

2023 NCEA Assessment Report

Subject:	English
Level:	Level 2
Achievement standard(s):	91098, 91099, 91100

General commentary

In all three standards, successful candidates' responses were focused and precise. The best responses showed insightful or original thinking, expressed concisely. Candidates clearly benefitted from having been taught how to develop a concise response that shows a discriminating understanding of the aspects of English, which is a requirement of *The New Zealand Curriculum* at this level.

As always, the quality of the analysis is more important than the length of the response. Lengthy responses were not always focused on the questions, and abundance of evidence is not the same thing as "perceptive" analysis.

Report on individual achievement standards

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

Assessment

Essay questions were developed from the four aspects stated in *The New Zealand Curriculum*: purpose and audience, ideas, language features, and structure. Reflecting the title of the standard "Analyse specified aspect(s)...", candidates can expect some essay questions to be specific rather than general.

Commentary

Previous years' assessment reports are worth consulting if teachers wish to seek advice on texts that candidates have used more and less successfully.

Candidates must make sure to select a question that is appropriate to their chosen text.

Candidates must be able to independently construct a structured essay in response to an unfamiliar question. Candidates benefitted from an understanding how to write an essay. This was often evident right from the introductory paragraph – essays with one-sentence introductions tended not to be successful.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- selected a question that was suited to their chosen text

- used a structured response format to demonstrate their understanding of the key words of the question
- showed an understanding of the text by incorporating appropriate evidence
- focused more on one part of the question, only briefly referring to the other part
- wrote sufficiently to demonstrate understanding of the key aspects of the question
- showed solid engagement with the text and question
- provided a straightforward analysis that met the requirements of the assessment
- showed awareness of the author's purpose.

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

- selected a question appropriate to their chosen text(s)
- produced answers that were well organised and focused
- showed a sense of personal engagement with text beyond the plot
- supported their analysis with 'convincing' details, offering interpretation of writers' language choices and, where relevant, making 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, with new ideas building on those previously discussed.

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

- interpreted the question in an abstract way
- used essay-writing conventions confidently to support the development of relevant ideas
- displayed both high-level literacy and mature thinking skills that were relevant to the question
- maintained a focus on the question and thesis points
- expressed original ideas that were interesting and thought-provoking
- used a wide range of evidence to support ideas in a fluent manner
- showed a clear appreciation of the author's purpose and choice of language features
- precisely linked examples of language features to the author's purpose and analysed this evidence thoroughly
- understood and could describe clearly how the reader was positioned to feel or relate to an idea.

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

- misinterpreted or did not address the question (possibly presenting a rote-learned essay)
- wrote a plot-driven essay
- responded to one part of the question without developing ideas sufficiently
- produced an essay that was muddled in structure
- showed minimal or no awareness of author's purpose or crafting
- made superficial and often irrelevant links to the wider world
- wrote on texts that did not have scope for them to develop ideas or analyse the text.

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

Assessment

Essay questions were developed from the four aspects stated in *The New Zealand Curriculum*: purpose and audience, ideas, language features, and structure. Reflecting the title of the standard “Analyse specified aspect(s)...”, candidates can expect some essay questions to be specific rather than general.

Commentary

To enable candidates to develop responses at an Excellence level, their selected texts must be appropriate to Curriculum Level 7, and they need to be familiar with a wide range of analysis-related terminology and its meaning.

Popular and successful texts included: *Parasite*, *Get Out*, *Suffragette*, *V for Vendetta*, *Persepolis* (graphic novel), *Gattaca*, *Nosedive*, *Cousins*, *Children of Men*, *Atonement*, *Hidden Figures*, *Ladybird*, *Into the Wild*, *The Swimmers*.

Texts that allowed some candidates to develop limited responses included: *Hunt for the Wilderpeople*, *Boy*, *Tama Tū*, *Slumdog Millionaire*, *Rabbit Proof Fence*, *Freedom Writers*, *The Blindsides*, *The Help*.

Candidates must make sure to select a question that is appropriate to their chosen text, and must be prepared to independently construct a structured essay in response to an unfamiliar question. Candidates who answer on only a single aspect are likely to be at a disadvantage. Some candidates appeared not to have a sufficient understanding of key terms (such as “structure,” “plot twist,” “setting” and “enriched”). More appropriate question selection would benefit some candidates.

Candidates will benefit from further exploration of essay structure and being reminded of the need to apply sufficient attention to all aspects of the question. Essays that only focused on one part of the question tended to be unsuccessful.

Discussion of other texts and wider context should be relevant and framed by the question. Many candidates made reference to other texts but got side-tracked with intertextuality and lost sight of the text they were meant to be analysing.

Candidates who focused on fewer techniques and offered more analysis of the purpose of their use in the text tended to better meet the demands of the question. A secure understanding of ‘setting’, ‘scene’, and ‘structure’ would have helped some candidates. In some cases, the personal response prompted by of the question (“just a bit of excitement”, “encourage you to care deeply”, “unlocking your appreciation”, and “your enjoyment”, etc.) was not evident.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- chose a question that suited their text
- provided broad evidence relevant to the requirements of the question
- answered both parts of the question to some degree, albeit in an unbalanced way
- demonstrated some detailed knowledge of the text

- referred to a range of detail and techniques
- described rather than analysed.

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

- referred to language features in detail, exploring how they were used to convey meaning
- demonstrated a deeper understanding of techniques used and the effects these created
- demonstrated, where relevant, some understanding of how the ideas in the text related to themselves or their world
- 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 distinct sense of style
- demonstrated sophisticated knowledge and use of vocabulary
- demonstrated in-depth understanding of text themes and techniques
- made relevant and perceptive links and connections beyond the text
- showed that they fully understood both the question and the text by skilfully integrating examples and techniques
- included examples that were judiciously selected and well-integrated into the response.

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

- did not demonstrate that they understood their selected question
- wrote a brief response with insufficient detail
- addressed only one part of the question
- provided a plot summary
- did not show evidence of having planned their response
- attempted to manipulate the question to fit an irrelevant, likely rote-learned, response
- showed insufficient command of writing skills to communicate clearly.

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

Assessment

All three questions began “Analyse how...”, inviting candidates to examine the techniques 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 author. 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 essays. Lengthy introductions including the title of the text and the author's name are not necessary and may inhibit candidates' performance.

Commentary

Candidates should attempt all three questions. Some candidates provided high-level evidence on single questions but didn't answer a second or third question, resulting in an overall score that did not appear to reflect their ability.

Careful selection of examples, analysis of them, and explanation of how they are linked to the question made for cohesive answers.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- presented a formulaic response, repeating the words of the question to frame their answer
- addressed the question clearly, using relevant quotations from the texts and explaining an idea in clear and simple words
- showed some evidence of having understood the text
- identified a language feature and linked it to the writer's purpose
- began to focus on the effects of the language features
- unpacked the main idea simply
- provided some analysis
- attempted to explain the author's purpose
- added a personal response
- related their answer to contexts outside the text, for instance by making generalisations, referring to a personal context, or making a judgement about the author's stance
- in Question One, only implied an understanding of the development of the relationship between Elliot and the narrator
- in Question Two, described the setting but proved little analysis of the techniques used
- in Question Three, focused on names without demonstrating a deeper understanding of identity (for example, by getting sidetracked into commenting on difficulties of pronunciation to the exclusion of other aspects of interpretation).

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

- reframed the question, rather than simply repeating it
- did not repeat material or paraphrase
- made a clear and direct response to the question
- showed a solid understanding of and engagement with the text
- showed understanding of the purpose of the texts in relation to the question
- wrote a well-structured, articulate response to answer the question in depth
- identified and showed understanding of techniques and their effect in relation to the main idea
- referred to several features, using and linking several examples of each
- unpacked the evidence provided in examples from the text, showing understanding

- showed a very good understanding of the author’s purpose, and awareness of the audience of the text
- made relevant comments on contexts beyond the text
- in Question One, clearly established the narrator’s initial reluctance to be friends with Elliot, identified the role of the parents, and linked each activity or language change to their growing friendship
- in Question Two, went beyond the physical descriptions of the landscape to make appropriate references to the past and the poet’s state of mind
- in Question Three, developed links to the idea of identity.

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 writer’s purpose, and technical aspects of writing
- discussed ideas in a forthright way, making links to specific and relevant aspects of the world outside the text
- showed awareness of different perspectives
- evaluated techniques by comparing, contrasting, or combining language features
- referred to relevant personal experiences where appropriate
- wrote fluently, using sophisticated and mature vocabulary and a wide range of imagery, structures, language features, and sentence types
- in Question One, showed a clear understanding of how or why the friendship started, the nature of a holiday friendship, and wider aspects of friendship and relationships
- in Question Two, showed understanding of emotional links to the landscape past and present, and made links to wider aspects of belief
- in Question Three, showed a clear understanding (beyond an explanation) of the role of identity and how it relates to names.

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

- did not address the question
- employed a ‘scattergun’ approach to the question, identifying many techniques and commenting very briefly on their effects
- paraphrased the text without providing analysis
- did not show understanding of the ideas in the text
- used quotations (sometimes excessively long ones), with little or no analysis
- used generalisations such as “positive”, “negative”, “feeling”, and “emotion”, without further exploration
- in Question Two, described what the writer liked about the bay and the landscape
- in Question Three, focused only on the rhetorical questions
- did not answer all three questions.