



National Certificate of Educational Achievement
TAUMATA MĀTAURANGA Ā-MOTU KUA TAEA

Exemplar for Internal Achievement Standard English Level 3

This exemplar supports assessment against:

Achievement Standard 91475A

Produce a selection of fluent and coherent writing which develops, sustains and structures ideas.

An annotated exemplar is an extract of student evidence, with a commentary, to explain key aspects of the standard. It assists teachers to make assessment judgements at the grade boundaries.

New Zealand Qualifications Authority

To support internal assessment

	Grade Boundary: Low Excellence
1.	<p>For Excellence, the student needs to produce a selection of fluent and coherent writing, which develops, sustains and structures ideas and commands attention.</p> <p>This involves demonstrating a sophisticated understanding of purpose and audience through the insightful selection and integration of ideas, language features and structure to create a striking whole.</p> <p>This student has produced a fluent and coherent narrative short story about teenage friendship, which sufficiently commands attention. Sustained ideas about conflicting tensions in relationships have been integrated with effective structures to create a striking whole. The opening comments catch the reader’s attention, and are developed and sustained throughout the narrative using repeated melodrama metaphors (3) and reprised in the closing comments.</p> <p>A range of language features are effectively integrated to create a sustained and immediate impression of the short story ‘slice in time’ (1) personal reactions, and observations (2). This becomes a striking whole by integrating ideas of tension in teenage friendships through use of language features throughout, such as syntax (4), diction and original phrases (5), and an ironic twist at the end (6).</p> <p>For a more secure Excellence, the student could ensure that the selection of language features, e.g. syntax and diction choices (7), are consistently fluent and striking.</p>

Three months.

1 As per usual, she had her back turned towards me. No surprises there, even without that pose I knew I was ignored. But I would not play her game and mask invisibility. Instead I casually slid into the same booth, emboldened by my bitterness. Her appearance seemed unchanged; sunlight locked in copper tendrils of hair, the latest fashion statement meticulously displayed of course complemented by enough makeup to hide the slightest rebellion of blemishes. In other words, she was like the tragic princess, dragged into hardship by none other than myself, the ugly, plain and painfully black and white villain. I'd play the part for now, just to let her indulge in the role of the victim.

4 5 Now that I was sitting opposite her in some trendy café, the well-practised words fled my brain. And she knew it. She hadn't expected to see me here, perhaps she was waiting for the famous Tom and wanted me to disappear before he arrived. But I had enough pride not to ask her. We hadn't spoken for three months, which seemed a short time in the duration of our friendship. Thirteen years it had spanned, through the eras of kindergarten, primary, intermediate and finally high school. I had once worn that statistic like a badge of honour, but now it felt more than an award for endurance. I should have said something which cut into the mocking superiority she presented. For all the effort it took to read her face, I might as well have been illiterate. But she always knew my thoughts, well at least to the depth of her understanding. That's why I couldn't fathom why she had done it. Since we were twelve she had abandoned me for the opposite sex, and her latest "true love" had cost our friendship dearly. Not only was I placed second when she met the gorgeous, oh-so-cool Tom, but I was left alone on the streets of Wellington, alone for seven hours while they sauntered around town doing god knows what. After we returned to Christchurch Sophie was greeted with my icy neglect. I had tolerated enough of her ideals of friendship and decided she was not worth the pain or anger. I only acknowledged her now because our parents were desperate for some resolve, in all honesty I think they were affected more than I was

And even after three months, one look at Sophie was all it took to call my anger back. But before any words could struggle out of my mouth, she spoke first.

3 "I'm sorry." She mumbled, rejecting my attempts of eye contact. With those two words she doused the fire of my rage. Instead pity flowed through me, as deep and strong as the Waimakariri river. She would never change. She was trapped, a slave to her somewhat obsessive perception of love. She considered me "too paranoid around guys", and I knew with a deepset certainty that she expected me to forgive her and carry on as if she never left me for Tom, never pretended that I wasn't standing right in front of her. But a lot can change in three months; the seasons of the year, the ages of two once best friends. And me.

2 6 I stood up and smiled to let her know I was not angry. "I've gotta go, I'm meeting up with Rachel at the mall." I announce, turning my head to readjust my shoelace, fast enough for her to pretend that I hadn't seen the relief on her face. "See ya then." She farewelled me with a false smile, knowing I wanted to be gone as much as she. I waved and then stepped outside.

6 7 3 Once at the mall I met up with Dale, the boyfriend Sophie would never believe me capable of having, and for that left in ignorance. I don't know if Sophie could've handled the concept of me not being single and experienced in the boyfriend/girlfriend department, so I did her a favour. I left her thinking that I was "too paranoid around guys", left the princess in the tragedy she adored.

	Grade Boundary: High Merit
2.	<p>For Merit, the student needs to produce a selection of fluent and coherent writing which develops, sustains and structures ideas, and is convincing.</p> <p>This involves demonstrating discerning understanding of purpose and audience through the discriminating selection and integration of ideas, language features, and structure.</p> <p>This student has produced a fluent, coherent and convincing dramatic monologue about the disillusionment of teenage romantic dreams. The ideas are sustained and structurally integrated through the description of dreams (1), ominous descent to the underworld (2), its grim conditions (3) and the character's growing resentment and anger (4).</p> <p>There is a discriminating selection and use of language features such as alliteration, imagery, syntax, and both formal and colloquial diction (5). The writing begins to command attention with the integration of classical, fairy tale and New Zealand cultural references (6), and the contrast between ideals and reality (8).</p> <p>To reach Excellence, the student could insightfully integrate effective ideas by identifying the promises made by Hades that were '<i>the death</i>' of the narrator. A more insightful selection of language to create effects and command attention could be made in places (9).</p>

"Promises"

Whisked away by a whirlwind romance,
Living out my dream.
Fairy tale wedding — pavlova dress and roses,
Bridesmaids and doves; (
Setting off in our chariot,
Tins clanking behind,
"Just Married" written clumsily by the best man.

1 6 7

Our GJ Gardner home,
the white picket fence I had always dreamt of,
a lawn sprinkled with daisies,
The brass knocker set upon the charming red door.
The quaint cottage; the traditional letterbox
The friendly postman,
one of our many delightful neighbours.
A lush garden littered with dirt trucks and
Barbies, pails and pans —
playground, fantasy world and kitchen for mud pie
brewing.
My precious little darlings, children who bring us
so much joy.
Stay at home mother, walking every step with my
babies,
Ready for them, waiting for them when they get
home from school.
I've wanted this ever since I was a little girl
Using Grandma's doily collection as beautiful
veils.

My handsome prince would be my hero, I just
knew it.

7

But he was the death of me.
Hades.

Handsome prince? God of the Underworld?
Don't quite go together, do they?
Oh, the naivety of it all.

6

My seventeen year old self
Was entranced, snared by his charm.
How he did it, we will never know.

Down.

Down, down, down.
The gates came rising up to meet us, burning with
a vengeance
Of eternity as our pure white Pegasus went down.
Down,down,down.
To the fiery depths of hell.

2

7

6

And that's where I have been ever since,
Two hundred and thirty six years on.

And what do I have to show for my life?
A shabby Bed and Breakfast for the lowlifes of the
world above.

3

Men waltz on in, past Cerberus, across the Styx
To reach their final destination.

My place.

My mansion, my palace, my cave?
It is dank. It is damp. It is dark.

3

It is, in fact, a dungeon.

My home sweet home,
A bloody hole in a rock.

6

The guests saunter past, demanding this and that
and the next thing; When
they've been sent down for eternal punishment!

4

I can see why they're here, anyhow.

Hades sashays around like he owns the whole
freaking place,
Setting things on fire whenever it takes his fancy.
Torturing damned souls with the most awful acts
of brutality,
And that's on a good day.
You should see him after a hard day at the office!

5

And me?

I've always been told that marriage is a
partnership,
yet you wouldn't know that down here.
No, normal 21st century social conventions don't
apply.

5

I am his mistress, his house keeper, his slave.
My body is not my own anymore, which is

something I never

In a million years
thought could happen.

And the thing is that there is absolutely nothing I
can do about it.

I have tried escaping, but let's not even go there,
That cost me twelve years of the little freedom I
do have.

9

It's not often I get girlfriends popping in for coffee,
Cake and a chinwag, no connection to the real
world.

7

I waved goodbye to the book club a long, long
time ago,

The scoundrels my way are far from literate.
The only dealings I down get here are with the
souls

Who dwell in my spare rooms; rude, ignorant
scum

Who treat me like it's their God-given right
To have a roof over their heads and rugs over
their toes.

Empty promises.

He was the death of me.

	<p>Grade Boundary: Low Merit</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>For Merit, the student needs to produce a selection of fluent and coherent writing which develops, sustains and structures ideas, and is convincing.</p> <p>This involves demonstrating discerning understanding of purpose and audience through the discriminating selection and integration of ideas, language features, and structure.</p> <p>This student has produced a fluent and coherent short story adaptation of events in Macbeth that is sufficiently convincing. Ideas about the impact of Macbeth's destructive actions on Banquo's family are sustained and structurally integrated through the stages of Lady Banquo's isolation, concern, horror and, finally, vengeful resolve regarding the absence of her husband and son (1).</p> <p>This becomes a convincing and coherent text by the discriminating selection of language features such as use of the third person limited narrative viewpoint (2), sensory description (3), adapted integration of original events (4), a repeated witchcraft motif (5), and transitions (6).</p> <p>For a more secure Merit, the student could make a more discriminating integration of ideas and structures through exploration of themes of grief and vengeance in addition to retelling the events in the play. The student could make a more discriminating selection of language to create effects (7).</p>

Stirring the Broth

Student 3: Low Merit

NZQA Intended for teacher use only

Where were they? The icy whisper of the Scottish dawn chill crept into the hall as Katherine stood at the stone hearth, stirring the morning broth. Alone.

2 The event was her daily ritual. The only time she had not made the broth was when she had given birth to young Fleance, and even then, she was back to hearth stirring her broth within the week.

4 She pulled back her dark hair with a dainty hand and wondered once again about Banquo's absence. Two days since, Banquo and Fleance had ridden back from Inverness after attending the royal banquet to honour Macbeth. No one had seen or heard from them. She

1 stared out the narrow window, hoping to see them riding out of the morning mist. But no, the road was empty. "Surely they'll be home soon," she said out loud, as she stirred the broth.

Once, twice, and thrice round the cauldron went the worn, wooden ladle. And then, almost as if the third stir had announced it, Katherine heard a voice.

5 "Worrying about the family are we, love?" it cackled.

"It would appear so, my sister," croaked another.

4 "Who goes there?" gasped Katherine, holding the ladle before her like a sword.

"Who we be, my dear, is not of importance. It's the secrets we have come to share about your Banquo and bonny Fleance that should interest thee", hissed the third voice.

Katherine's hand grew white at the knuckles as she tightened her grip on the ladle. Mustering every ounce of courage she harboured behind her delicate appearance, she cried, "Be out with it you imperfect speakers!"

"Look into the broth, sweetie, for there is the truth about Macbeth," enticed the first voice.

7 Katherine slowly turned back to the broth and almost immediately her piercingly blue eyes widened as she caught sight of three shadows, crouched behind a rocky pass, whispering amongst each other, on the bubbling surface of the broth. She barely heard a word the three were saying except the name 'Macbeth'. The sound of horse's hooves began to echo around

3 the rocks, the glow of torchlight began to fill each angular crevice. Banquo and Fleance on horseback! Suddenly three men sprang out from the shadow of the rocks, startling the galloping horses. Banquo's horse threw him to the hard ground, raising its front hooves into the air, almost in surrender to the men and their swords. All she could hear was Banquo's cry

3 piercing the night, "O treachery! Fly good Fleance, fly, fly, fly!" The sound of horses hooves once again echoed around blood-splattered rocks. Tears ran down Katherine's face as she watched her beloved son become enveloped in the night's embrace.

6 "For what purpose have you shown me this? Speak!" demanded Katherine. But all that she heard in reply were the fading whispers of a name that would haunt her forever. "Macbeth."

6 Macbeth? Brave Macbeth, Banquo's boyhood friend? It made no sense, she thought as she paced the floor. Then suddenly she remembered the riddle that Banquo had told her and Fleance on his return from battle, "Lesser than Macbeth, and greater. Not so happy, yet much happier. Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none." The foolish words from the old women on the heath. They had laughed about it at the time. Banquo had made a paper crown for Fleance... She shivered. "Your line shall be kings," Macbeth had told Banquo

4 quietly, looking at him straight in the eye.

"Lady," the servant's voice broke into her thoughts. "Lady, there is grave news from Inverness. Your lord has been slain by robbers. Your son has fled. The king has promised to bring those responsible to justice." Katherine said nothing. "I will have him unseam'd him

1 4 from the nave to the chaps," she thought.

	Grade Boundary: High Achieved
4.	<p>For Achieved, the student needs to produce a selection of fluent and coherent writing which develops, sustains and structures ideas.</p> <p>This involves demonstrating understanding of purpose and audience. This is demonstrated through the development of linked ideas and the accurate use of structures and language features to create consistent meaning and effect for sustained interest.</p> <p>The student has produced a fluent and coherent column about the dilemma facing modern women. This central idea has been sustained and structured by defining the ‘<i>Superwoman</i>’ issue (1), describing its impact on women (2), linking references to research (3) and recognising misplaced nostalgia for the 1950s (4). Both sides of the dilemma are balanced in the conclusion (5).</p> <p>Appropriate language features to create consistency in meaning and effect and to sustain interest are used by allusion (6), emotive language and repetition (7), and original, alliterative phrasing (8). This piece of writing sustains interest with some discrimination through the use of transitions and motif (10).</p> <p>To reach Merit, the student could explore the ideas and the significance of the films so that they become generally convincing, and integrate these with a discerning selection of language and structures, as required at (11).</p>

Superwoman vs The Desperate Housewife”

6 "Desperate Housewives" aren't just found on Wisteria Lane in Television City. They can be found in every walk of life as the result of social change over the last four decades. 1 Forty years ago feminism was at a peak. Frustrated, bitter women wanted all the same rights as men, including being able to go out into the workforce instead of being slotted into the role of traditional housewife. Early feminists, Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, and New Zealander Sue 10 "it's not your penis we envy - it's your freedom," Kedgley paved the way for new generations of women, making them believe that they could be Superwoman and have it all, run a household, look after their children, spend time with their hubby and friends as well as have a successful career. But some would say this just set women up for a fall in the future. And they're right.

10 2 Today, more and more women are deciding that while it is possible to juggle all these factors, it's simply too difficult. Being Superwoman doesn't mean that women achieve at a super high level across the board, impressing everyone with their "amazing powers" with a quick 8 10 flick of their red cape and toss of their tiara topped hair. No, it means difficult choices have to be made: women can't neglect their children but they can't neglect their job either, not if they want that promotion. 7 Guilt comes naturally to women. If they aren't being 'Superwoman', they feel guilty. If they just go a job or a family, they feel guilty. They can't win. It's ridiculous really that the feminists believed in this 'Superwoman' thing. Men were only able keep a high flying career going because they had wives to cook, clean and look after the children for them.

So this is the backlash. Although women fought hard for the rights and opportunities that women have today, two thirds of Australian women say they would go back to being a housewife if they could afford to do it. In a Time magazine poll, the majority of men and women thought it was best for children to have a father working and a mother at home. According to the British Guardian, most children grew up with a stay-at-home mother in the 3 1970s. Now only 30% do. 65% of adults view this as negative for society. So much for the "amazing powers of Superwoman! Women want the perfect 1950's white picket fence and the 'happy family' fairytale where men looked after their wives by providing for them, taking on the pressures of the outside world so women didn't have to. We can see this in films like Stepford Wives and Pleasantville. They're perfect, aren't they?

6 Of course not. When you put someone else in control of your life like this, you're not really having a life your own at all and that is what made women become desperate housewives in the 1960s, taking Valium or Mother's Little Help to get through years in the suburbs. Handing control over to men and relying on them financially can drain women's sense of independence and can even be dangerous for some.

...paragraph omitted...

11 The picture perfect view modern day housewives have about 1950's is an illusion. If you asked housewives then what it was like for women in that era, I bet some would have a rather bitter reflection of it, just like the women of today have about trying to be a superwoman. 5 10 Maybe this is the real challenge for the future: finding a solution for modern women who don't live in a comic book world of super heroes.

	Grade Boundary: Low Achieved
5.	<p>For Achieved, the student needs to produce a selection of fluent and coherent writing which develops, sustains and structures ideas.</p> <p>This involves demonstrating understanding of purpose and audience. This is demonstrated through the development of linked ideas and the accurate use of structures and language features to create consistent meaning and effect for sustained interest.</p> <p>The student has produced a fluent and coherent short story portrayal of a character in a difficult relationship. The central idea that the character is trapped and controlled by her husband is sufficiently sustained and structured through gradual suggestions of increasing unease, denial and final humiliation (1), and revealing a façade portrayed by the character (2).</p> <p>This becomes fluent and coherent by the use of structures and language features such as a shift in narrative perspective (3), sustained use of the third person pronoun suggesting the sinister presence of the antagonist (4), repetition, (5), and syntax (6).</p> <p>For a more secure Achieved, the student could further develop fluency and coherence in use of the narrative viewpoint selected, and integrate this with further selection of accurate language and structures to create consistent meaning and effect for sustained interest (7).</p>

A Blind Eye

Student 5: Low Achieved

NZQA Intended for teacher use only

Every morning, it's the same procedure, cook for her young kids and husband, clean the house - all before the long and busy shift she has coming up. She puts on her shirt buttoning up every button making sure nothing extra is showing, long black pants and all black leather shoes, that's the dress code. She slips on her manager badge, she makes no effort with her hair, after all she doesn't want to attract another man. (1) Twenty minutes to spare before, staring at her makeup, she thinks of all the different designs and styles she could do. She picks up her eyeliner and looks in the mirror. Out of nowhere she hears heavy, thumping footsteps, the pencil clatters on the table, she rushes to her work bag trying to look natural. (1)

"It's time to go, I'll be waiting," She rushes down and runs to the car. "What took you so long? Next time your late you're going to walk". (7) She feels like she's a little girl who's just been told off. Fists tightening, body stiffened, jaws clenching. (6) She's angry. Is she brave enough to stand up for herself? The rest of the car ride is full of awkward silence. (1) hearing every speed bump and pebble the wheels roll over. "We're here" both sitting there with an awkward silence as he stops the engine. (4) They look at each other, she quickly looks away. "I don't know why your in a mood, its all your fault." (7) He catches her looking at the clock at the front of the car. His lips touch her cheek softly, "have a good shift", with no expression on her face she bids him goodbye. He doesn't realise what he does to her, everything is always her fault. (1) (4)

She clocks in to work and manages her shift, everyone immediately clocks on to her mood. (2) Are we not doing our job properly or what? I swear every two minutes she demands us to do something different. What's her problem is what we're all thinking. She's on her break, we can all hear her on the phone speaking in a way we all seem to understand. We assume she's talking to her husband. Back from her break with a big smile on her face, she seems happy. (1) (2) We're all joking and having a laugh; there seems to be no customers, the topic of conversation is Facebook. "Josh I didn't know you had a Facebook, you should add me! Actually, all of you should add me". "I don't have a Facebook", we all look at her in shock, is she joking or? (7) Why not we all ask her with puzzled looks on our face, I mean even Ranju the 60 year old divorcee has a Facebook. "Cause, my husband doesn't allow me to have a Facebook" it's kind of a conversation killer, well that's awkward. (2) As customers come in, we all get back to work. We may not have said anything but were all thinking the same thing, how can a husband be so controlling? How can she let him be so controlling (5).

It's been a long 12 hours. There's a roster to complete before she leaves. She's in the office completing her task. As I do my job on front line; (3) taking orders and serving customers, I see a man standing on the side. He's not ordering, he's not making any eye contact what so ever. Crossed arms, flared nostrils, staunch stance. (6) I have no idea who this man is, is he going to rob me? Will he suddenly pull out a gun or something, there's got to be a reason as to why he's so angry.

She comes out of the office in a rush to get her planner from the crew room. As she her footsteps she realises her husband is right there. Rushing back to her office her pen is flying across the paper, cramping hands, and squinted eyes. She comes out like a scolded puppy, head down and tail in between her legs. (1) He causes a scene shouting and bickering as she ignores it and makes her way to the car. (2) (4)

I'm shocked from what I've just witnessed, from the conversation we just had about Facebook, to all the times she told me about the changes she made to her appearance since she got married, it's almost like she's trapped- but she does not even realise it. When she tells me these things she says it in such a happy way, as if it's a good thing. There's an underlying impression, she sees it as innocent but everyone else sees a women who's life is being controlled. (2) She will continue to live her life the way she does, giving a blind eye to the unacceptable behaviour. Just another woman in denial, controlled, abused and empty inside. (1) She deserves to be safe, she deserves respect, she deserves to be free. She deserves equality. (5) (6)

	Grade Boundary: High Not Achieved
6.	<p>For Achieved, the student needs to produce a selection of fluent and coherent writing which develops, sustains and structures ideas.</p> <p>This involves demonstrating understanding of purpose and audience. This is demonstrated through the development of linked ideas and the accurate use of structures and language features to create consistent meaning and effect for sustained interest.</p> <p>This student has produced an opinion column piece about the stereotyping, judging and rejection of people in our society. A central idea is developed, structured and sustained by the use of anecdotal description (1), identifying and describing the issue and consequences of being judgemental (2) and challenging the reader to consider the impact of their actions on other people (3).</p> <p>Selected language features, generally appropriate to column writing conventions, begin to create a coherent text. The student uses vocabulary and stylistic features such as pronouns, descriptive detail (4), rhetorical questions, repetition and anti-climax (5) and syntax (6). Personal reflection on societal issues (7) and integration of research facts (8) are used to develop and link ideas.</p> <p>To reach Achieved, the student could develop fluency and coherence by editing for consistent meaning and sustained interest, and make further use of accurate language and structures (9).</p>

“Let’s make the world a better place.”

Most of you will remember something from your first day of school, not all of you will. Chances are you remember something whether it’s your mum crying and taking photos, or your cool new lunchbox you got to use for the first time. Personally I was really excited for my first day, although now I look back and wonder why exactly I was so keen to get up at the crack of dawn every day for the next 13 years. My first day was pretty good. You all probably remember how little kids just made friends right? “Hi! My name’s Emma! Will you be my friend?” and BAM instant friendship. This was how I made my first best friend at school. We were best friends for a whole two weeks! Until... I got a tummy bug and spewed all over her shoes. After that she didn’t talk to me again, not even once! That was just the start of all the friendships we would make throughout school... we didn’t yet seem to understand how important good friends could be back then. It seems as though many of primary school memories revolve around vomit. In year two there was one boy who decided to spew all over the...

There is one primary school memory that doesn’t have anything to do with vomit however. It was getting my first pair of glasses. I was in year four and I just could not see the board no matter where I sat in the classroom. And after complaining to my teacher which resulted in her screeching at me to “Go get your eyes checked then!” Me and mum were off to the optometrist. I got told that from then on I would have to wear glasses to help me see. At the time I thought I was sooo cool, and my friends used to say that with my hair in pigtails I looked like Suzie Cato off Suzie’s World. But that was at the time and things have changed a lot since then and now I have worn either glasses or contacts everyday unless I feel like tripping over everything in my path. So how did all this make me who I am today? Well this is difficult to answer, because I’m still trying to work this out myself. One thing I know for sure is that it has led me to have an insane phobia of vomit. When I say phobia I mean that if I see, hear or smell vomit, I start crying and shaking uncontrollably, without fail.

But really there is much more to it than that. As I grew older, school showed me that people are judgmental and there is no way to escape this. You just have to learn to accept people’s opinions and move on. But still I find it unfair that because of something completely out of your control, such as wearing glasses, people can be bullied and excluded. If you have glasses then you will know exactly what I mean when I say that people judge you instantly for wearing them. I am the biggest hypocrite of all, I judge people for wearing glasses and I need them myself! It is how society has shaped me and every one else and is also why I resent glasses so much myself.... I was instantly labeled as a geek. It is purely because of other people that in year nine I started wearing contacts”

Many of you will agree with me when I say that a large portion of your happiness and confidence comes from having good self esteem and right now it seems as though your self esteem is either good or bad depending on other people’s opinions of you. I’m not saying this goes for every one, some people don’t care at all what others think of them. However I think that even those people have a tiny part of them that does care, and unfortunately there is always some one who knows exactly how to crush it. Any one who knows me knows I’ve done swimming my whole life, and competitively for the past four years. Of course because I have done swimming for so long you assume I must really love it right? Well for fourteen out of sixteen years I’ve done it, I hated it. At first I only swam because Mum made me, but then I realised once I started it competitively that a lot of people were impressed by the fact I trained sixteen hours a week, not including weights sessions. So I kept swimming. Not because I liked it, but because of how other people saw me. There were a couple of years where I did actually love it; I was getting really good results from all the training, I had heaps of friends and a really good coach. But this didn’t last. A few people in my squad and I were on bad terms, and then I got a long-term shoulder injury, as well as a new coach I didn’t agree with. This made it even less enjoyable, but in the end my shoulder was what forced me to quit.

Society nowadays is extremely unforgiving. People get judged for absolutely everything about them. And it’s getting worse. Now that every one has mobile phones, and is a part of websites such as facebook or tumblr, there are so many different ways for people to bully others; there is no escape. (2) If we can change the way our generation sees other people, and change the way they act towards others, then eventually it will come right; but trying to change every one will be near impossible. That should not deter you because it will be worth it. It will be worthwhile living in an anti-bullying, non-racial, non-homophobic world where you can be yourself. Imagine the world this way; it would be a huge step towards world peace. Not only that but it would lower the suicide rate as well, something that of current times is becoming a huge world issue.

Currently in America the overall suicide rate per 100 000 people is 11.3. And in New Zealand, it’s 13.8. That’s almost half this class. Per 100 000. In New Zealand we have 4 000 000 people. Add that all up and approximately

2 8 552 people in New Zealand die from suicide each year. That doesn't include attempts or people who may feel that way but don't choose that option. People ask, 'if they felt this way, why didn't they say something?' the answer is simple. People like you tell them they are attention seeking.

2 7 Bullying is a leading cause of suicide. It occurs at all ages; from kindergarten, through school, right into the work force. Whether they are bullied for their appearance, race or sexual orientation, in the end it doesn't matter. It still hurts. And unfortunately it hurts some people more than others to the point where they feel they can't take it anymore. You could be the person that pushes someone to that point. You could force someone to be so unhappy that they choose to kill themselves. You could be a murderer. All because of that one small comment you made towards them. Sometimes people can bully themselves thanks to today's society. Society feeds us images of skin and bone models and filters out any photo of normal sized people, making some people feel as though they are not good enough. I know you have all heard of this before, but we are shaping the world this way, we are making people unhappy, yet we don't try to fix it. Doing something about this could save at least one of those 552 New Zealanders, possibly even more!

3 I once read a story that made me realize how much our actions really affect other people. It talked about two American boys in high school, one being your typical stereotype of a 'geek', and the other a jock. As the first boy was walking home one day carrying the entire contents of his locker, he tripped and dropped it all. The other boy saw what happened and came over to help him carry all his books. They ended up walking home together and becoming best friends. A few years on the boy who was the jock was getting married, and the other was his best man. Of course this meant he made a toast to the groom. What he said was something along the lines of this: "I owe my life to my best friend. That day we met I was carrying everything home from my locker to save my mother the hassle of going and doing it; that night I was planning on committing suicide. But as I was walking home you smiled at me and helped me and became my first friend and so I decided to stay." No one, not even the groom himself had known this. This story proves that we don't know how our actions may affect other people, whether good or bad, and they can be the difference between life and death. We don't always know the truth behind people, or how they really feel, so we do not know the real harm of what our words can do.

3 All I ask is that you think about what you're saying before you say it. Not just next time, but every time. You never know the affect your words could have on someone else, no matter how old they may be.