

2022 NCEA Assessment Report



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Subject: English

Level: 2

Standards: 91098, 91099, 91100

Part A: Commentary

In all three standards, candidates who directly engaged with the questions were rewarded. Candidates' responses were generally focused and precise, and the best responses showed insightful or original thinking. Candidates will benefit from further teaching and learning about how to develop a concise response that shows a discriminating understanding of the aspects of English. The quality of the analysis is more important than the length of the response.

Part B: Report on standards

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

Examination

The essay questions are developed from the four aspects stated in the curriculum: purpose and audience, ideas, language features, and structure. Candidates can expect essay questions to be specific rather than general. This is because the essay questions are carefully designed to assess a response against the achievement standard, the title of which is "Analyse *specified* aspects ...". Candidates who only prepare to answer on a single aspect are likely to be disadvantaged. Some candidates seemed to have a weak understanding of key terms used in questions (e.g. "structure" and "loyalty"). Further understanding about question selection will benefit candidates.

Observations

Selected texts need to be appropriate to curriculum Level 7 to enable candidates to develop responses at an Excellence level; some texts tended to allow them to reach only an Achievement grade.

Popular and successful texts included Shakespeare plays, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Harper Lee), *Lord of the Flies* (William Golding), *The Things They Carried* (Tim O'Brien), *Jasper Jones* (Craig Silvey), and short texts by Carol Ann Duffy, Karlo Maya, and Witi Ihimaera.

Some texts appeared to have limited application or relevance to candidates' experiences, notably *A Streetcar named Desire* (Tennessee Williams), *An Inspector Calls* (J.B. Priestley), and *A View from the Bridge* (Arthur Miller).

Some candidates showed limited responses to the following texts: *Noughts and Crosses* (Malorie Blackman), *Goodnight Mr Tom* (Michelle Magorian), *A Christmas Carol* (Charles Dickens), *The BFG* (Roald Dahl), *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (John Boyne), *Of Mice*

and Men (John Steinbeck), *Ka Kite Bro* (Willie Davis), *THUG* (Angie Thomas), and song lyrics.

Candidates will benefit from further exploration of essay form and the need to give sufficient attention to important elements of a structured response. Essays with one-sentence introductions were not successful. Candidates must be able to construct a structured essay independently in response to unknown questions.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- used a standard response format, demonstrating an understanding of the key words of the question
- showed an understanding of the text by incorporating appropriate evidence
- gave an unbalanced focus of the first part of the question with only brief reference to the second part
- wrote enough to demonstrate understanding of the key aspects chosen
- showed basic engagement with the text and question
- provided simplistic and straightforward analysis to meet the requirements of the achievement standard
- showed awareness of the author's purpose
- selected a question that was suited to their studied text.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- wrote plot-driven essays
- did not understand or address the question requirements
- wrote on one part of the question only
- did not develop ideas sufficiently
- produced an essay that was muddled in structure
- showed minimal or no awareness of author's purpose or crafting
- made superficial links to the wider world (for example, comparing the fatigue of soldiers in the First World War to being tired in class)
- used a pre-prepared essay
- wrote on texts that did not allow them to develop ideas or analyse the text.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- selected a question appropriate for their chosen text(s)
- produced answers that were well organised, sticking to the topic and making points or drawing conclusions based on discussions

- showed a sense of personal engagement with text beyond the plot and were able to consider the author’s purpose in a broader sense
- used convincing details through an interpretation of writers’ language choice(s) and made authentic links to issues in contemporary society
- addressed all parts of the question in a reasoned and cohesive manner
- constructed an argument throughout their essay, building on ideas previously discussed.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- displayed a high level of literacy and mature thinking skills that were relevant to the question
- exercised confident control of essay writing conventions to complement the development of ideas
- showed a clear appreciation of author’s purpose and choice of language features
- understood and could describe lucidly how the reader was ‘manipulated’ to feel or related to an idea
- linked language features precisely to the author’s purpose and analysed evidence thoroughly
- used a wide range of evidence to support ideas in a fluent manner
- interpreted the question in an abstract way
- kept the focus on the question and thesis points
- expressed original ideas that were thought provoking and interesting
- demonstrated an insightful understanding of human nature.

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

Examination

The essay questions are developed from the four aspects stated in the curriculum: purpose and audience, ideas, language features, and structure. Candidates can expect essay questions to be specific rather than general. This is because the essay questions are carefully designed to assess a response against the achievement standard, the title of which is “Analyse *specified* aspects ...”. Candidates who only prepare to answer on a single aspect are likely to be disadvantaged. Some candidates seemed to have a weak understanding of key terms used in questions (e.g. “structure,” “contrast,” “setting” and “shocking”). Ongoing teaching and learning about question selection will benefit candidates.

Observations

Selected texts need to be appropriate to curriculum Level 7 to enable candidates to develop responses at an Excellence level. Candidates need to be familiar with a wide range of analysis-related terminology and its meaning. Candidates must be able to independently construct a structured essay in response to unknown questions.

While 'beyond-the-text' comments are encouraged, a response should primarily focus on addressing the question, and discussion of wider contexts should be relevant and framed by the question.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- understood broadly what the question required
- demonstrated some detailed knowledge of their text
- answered both parts of the question to some degree
- understood generally which question suited their text
- included a range of detail and techniques
- described in detail, rather than analysing
- did not always have the focus that the question required (for example, discussing multiple events when the question asked for one key event).

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not understand their selected question
- wrote on self-selected texts rather than texts that had been studied
- addressed only one part of the question
- provided a plot summary
- provided an unstructured response
- were unable to communicate the ideas outlined in the text clearly.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- demonstrated a deeper understanding of techniques used and the effects these created
- demonstrated some understanding of how the ideas in the text related to themselves or the world they live in
- responded to the question by convincingly analysing the deliberate use of a range of techniques
- wrote a coherent, focused response that fully addressed the question.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- wrote with a distinctive sense of style

- demonstrated sophisticated vocabulary knowledge and use
- demonstrated in-depth understanding of text themes and techniques
- made relevant, perceptive links and connections beyond the text
- showed that they fully understood both the question and the text by skilfully integrating examples and techniques
- examples were judiciously selected and well-integrated into the response.

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

Examination

All three questions began “Analyse how...”, inviting candidates to examine the writing tools used to create the text, and to link them to ideas, purpose, and effects. It is important that candidates relate their discussion directly to the question posed in the examination, and that they focus their discussion on the techniques employed by the writer. The number of techniques mentioned in an answer is less important than the quality of discussion of each technique; answers benefit from discussion of fewer techniques and more analysis of how they work in the context of the text and in relation to the question. Candidates are not required to write an essay. Lengthy introductions including the title of the text and the author’s name are not necessary.

Observations

Candidates should be strongly encouraged to attempt all three questions. Some candidates received Merit or Excellence grade scores on individual questions but didn’t answer a second or third question. This resulted in an overall score that did not appear to reflect the potential ability of the candidate.

Careful selection of examples, analysis of them, and explanation of how they linked the answer to the question made for cohesive answers. Ongoing teaching and learning about language features will benefit candidates. Markers noted that a significant number of candidates confused parts of speech, particularly adjectives and adverbs; and first, second and third person pronouns.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- addressed the question clearly, used quotations from the texts and explained their idea in clear and simple words
- identified a language feature and linked it to the author’s purpose
- unpacked the main idea simply
- attempted to explain the writer’s purpose
- added a personal response

- went beyond the text to the real world (for example, making generalisations, relating to a personal context, or making a judgement about the author's stance)
- started to focus on the effects of the language features
- were formulaic in their approach
- provided some analysis which did address the question.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not address the question
- paraphrased the text
- did not back up their response with detail
- included quotations but with little or no analysis
- did not show understanding of the ideas in the text
- used excessively long quotations with no analysis
- used generalisations such as “positive”, “negative”, “feeling” and “emotion” with no exploration
- did not answer all three questions
- got the general idea of the text but supplied no supporting detail, or identified a technique or two without making links to idea(s).

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- made specific comments to answer the question rather than just reusing the words of the question to signal their answer
- clarified their answer in a direct way
- understood and analysed the examples from the text well to unpack the evidence
- showed a solid understanding of and engagement with the text
- wrote well-structured, articulate responses answering the question in depth, showing a very good understanding of the author's purpose
- used several features and linked examples
- went beyond the text to the real world, where relevant
- were aware of context: the readers, and / or the audience
- did not repeat or paraphrase material
- understood the purpose of the texts in relation to the question
- identified and understood techniques and effect they had – how they related to the main idea
- demonstrated some insight.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- developed an idea throughout their response in a sophisticated way

- demonstrated original ideas and perspectives on the text and related these back to the question
- showed maturity of insight in response to the text, the author's purpose, and technical aspects of writing
- were forthright in discussing ideas, often linking these to specific and relevant events in the real world
- showed awareness of different perspectives
- evaluated techniques by comparing, contrasting, or combining language features
- demonstrated perception and insight
- had a wide range of imagery, structures, language features, and sentence types in their kete.