

# 2022 NCEA Assessment Report



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

**Subject:** English

**Level:** 3

**Standards:** 91472, 91473, 91474

## Part A: Commentary

In general, candidates produced responses that demonstrated engagement with the texts chosen or provided. Many candidates provided evidence of understanding how texts work and the ways authors employ structure and technique. As in previous years, candidates who focused on responding to the statements and questions set were easier to reward than those who uncritically recalled previous work or personal experiences. Similarly, those who structured their thinking and answers around recognised aspects of texts, such as setting, character and language, gained more than those who relied on plot to structure their responses. Unfocussed writing often led to overlong, repetitive responses, which as a consequence provided little evidence of insight or perception. For 91472 and 91473, some candidates selected statements that were appropriate and helpful, while others chose unwisely, limiting the application of their knowledge and understanding as a result.

To summarise across all three standards, the most successful candidates appeared to have generally organised their time and effort well, planned, paid attention to the requirements of the task as well as ‘big ideas’, and made sure to include relevant detailed examples.

## Part B: Report on standards

### **91472: Respond critically to specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s), supported by evidence**

#### **Examination**

The examination included eight statements from which candidates were required to select one in order to make a critical response to a studied text. The statements addressed a range of “aspects” as specified in the *New Zealand Curriculum*, such as language, purpose, structure, and ideas.

The assessment specification sets out the expectation that a critical response will take the form of an argument, communicated clearly and coherently through a structured written answer that follows the conventions of an essay format. Evidence should be in the form of relevant detail which may include quotation. Each statement provides candidates with opportunities for evaluation by accounting for how and why a text is valuable in educative, meaningful, or other terms.

## Observations

The overall quality of the responses for this paper was high this year with many candidates writing substantial, detailed, and engaged responses. As in previous years, candidates who offered a prepared answer ill-matched to their chosen statement were hard to reward, as were some candidates who elected to write about a song lyric or overly short / simple poem.

Many candidates seem highly engaged with their chosen texts which included good numbers of New Zealand and Pasifika texts. However, the most common texts include *The Handmaid's Tale* (Margaret Atwood), *The Great Gatsby* (F. Scott Fitzgerald), *1984* (George Orwell), *The Things They Carried* (Tim O'Brien), and *Othello* (Shakespeare). Short texts by Mansfield, Bradbury, Atwood, and Carol Ann Duffy also featured, as did contemporary poetry from Aotearoa New Zealand.

Some candidates attempted to use material from research for this examination. The key to success when this approach was used was in selecting material relevant to the chosen statement rather than wholesale regurgitation. The strongest candidates challenged or defended relevant material.

## Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- addressed their chosen statement through a simple or straightforward argument
- showed some engagement with their chosen text
- provided evidence in the form of quotes and / or appropriate specific textual details
- used a relevant essay structure to support the development of their ideas
- discussed the significance of the aspect specified in their chosen statement.

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

- did not develop an argument
- provided plot summary with little evidence of critical response
- failed to engage with all aspects of their chosen statement
- offered a prepared essay that did not coincide well with their chosen statement
- provided a noticeably short answer or wrote about a simplistic text.

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

- selected a statement that was appropriate for their chosen text
- engaged with both their chosen statement and their chosen text
- developed a clear, fluent argument that addressed their chosen statement
- used a range of convincing details to explore one or more relevant aspects of their chosen text
- critically analysed their chosen text, showing appreciation of the author's craft.

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

- used their chosen statement to tightly focus their response
- matched deep textual understanding with perceptive appreciation of their chosen statement
- provided depth of discussion with concision by avoiding the use of multiple pieces of similar evidence
- reflected on the human condition in general as well as on personal examples
- integrated critical lenses into discussion with sophistication, control, and flair.

**91473: Respond critically to specified aspect(s) of studied visual or oral text(s), supported by evidence**

### **Examination**

The examination included eight statements from which candidates were required to select one in order to make a critical response to a studied text. The statements addressed a range of the “aspects” specified in the *New Zealand Curriculum*, including purpose, structure, ideas, and language. The assessment specification gives examples of language features such as cinematography, mise-en-scène, editing, production design, sound, performance, and rhetorical devices, indicating the kinds of foci expected.

The assessment specification sets out the expectation that a critical response will take the form of an argument, communicated clearly and coherently through a structured written answer that follows the conventions of an essay format. Evidence may include quotation or details such as the techniques used to construct specific visual elements of texts. Each statement provides candidates with opportunities for evaluation by accounting for how and why a text is valuable in educative, meaningful, or other terms.

### **Observations**

Candidates generally chose texts that enabled worthwhile arguments. However, some simpler texts were chosen that led to limited responses. Candidates who directly addressed their chosen statement achieved well compared with those whose responses were plot-focussed or where the chosen statement was not central. Candidates benefited by acknowledging of the visual and oral focus of the standard through reference to appropriate visual and / or verbal aspects, such as technical elements and, where appropriate, directorial focus. Clarity about the meaning of terms such as “setting” and “scene” was also helpful to candidates.

### **Grade awarding**

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- demonstrated sound, surface level knowledge of their chosen text
- addressed some aspects of their chosen statement in their response
- framed their response as a formulaic essay

- made tangential links between their argument and the wider world
- provided responses that were limited in scope and development.

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

- did not respond to their chosen statement
- provided limited indication of engagement with their chosen text
- used little relevant evidence to support any claims made
- disagreed with their chosen statement but did not create a valid alternative argument
- selected a statement ill-suited to their text and / or offered a prepared essay.

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

- selected a relevant statement that allowed for exploration of their chosen text
- responded to their chosen statement with clarity and momentum
- used an essay structure in which paragraphs were framed around relevant ideas
- explored their ideas in some depth, at times linking ideas together
- selected evidence judiciously to support a relevant argument.

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

- constructed an argument based on a full appreciation of their chosen statement
- wrote a response that was highly original and benefitted from enjoyment and curiosity
- analysed a relevant range of elements of their chosen text in close detail
- demonstrated a strong appreciation of the cinematic qualities of their text
- provided evidence of mature, sophisticated insight using appropriate wide connections.

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

### **Examination**

The examination included two unfamiliar texts and three questions: one for each text and one requiring a comparison of both. The assessment involves candidates applying a knowledge of “aspects” as specified in the *New Zealand Curriculum* and the Achievement Standard to an analysis of how these are used in the texts. Candidates who did not refer to appropriate aspects, despite showing good understanding of the text, were disadvantaged.

### **Observations**

In general, candidates attempted to write more compared to previous years, and there appeared to be concerted attempts at answering the three questions. However, some candidates were unsuccessful in developing comparison and contrast for Question Three.

Many candidates offered a personal voice and a level of engagement indicating authentic close reading. This was most valuable when supported by detailed reference to techniques and crafting within a text, particularly the prose. The paper assesses candidates' understanding of the crafting and meaning of the given texts, and consequently, candidates were advantaged when they tied discussion of real-world events and experiences to these texts.

## **Grade awarding**

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- attempted all three questions, identifying and exemplifying aspects accurately
- offered a relevant but unbalanced or limited explanation that addressed the question
- incorporated keywords from the questions into their answers
- attempted to unpack relevant specified language features
- focused on sections of a text rather than the text as a whole.

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

- offered little relevant evidence or did not link evidence to a specified aspect of the texts
- summarised parts of the given texts without analysis
- provided little explicit linking between question and answer
- focused on their own experiences without tying these to the texts.

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

- identified two or more aspects of the text relevant to the question
- provided a valid, exemplified, and convincing discussion of these aspects
- analysed and evaluated how techniques were used to create impact
- made convincing links to the wider world, bringing discussion back to the texts
- employed a clear structure, tracing the development of ideas across the texts.

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

- wove the questions into their answers to create coherent and cohesive responses
- sustained an argument, accurately using a wide range of appropriate terminology
- explored the authors' viewpoints, insights, and purposes
- traced ideas throughout the text(s) explicitly, positioning the reader as a result.