed an awareness, and some understanding, of the essay's context
- addressed both questions within the essay relatively well, although often one was answered to a better degree than the other
- used some good, specific examples to support their writing.

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:

- demonstrated clear and comprehensive understanding of many concepts related to the topic
- revealed a thorough understanding of context, and made good use of it
- wrote a detailed essay – few Excellence students wrote less than seven pages
- planned well – almost all Excellence students had effective mind-maps or brainstormed lists on their planning page
- use appropriate and specific examples in a relevant context to advance their argument.

OTHER COMMENTS

There was a good deal of evidence of candidates responding with enthusiasm to the discipline of history. Responses were often very thoughtful, demonstrating an appreciation of the analysis of the past and one which had been developed over an extended period.