



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 2025. It also provides further insights from moderation material viewed throughout the year and outlines the Assessor Support available for History. Please note this report does not introduce new criteria, change the requirements of the standard, or change what we expect from assessment.

Insights

92024: Engage with a variety of primary sources in a historical context

Performance overview:

This standard requires students to engage with primary sources in a historical context. They must select a range of sources, establish each source's relevance to the focus question, and comment on its strengths and limitations.

In 2025, most students used focus questions that were accessible and aligned with expectations at curriculum level 6. They chose sufficient appropriate primary sources that directly addressed their question.

The appropriateness of the sources is best demonstrated by the student's ability to connect them to the focus question. As such, when making annotations establishing the relevance and main ideas of the sources, these should directly relate to the focus question. At times, students provided an annotation that described what was in the source or identified its main ideas without linking this to the focus question, which does not meet the criterion.

Students were most successful when instructed by the task to discuss the strengths and limitations of the sources. When students frame their discussion around usefulness, reliability, and perspectives, they do not meet the criteria unless an explicit link is made to strengths and limitations.

Practices that need strengthening:

Strength annotations

Overall, the quality of comments provided for strength annotations has improved, but this criterion continues to be the main reason for inconsistent judgements.

When commenting on the strengths of individual primary sources, annotations must go beyond describing the source type, what can be seen in the source, or the information it contains. It must also be a comment distinct from those that establish the relevance of the source to the focus question.

For further guidance on what constitutes a valid strength annotation, see the bite-sized module on Pūtake: 'What is a strength? Engaging with primary sources'.

Identified verses explained annotations

Accurately distinguishing between an 'identified' and an 'explained' strength or limitation leads to more consistent Achieved and Merit judgements. The table below outlines key ways these can be differentiated:

Identified	Explained
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single statement (or a series of single statements). • Accurate, but likely generic; may show more engagement with the source 'type' as opposed to the specific details of the source itself. • Consistently narrow in approach (i.e. repetition across each source). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers the 'how' and 'why' (i.e. how the strength is evident in the source, and why it is considered a strength in terms of the 'findings'). • Higher-level engagement with the specific details of the source itself (in addition to considering the source type). • Across the sample, it is more likely to see a range of different types of 'strengths' or 'limitations' discussed.

92025: Demonstrate understanding of the significance of a historical context

Performance overview:

To achieve this standard, students must demonstrate how their chosen context is historically significant. This requires selecting one or more aspects of significance and discussing how these are illustrated within the context.

In 2025, most students appropriately focused on one or two aspects of significance, opting for depth rather than breadth. These aspects were clearly illustrated with two to three relevant examples from the historical context.

Overall, students selected aspects of significance that were appropriate to their contexts. Students used aspects from Christine Counsell's 5Rs, Partington's model, or Explanatory Note (EN) 4 in the standard with equal success. Assessors and students should be encouraged to think carefully about which aspects best demonstrate the significance of their chosen context. Poor selection can make it difficult to access higher grades.

Students were most successful when the te ao Māori aspects listed in EN4 were used appropriately to discuss the significance of Māori history contexts. The concept of *whakapapa* remains the most challenging for students to use accurately. Care should be taken not to reduce this concept to a broad notion of 'relationships', but to engage with the deeper nuances of the kupu.

Practices that need strengthening:

Providing background to the chosen historical context does not directly contribute to the standard and should be kept brief. Lengthy background sections often included detail that would have been more effective later in the response to illustrate the chosen aspect of significance.

Students generally achieved greater success when selecting an event rather than a person or place as their historical context.

When selecting a person, students should:

- Avoid a biographical and/or chronological account of the individual's life.

- Shape evidence clearly around the chosen aspect (e.g. the impact Whina Cooper had, or how she is remembered).
- Ensure most of the discussion focuses on the person, not associated events (i.e. considering the impact of Whina Cooper on the Land March, rather than the impacts of the Land March itself).

When selecting a place, students should:

- Avoid focusing only on the different ways the place has been used over time.
- Shape the evidence clearly around the chosen aspect. This has been most successfully accessed through Christine Counsell's 5R. For example:
 - Remarkable: Did something 'remarkable' take place at this location? For example, a contentious battle or civil disorder.
 - Remembered: Is the place connected to events or people that are still in the collective memory? Is it a site of commemoration?
 - Revealing: Does this place reveal other aspects of the past? For instance, the tension between different perspectives on what the place means or how it should be used. Or, a historic homestead might reveal aspects of social class structures, or social etiquette at the time.

91435: Analyse an historical event, or place, of significance to New Zealanders

To achieve this standard, students must communicate an argument using key historical ideas and evidence to analyse a historical event or place of significance to New Zealanders.

The requirement to communicate an argument, introduced at the end of 2024 (91435 v3), was successfully addressed in most responses seen in external moderation. In many cases, this change reflected practices schools had already begun to adopt in assessment tasks, where students were required to take a position on a moot or question.

Students were most successful when their argument was clearly articulated in the introduction, developed through a series of body paragraphs, and used as the foundation for a logical, well-supported conclusion.

By contrast, responses that focused only on analysing the causes, consequences, and significance of an event often lacked the clear argument now required by the standard.

91437: Analyse different perspectives of a contested event of significance to New Zealanders

To achieve this standard, students must analyse different perspectives of a contested historical event.

Practices that need strengthening:

Choosing a context with a clearly contested element is essential. Historical discussion or debate, either at the time of the event or by historians since, should exist around the contested element chosen. This may involve selecting an event where the causes are disputed or the morality of a decision is debated.

Successful contexts seen in 2025 included:

- The intent of the Tohunga Suppression Act (cultural eradication vs medical justification).

- Why the atomic bomb was dropped in 1945 (revisionist vs traditionalist perspectives).
- The Black Armband vs White Blindfold debate.
- The functionalist vs intentionalist debate on the Holocaust.

By contrast, merely considering two different 'experiences' of a contested event, for example, Muldoon and Pasifika peoples in the Dawn Raids, Calley and Thompson in the My Lai Massacre, or pro- and anti-tour protestors in the 1981 Springbok Tour, is unlikely to provide the nature of evidence required (particularly the discussion on validity). Such responses more closely align with the expectations of the Level 2 equivalent standard, 91232.

To give feedback on this report click on [this link](#).

Assessor Support

NZQA offers free 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.

Exemplars, National Moderator Reports, clarifications, and webcasts are hosted on the NZC Subject pages on the NZQA website.

[Subject Pages](#)

Online learning modules and the Assessor Practice Tool are hosted on Pūtake, NZQA's learning management system. You can access these through the Education Sector Logon.

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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.

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