



The following report gives feedback to assist assessors with general issues and trends that have been identified during external moderation of the internally assessed standards in 2024. It also provides further insights from moderation material viewed throughout the year and outlines the Assessor Support available for English.

## Insights

### 91924: Demonstrate understanding of how context shapes language use

#### Performance overview:

This standard requires students to demonstrate their understanding of how context shapes language use. This involves describing a context and the typical characteristics of language used in that context, and then explaining or examining how context influences language use.

A wide range of contexts and supporting source material (a text) were selected by students. Appropriate source material included speeches, songs, podcasts, fiction, historical or non-fiction texts, and live texts such as sports commentaries and spoken word poems. Many responses demonstrated a high level of engagement from students, particularly in cohorts where it appeared the texts had been student selected.

Successful responses typically contained the following:

- Contemporary and historical contexts.
- A description of the relevant components of the context to outline the situation that surrounded it.
- Relevant situational factors such as description of audience, purpose, time, place, and genre conventions.
- References to situational factors throughout the response to show how language was used.

Responses that began with a description of context helped students to consider how the context shaped verbal language use. At Achieved, typical usage and the characteristics of language use (such as the function or effect) were described.

When describing or explaining the situation that surrounded the context, evidence that considered the nuances of that specific context better positioned students to achieve Merit and Excellence. For example, in a persuasive speech, understanding of the specific audience being addressed was demonstrated. Consideration of contemporary and/or historical events that may have influenced the speaker, and the context of time/place that could shape the speaker's choice/s of language, was also evident.

Understanding that text creators change and adapt their language with different types of audiences in different circumstances was also evident in Merit and Excellence responses. For example, a live speech given to the United Nations General Assembly constructed to engage the audience in front of the speaker at that specific time, rather than exploring the wider impact of the speech when it is viewed by a global audience at a later date on social media platforms.

Students who clearly met the standard selected texts that reflected their interests and were able to effectively exemplify the context. Protest songs or speeches were a popular option and linked to a range of social contexts. Social issue contexts were evident in texts such as podcasts, videos/speeches, and articles about mental health, gender, racism, and diversity, providing rich opportunities for students to consider how context shapes language use.

In some cases, localised contexts were selected, with students drawing on their personal experiences or attendance at hui, Pōwhiri or a sporting event. Where class texts were used as a stimulus to explore a context, successful responses articulated the context clearly and used a new text to provide specific examples of context influencing verbal language use.

The accurate identification and description of verbal language examples used in the source material (text) was evident for most students. Demonstrating understanding of verbal language use that included description of language features, syntax, and style typical of the context helped students meet the standard at level 6 of the curriculum.

At higher levels of achievement, students provided a specific and detailed explanation of common language use in that context, or identified patterns of usage that were influenced by the context. At Excellence, an examination of atypical usage often enabled students to draw conclusions about how and why the context influenced the language use.

### **Practices that need strengthening:**

The need for a reduction in the volume of evidence was an issue found in moderation. The Assessment Activities suggest a range of 750-800 words or visual presentations/oral texts of 3-4 minutes. More than half of the evidence seen in moderation exceeded 1500 words. In some instances, students focused on explaining the combined effect of verbal language features to try and meet the Merit criteria. Whilst this is of no detriment to the student's grade, it increases the volume of evidence unnecessarily. The focus is on moving from Achieved (Describe) to Merit (Explain), not on the combined effect of the verbal language features.

At Merit, students should provide a clear description of the context and explain the connections between context and language. This can include giving a specific and detailed outline of verbal language that is common within the context. Explanation of how the context has influenced specific examples of verbal language use should be supported by reference to individual features or examples.

The focus of the standard is on how context shapes verbal language use. Some responses focused on unpacking the meaning of language, undertaking a language study, rather than exploring how context shaped the language selected. To ensure the focus is on context, providing a description of the context at the beginning of the response is recommended.

An accurate understanding of the context is also needed. This means ensuring that information such as dates, times, and places relating to the context are correct. If information about the context is sourced without adaptation, referencing is needed to ensure authenticity.

Across each level of achievement, consideration of typical, atypical, or expected usage is required. Some responses tended to focus on describing the characteristics or effect of the language without describing typical usage. For students to understand typical usage, exposure to other source material (texts) from the same or different contexts is recommended. For example, a study of protest speeches and political speeches may reveal

that similar verbal language features are used. However, differences in audience, time, and place may show that the verbal language use has been shaped by these factors.

A common issue seen in moderation was the use of non-verbal language features. This was particularly prevalent in the Ministry of Education 'Social Issue' Assessment Activity when students were using speeches as their source material. For example, oral and visual language features such as emphasis, tone of voice, gesture, body language, and pace are not considered verbal language features. The Ministry of Education has produced an updated and comprehensive glossary that specifies appropriate verbal language features for use in this standard. This can be accessed via the NCEA Website.

When selecting verbal language use, identifying patterns, significant use, or unusual features could better position students to explain or examine how context shapes language use. Many responses selected very common features such as pronouns or similes which limited the responses to general description of the effect of the language use. Taking a broader view, for example looking at imagery across the source material rather than a single simile, or explaining how the overall structure has been influenced by context, can also be used in conjunction with a focus on individual features.

Please note that the Ministry of Education has made changes to 'Unpacking the Standard' for 91924. Updated documents are available on the Ministry's NCEA website.

## **Insights**

### **91925: Demonstrate understanding of specific aspects of studied text**

#### **Performance overview:**

#### **Please note that this standard will be externally assessed by examination from 2025.**

This standard requires students to describe specific aspects of a text and how these aspects create engagement with, or viewpoints on, the text. Descriptions should be supported with examples from the text. For Merit, an explanation of the combined effect of the aspects is needed. A discussion of the relationship between the aspects and the author's purpose or wider context is required at Excellence.

A broad range of studied texts were used by students. The texts were primarily literary works, rather than non-fiction, and included both long and short form written and visual texts. Texts were drawn from across the literary canon, and included eminent works from Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific, as well as world literature. Most texts selected for this standard provided enough depth to enable students to explain how the aspects worked together to create viewpoints or engagement, and enabled a discussion of relevant wider context links or the author's purpose.

Most students accurately identified specific aspects from the studied text by naming them and providing specific examples. Students chose both broader, overarching aspects and finer details, often successfully combining the two to explain how a viewpoint or engagement was developed. For example, the aspect of character development could be combined with an explanation of finer details such as camera shots (film), or diction/language use (written texts).

At the higher levels of achievement, students:

- made original and perceptive observations about a range of aspects

- unpacked how the aspects helped create understanding of the author's purpose or the wider context
- moved beyond their immediate world to consider socio-cultural or political implications raised by the combined use of aspects
- wrote thought provoking responses about how the aspects in the text helped reveal ideas about New Zealand society and their place within it.

Evidence was successfully presented either in written format (reports, essays), oral texts, and presentations.

### **Practices that need strengthening:**

The explicit identification of specific aspects was needed to meet the requirements of the standard. The most common issue seen in moderation was where students implicitly referred to specific aspects without naming them. Additionally, students needed to describe how the aspects created engagement with, or viewpoints on, the studied text. In some instances, students would describe the specific aspects, but not the link between the aspects and engagement/viewpoints.

Further unpacking of viewpoints and engagement was needed across some of the evidence.

For example, when interpreting viewpoints, students could consider:

- different readings of the aspects – it may suggest this, and/or that...
- different moral or ethical judgements that could be made
- the views of different audiences or stakeholders within or beyond the text
- different critical views (the ideas of others)
- evaluating or making a judgement on aspects of the text or the ideas generated by the text
- commenting on the significance or importance of a decision/action/situation/use of an aspect/relationship between aspects
- consideration of contrasting perspectives/views/ideas.

Generally, when explaining engagement, the focus was primarily on how the specific aspects made the student feel. The definition of engagement could be expanded to consider how the aspects reflect something in the student's world, reflects or contrasts with their values or beliefs, or reflects something in the wider world. Broader examples of engagement could include:

- modern reception of the text versus the original audience
- consideration of how the text/ideas may have changed over time (from their own perspective)
- critical acclaim or relevance in modern society
- learnings linked to the author's purpose/intent
- why the text is meaningful to them as the audience (linked to identity or personal experience).

Each of the MOE Assessment Activities includes a list of prompt-style questions. The list should be taken as a starting point, rather than an exhaustive list that will enable students to meet the standard. In some cases, students were unable to meet the standard as they only responded to the prompt questions. Assessment materials need to include prompts that encourage students to explicitly make a link between aspects and engagement/viewpoints.

## Assessor Support

NZQA offers online support for teachers as assessors of NZC achievement standards. These include:

- Exemplars of student work for most standards\*
- National Moderator Reports\*
- Online learning modules (generic and subject-specific)\*\*
- Clarifications for some standards\*
- Assessor Practice Tool for many standards\*\*
- Webcasts\*

\*hosted on the NZC Subject pages on the NZQA website.

\*\*hosted on Pūtake, NZQA's learning management system. Accessed via Education Sector Login.

We also may provide a speaker to present at national conferences on requests from national subject associations. At the regional or local level, we may be able to provide online support.

Please contact [workshops@nzqa.govt.nz](mailto:workshops@nzqa.govt.nz) for more information or to lodge a request for support.

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