

2024 NCEA Assessment Report

Subject:	Drama
Level:	3
Achievement standard(s):	91514, 91518

General commentary

It was encouraging to observe that a significant number of candidates met the criteria for higher levels of achievement across both standards.

At Level 3, candidates are required to make connections between drama components such as the features of the form, use of conventions, techniques and technologies in performance, and their intended purpose and effect. Candidates need to be able to support their answers with well-documented evidence, drawing on examples and details from the text as it would have been typically performed or from the live theatre performance.

A confident use of drama terminology allows for more insightful explanations and vivid descriptions of the action on stage. The assessment specifications and explanatory notes in the standard are valuable resources for understanding the terms that may be addressed in the questions.

Report on individual achievement standard(s)

Achievement standard 91514: Interpret a text from a prescribed playwright to demonstrate knowledge of a theatre form or period

Assessment

The examination included three questions, each with two parts, and candidates were required to respond to all three. The questions covered the requirements of the 2024 Assessment Specifications, which stated that candidates needed to be familiar with features of the form, which may include performance space, acting style, themes and ideas, use of conventions and technologies, and the historical and social context of the theatre form or period.

The questions required the candidate to provide coherent and relevant examples from the text to make connections to the theatre form or period.

Commentary

Candidates were required to be familiar with the key features of the theatre form, including the performance space, acting style, use of conventions and technologies, and themes and ideas, as well as the historical and social context specific to the theatre form or period.

These features needed to be identified in a typical performance of the text within its original context, serving as an example of the specific form. It was essential to focus on performance aspects rather than merely conducting a textual analysis.

Texts that exemplified distinct theatre forms, grounded in strong social and historical contexts and defined by specific performance styles, such as Absurdism, Epic theatre, and Elizabethan theatre, provided valuable opportunities for candidates to demonstrate in-depth knowledge.

Realism was often used as a default for texts that lacked a clear form or acting style. However, this identification was frequently incorrect, leading to challenges when providing relevant supporting evidence.

When candidates addressed the diverse styles and eclectic mix of forms within New Zealand theatre, their responses showed greater insight. A clear understanding of the conventions of Māori and Pacific theatre further strengthened the quality of their answers.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- provided mostly accurate details about the theatre form and text
- relied on plot-based evidence, rather than specific examples or quotes directly related to the question
- offered limited detail on the social and/or historical context, often focusing more on the text than its context
- included material that was not relevant to the question.

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

- presented accurate evidence, regarding both the text and the theatre form
- included a variety of details to support their answers, including specific examples and quotes from the text
- demonstrated an understanding of the social and historical influences on the text and the playwright
- discussed the impact of these influences on the form with clarity, showing an understanding of their purpose and effect, supported by examples from the text and a typical performance
- offered a complete response to the question, though the evidence could have been more carefully selected and directly relevant to the question.

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

- offered insightful commentary on the text and form, going beyond the basic facts; for example, they considered how the purpose is reflected in production choices and their intended impact on the audience
- perceptively discussed the connections between the text and the context in which it was originally written and performed
- showed a broader understanding of other plays, playwrights, and/or events of the time, and were able to relate this knowledge to their text and the question
- used the bullet points effectively to support their answers and recognised when a suggested point was not relevant to their response
- provided carefully selected and detailed evidence in direct response to the question.

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

- used texts that were not on the prescribed playwright list
- did not use drama terminology accurately
- misread or misunderstood the questions being asked
- provided incorrect material in response to the questions
- offered very limited text-based evidence to support their understanding of the form or period

- appeared to have selected and studied the text independently
 - discussed their own performance work, which often differed significantly from the original context.
-

Achievement standard 91518: Demonstrate understanding of live drama performance

Assessment

The examination included three questions, each with two parts. Candidates were required to respond to all three. The questions covered the requirements of the 2024 Assessment Specifications, which were that candidates need to be familiar with the use of drama components, such as elements, techniques, conventions, and technologies. The questions required the candidate to make connections between the director's / designer's concept(s) and the performance seen.

Commentary

Candidates are required to have a thorough understanding of drama components, such as technologies, techniques, elements, and conventions, and be able to recognise their creative implications for both theatre and audiences.

The choice of production is crucial. Selected productions should clearly demonstrate the use of drama components and offer significant opportunities for analysing performances, characters, director's intentions, key messages, and audience impact. Successful candidates typically discussed works by established playwrights, reputable theatre companies in New Zealand, and those accompanied by educational resources.

Candidates who achieved higher grades generally analysed productions they had viewed, rather than those they had performed or self-devised. Viewing a production provides the objectivity necessary for more critical and comprehensive analysis.

When a sketch box is provided, candidates are encouraged to use it, as this allows them to visually demonstrate their understanding. This visual representation forms part of their evidence from the production, highlighting their comprehension and analytical skills in a different format.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- showed an understanding of the drama terminology
- wrote in limited detail
- demonstrated some understanding of the connection between drama components and the director's or designer's intention and the impact on the audience
- supported their answer with evidence from the live drama
- understood the need to move beyond description into explanation.

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

- provided detailed explanations of how drama components are used to communicate with the audience
- demonstrated a well-informed understanding through thorough connections between the drama components used in the live performance and the director's or designer's intentions
- supported their answers with descriptions of drama components, offering more than one instance of detailed and relevant evidence from the live performance to clarify their response
- used sketches and annotations to further support their answers.

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

- used drama vocabulary confidently and accurately
- discussed, with insight, how drama components were used to communicate with the audience
- demonstrated insightful connections between the drama components used in the live performance, the director's or designer's intentions, and the wider context
- supported answers with carefully selected evidence from the live performance.

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

- demonstrated limited knowledge of drama vocabulary
- identified a drama component, but provided minimal detail on how it was used
- described the use of drama components without offering explanation or evidence from the performance.