

# **National Certificate of Educational Achievement**

## **2014 Assessment Report**

### **English Level 3**

- 91472** Respond critically to specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s), supported by evidence.
- 91473** Respond critically to specified aspect(s) of studied visual or oral text(s), supported by evidence
- 91474** Respond critically to significant aspects of unfamiliar written texts through close reading, supported by evidence.

## STANDARD REPORTS

### **91472 Respond critically to 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:**

- demonstrated genuine engagement with the text
- referred to both parts of the question although the response could be unbalanced
- constructed a straightforward argument that was supported with evidence from the text(s)
- used writing conventions fairly accurately
- used the key words of the statement to formulate an argument
- attempted to relate the argument to some wider issues and contexts
- employed a recognisable sequence of paragraphs, leading to a conclusion
- demonstrated some development and discussion which sometimes had to be accumulated across the essay
- addressed the statement directly.

#### **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 commonly:**

- selected statements to respond to, which were inappropriate for their chosen text
- used a basic introduction, which focused mainly on plot and agreeing with the statement
- used a sequence of paragraphs, leading to a conclusion, which was mainly restating the introduction, only occasionally finishing with a validated personal response
- did not demonstrate any critical evaluation of the specific aspect(s) of written text(s)
- demonstrated problems with accuracy
- presented a prepared essay that did not address the statement
- showed a lack of understanding of, or engagement with, 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:**

- maintained the focus of their response to the chosen statement
- constructed a careful argument in a logical sequence
- showed an in-depth understanding of their text(s)
- had a well-developed ability to control and use language effectively
- presented opinions that were supported by evidence
- consistently and clearly developed their arguments
- attempted to relate the text to wider society (past or present)
- presented a clear, discernible essay structure

- integrated evidence into their argument
- wrote well-structured and accurate responses
- integrated relevant evidence effectively
- made judicious selection of statement which enabled them to write convincing responses
- wrote a balanced response which convincingly addressed both aspects of the statement
- referred to related texts in a way that was at least partially relevant to their discussion
- showed some skill in their use of language and vocabulary choices
- successfully related the argument to some wider issues and contexts
- included evaluative comments and judgements
- were responsive to the text and showed genuine engagement.

### **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:**

- integrated references appropriately into their responses
- showed evidence of independent thought
- made judicious reference to reputable and relevant literary criticism, and showed an understanding of critical theory which again enhanced their response
- viewed their chosen text(s) as a vehicle for societal or contextual analysis
- wrote with a fluent, engaging writing style
- maintained a singular focus on the chosen statement
- demonstrated a clear, logical and consistent paragraph and essay structure(s)
- gave a precise overview of the scope and focus of their argument in their introductory paragraphs
- showed an ability to think deeply about their statement and develop considered arguments in response to the statement
- showed insight and perception relating to the specific aspects under discussion
- wrote controlled and perceptive responses, which integrated evidence fluently
- wrote a fluent, integrated and persuasive argument
- showed flair and precision in their use of language and used a sophisticated vocabulary.

### **OTHER COMMENTS**

The most successful essays showed that the candidate thought clearly about the statement. The candidates were able to critically analyse and evaluate the language and concepts they encountered in texts. They were able to appreciate how meaning was shaped. Candidates are encouraged to fully engage with the terms (and indeed both parts) of the question attempted. Challenging the terms of the statement, perhaps disagreeing with some part or the entire premise outlined, is an acceptable way in which to approach an answer. Candidates who did not engage with all parts of the statement were unable to write an essay at the level of Excellence.

When candidates write beyond the text, any point of view expressed should be well grounded in the relevant text(s) and supported by reference to those texts. A number of strong writers focused too much on current affairs or issues of our time and neglected to locate the importance or examples of such issues or views within the text itself.

The most commonly used texts in 2014 were Shakespeare ("Othello", "King Lear" and "Hamlet"); novels ("The Bell Jar", "The Handmaid's Tale", "The Book Thief" and "Catcher in the Rye").

Popular classics that were used and usually written on with strength included Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein", Austen's "Pride and Prejudice", Huxley's "Brave New World", Arthur Miller's "The Crucible", Tennessee William's "A Streetcar named Desire" Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby".

Interesting or new texts that were used were, Kevin Power's "The Yellow Birds", Tim O'Brien's "The Things They Carried", Martin Amis' "Yellow Dogs", "A Clockwork Orange", Sarah Quigley's "The Conductor" and Cormac McCarthy's "The Road".

Popular short texts included: short stories by Katherine Mansfield, Owen Marshall, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Edgar Allan Poe; poetry: James K Baxter, T S Eliot, Sylvia Plath, Emily Dickinson, Wilfred Owen, Carol Ann Duffy, Hone Tuwhare and Robert Frost.

Some candidates were anxious to show off the knowledge they had acquired from Internal Standards, 91478 and 91479. Areas discussed were: feminism, future dystopia, technology, war (World War 1 remains popular, as is the Vietnam War and Afghanistan), cultural difference, racism, New Zealand identity, personal identity, teenage angst, the Holocaust, violence, conformity and mental illness. The use of two texts allowed the 'compare and contrast' approach, which often gave candidates more possibilities.

### **91473 Respond critically to 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:**

- responded critically to their chosen text, showing an acceptable level of understanding of it together with focus on the statement
- showed some knowledge of film techniques and/or used quotes in their discussion
- used key words from the statement in their essay
- demonstrated engagement with and knowledge of the text
- used key words from the statement to focus their answer and make connections
- constructed a reasonable argument in response to the statement
- used evidence from the text constructively
- structured essays logically
- showed an awareness of the creator's purpose.

## **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 commonly:**

- did not engage with the key words of the statement
- made an attempt to address the statement made but did not provide enough evidence that was relevant to the statement
- provided a prepared essay that focussed on a broad theme or character statement rather than the one of the statements provided.
- focused on plot or a basic step-by-step character recount
- wrote a pre-prepared essay, addressing none of the statements provided.
- made broad generalisations which lacked sufficient depth
- did not follow the conventions of a literary essay in terms of structure or expression
- wrote at insufficient length.

## **ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT**

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

- used a variety of visual aspects in their response
- showed an understanding of the directors' purpose
- went beyond the text to provide evidence for their critical opinion
- demonstrated a sound understanding of the text and could apply that knowledge to the statement
- set up a convincing argument in their introduction
- confidently referred to the statement throughout the response

## **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:**

- employed a good vocabulary
- set up an insightful argument in their introduction
- showed a sound awareness of the societal context for the text.
- responded to their chosen text with a high level of perception and insight.
- displayed extensive knowledge of the aspects of visual and/or oral texts and were often able to include insights from beyond the text
- took an unusual position at times or offered a fresh perspective
- backed up their unusual position with evidence and a clear sense of the directors' purpose
- expressed themselves fluently.

## **OTHER COMMENTS**

Many candidates were clearly using the skills and information learnt from Achievement Standard 91479 and most of the time this enhanced the argument although at times they just added in critics' opinions or philosophical or psychological analysis without clearly linking it to the statement and at the expense of developing an argument. By far the most popular choice of text for 2014 was *American Beauty*.

Many candidates wrote on R18 films and it is illegal to show these films to our students under 18.

## **91474 Respond critically to significant aspects of unfamiliar written texts through close reading, supported by evidence**

### **ACHIEVEMENT**

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

- understood each text in terms of its literal meaning
- attempted a discussion of the textual content in their answers
- used correct terminology most of the time
- often presented good examples but stopped short of sufficient explanations or judgements
- used a visible structure in their responses
- did not comment on the metaphorical or symbolic meaning in each text.

### **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 commonly:**

- did not understand the content of one or both text(s)
- used incorrect terminology when discussing aspects of the texts
- wrote responses that were assessed as too superficial for Level 8 of the curriculum
- did not provide sufficient accurate evidence in their response
- offered little in the way of explanations or judgements
- did not understand the meaning of key words "mood", "attitude", "ownership".

### **ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT**

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

- offered a consistent critical response to the questions
- used terminology correctly
- offered very clear, in-depth responses that were highly structured
- was aware of the writer's positioning in the text, to society
- presented very clear explanations and occasionally solid perceptions and/or judgements
- used a range of evidence that was logical and integrated.

## **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:**

- presented their position to the textual content and writer's concerns
- embedded their evidence into their responses
- linked the texts to wider society
- presented in effect an hypothesis and sought to prove it
- judged, critiqued the effectiveness of the specific aspects of the writers' craft.

## **OTHER COMMENTS**

For 91474, 2014 saw the full range of responses from highly exceptional and judicious to efforts that failed to acknowledge the content and multiple contexts of the two texts presented in the assessment.

For the candidates who achieved Merit or Excellence overall, it was obvious that these candidates did not only understand the meaning of "attitude", "ownership" and "mood", they also understood the importance of each of these words in context and therefore discussed such words accordingly.

Achieved candidates tended to present answers that were predominantly literal but sufficiently evidenced and explained.

Not Achieved responses often failed to address the statement or texts at hand nor did they identify the correct technique or give appropriate examples. Not Achieved responses tended to offer little in the way of effective explanation or commentary.

It should be noted that that the manner of response (i.e. paragraph or notes) was not a factor in the marking or in terms of clarity. Care, however, must be taken with the excessive length of some responses that were repetitive in nature and remained superficial in terms of discussion and judgements. Regardless of the response format in use, high performing candidates used accurate terminology and analysed the literal and the symbolic.