



Creative Writing

in the Gallery

NCEA Tasks for Teaching and Learning in the Gallery

English Internal Assessment Resource

Developed by Catherine Kelsey (English teacher, Westlake Boys High School) and Jenny White (English teacher, Rosehill College)

‘Art as a starter...’

AS 91101 v2 (2.4)

Produce a selection of crafted and controlled writing.

Level 2 – 6 credits

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Produce a selection of crafted and controlled writing which develops, sustains, and structures ideas.	Produce a selection of crafted and controlled writing which develops, sustains, and structures ideas effectively.	Produce a selection of crafted and controlled writing using language features appropriate to audience and purpose to create convincing effects.
Produce a selection of crafted and controlled writing which develops, sustains, and structures ideas convincingly.	Produce a selection of crafted and controlled writing using language features appropriate to audience and purpose to create effects.	Produce a selection of crafted and controlled writing using language features appropriate to audience and purpose to command attention.



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



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'Art as a starter...'

AS 91475 (3.4)

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

Level 3 — 6 credits

Achievement

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

Achievement with Merit

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

Achievement with Excellence

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

Quality assurance status

These materials are yet to be quality assured by NZQA

Authenticity of evidence

Teachers must manage authenticity for any assessment from a public source, because students may have access to the assessment schedule or student exemplar material.

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Context/Setting

These tasks require students to explore a response to works of art. These could take the form of a descriptive, narrative or persuasive piece that may be assessed against Level 2 or Level 3 criteria.

Students will need to be fully prepared for these criteria to be met. Students may choose to do two portfolio pieces using this assessment starter or just one, which they may complement with another piece of writing from their year's work. As part of this task students will need to be pre-prepared by their teacher, visit Auckland Art Gallery with specific activities and then have time to develop their writing with guidance and exemplars. As with all tasks, students should have the time to edit and revise their writing to the appropriate criteria.

Tasks:

1. A character or place description
2. An internal monologue response or a narrative
3. Poetry
4. An exposition piece:
What is Art and What is Not Art?
Or The Place or Role of Art Galleries in Cities.

Scaffolded writing tasks developing vocabulary activities

(pre-visit and during visit)

1. **Descriptive** – start with mood – see appendix for planning
 - a. Using all your vocabulary and mood words take the reader on a journey through the painting as if you were an art gallery guide – use the second person as if explaining colours and shapes to someone as they move around the image.
 - b. Sit and look at the painting and record your observations over half an hour. Start with the first thing that catches your eye and work outwards. Observe what you see and what it makes you think about.
 - c. Different structures of good descriptive writing. (If topic) e.g. 'A Firework Display'
 - i. A chronological approach to description
 - ii. A sensory approach
 - iii. A cinematic approach focusing on wide and then close shot.
 - iv. Contrast pairs – light/dark
 - v. Order of priority; most dramatic, least dramatic, etc
 - vi. A physical journey or walk through the painting eg read the description of the Burrow in The Hobbit and get students to write it with detailed sequencing
 - d. Connected response to the place of the painting for student – turangawaewae (a place to stand)



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2. Character

Comparative description between a piece of writing and a painting. For example comparing the poem 'My Last Duchess' by Robert Browning with Ingres' Princess Albert de Broglie.

[Click here for image](#)

3. Narrative

- a. Write a story in which the two characters in a painting are talking. Both have a secret they are not telling OR both want something different out of the conversation.
- b. Write the thoughts of a character in the painting – an internal monologue/ reflection of inner thoughts.
- c. Prequel or sequel: what happened prior to this painting or what will happen afterwards?
- d. If a painting captures a moment or an event, – describe it in detail as though for a movie script. Include sounds as well as sights – bring the painting alive, like 'Night at the Museum'.

4. Poetry

- a. Build around a theme and vocabulary stimulated by a picture – isolation, life, beauty, journeys or stories. (See Icarus poems attached as models in appendix)
- b. 13 ways to look at . . . Try to make an ordinary thing sound mysterious. This exercise is based on Wallace Stevens' poem 'Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird' (see attachment).
The poem has 13 verses, and each one evokes a glimpse or reaction to the blackbird. This highlights that a single thing is composed of a range of aspects, and that knowledge depends on perspective. This helps students think about the direction of their narrative.
Ask students to write their own 'X ways of looking at Y'. Do they want a sense of revealing an idea? OR of playing up the possibility of contradiction? OR the process of a mind-developing perception? NOW apply it to their own writing.
- c. An internal response – questions to a character or association poem (see Seamus Heaney poetry attached)

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Exemplar for Poetry



Para Matchitt *Untitled* 1969
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 2007



Creative Writing in the Gallery

Exemplar for Poetry (continued)

– Student work

How symmetry aligns from top to bottom
Where many defects appear to humiliate order
With all the curves and turns
The centre, a circle becoming an illusion

An elephant's trunk and layers of spiky vines
The blue becomes inferior, isolated, and invisible to my eyes
It's like a tear

A serpents tongue with a spiky soul
Slashes across beating the mind

A repetition of spikes copying itself
Until a smooth edge appears showing weakness and flaw

It stands in a rectangle
Protecting what it cares
Hurting others which are near

A dark emptiness
Within a blue tone
The lines only lead you
To a white cross of hope

An illusionary line thought to be moving
As the path goes round reaching into the centre
Like a Koru, a spiral on a twisting line

A construct of society shunning the weak and mortal
Those that are scared are also blind
Those who reap the sadness of others
Have a dark red blood in their soul
And those who are pure
Are clear inside and out

The stripes and patterns so closely packed
Becomes a snowflake creative and intact

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Exemplar for Poetry (Continued)



William Hodges, Sawrey Gilpin
Two Tigers in a Rocky Landscape, circa 1785
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
purchased 1957



Creative Writing

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Exemplar for Poetry (Continued)

– Student work

The Tiger

In its realm of rock and stone
Where it lies on nature's throne
As the King of Cats, the ruler of all
The tiger lies in gracious sprawl.

Its magnificence cannot be expressed,
The proud head and the proud chest,
Gleaming claws that scratch the floor
And topaz eyes that intensively bore
With a hard glint that burns the ground
With a fire blazing deep down
Emits a roar which shakes the land
As the lord of the wild, the tiger stands.

Through ancient times, this beast is depicted
An immortal, whose power's unrestricted.
Forged from the depths of burning fire
And mixed with the creation of the Creator's ire
The savageness of the tiger is born
A beast with a heart of stone.

A beast of pure beauty like the tiger
Is much more than just a fighter
Possessing an aura of awe and fear.
The tiger will be there

Creative Writing in the Gallery

5. Exposition

- a. Is this Art? Discuss the painting below and compare with the second painting. Then look at the cartoons and discuss what they are challenging.



Star Gossage
Seeing the Unseen 2014
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki,
gift of the Patrons of the Auckland Art Gallery 2014



Gretchen Albrecht
Skydive 1974
Chartwell Collection
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki 1974



- b. Read 'Billenium' by J G Ballard – a short story that depicts a world without art galleries and beautiful objects. Use this as a starting point for discussing the feasibility of a possible future world without art.

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Character Tasks For Level 3

Character: A Clash of Opposites

Study a piece of abstract art and write down five or six words you would use to describe it. (A list of words can be provided to allow for further ideas.) Think in terms of material used, colour, line and scale. Try and identify a mood you feel is portrayed in the art. Then transfer these ideas to a character about whom you will write. Use one description for each of: the look of your character; the movement of your character; what your character is thinking; their perceptions of the world; and other people's perceptions of them. The mood of the story you will write about this character needs to mirror that of the artwork. Now consider a second piece of art opposite in mood. Develop ideas about a second character based on this one. Write a story about these two characters coming together in some way. You can decide whether their connection will be explosive, surprising . . . Think of appropriate names for your characters.

Exemplar

Painting chosen – abstract piece in red, white and black; composed of corrugated iron; mixture of paint sprayed and paint dripped; filled the whole wall.

Adjectives chosen to describe it – splattered, organised, layered, free, rough, chaotic.

The look of your character – layered (The elements of his face appeared to be carefully layered, each fitting on top of the other, none out of place.)

The movement of your character – organised (His steps were organised, as though he had planned the exact number he was going to take to reach the elevator.)

What your character is thinking – splattered (Despite his calm appearance, his thoughts were splattered, leaving dark-coloured stains on his mind.)

Their perceptions of the world – rough (He saw the world as a strange place, one in which everything was rough and in need of sorting.)

Other people's perceptions of them – free (He appeared to others to be free; nobody suspected the chaotic nature of his thoughts.)

The mood is one of depression or unhappiness.

Second artwork – pop art in red, blue, yellow and white; stylistic, pointillist; larger than life.

Adjectives – colourful (look), loud (movements), structured (thinking), funny/weird (their perceptions of the world), retro (others' perceptions).

The mood is enthusiastic, upbeat.

This story could focus on how Edward and Dolly meet.

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3.4 Student Merit exemplar 'Art as a starter'

Man of War

by Robbie Thomson (Rosehill College)

Statement of Intent

The inspiration for my piece of writing came from a painting I saw in the Auckland Art Gallery. It was a portrait of a member of the Royal British Army. He was wearing a red jacket with fancy golden buttons. This gave me the inspiration for the jacket of blood as the colour of the jacket reminded me of fresh blood. The golden buttons reminded me of bullets. Also to have some many medals and to be so decorated a soldier must climb through the ranks. To climb through the ranks you need to of served a long time, generally with more time served means you have killed more people. So I wanted to write about the horrors a man can witness in war.

I exchanged my bloodied jacket for a jacket of blood. It cloaks me, weighs me down, shrouding me with the souls of the lost. My face whitened like the dead. Cold and white, so very cold. The gold metal pinned to me like the bullets lodged in flesh and bone. Not my flesh or bone. Some would say I'm unscathed and untouched by metal and fire. They would say I was one of the lucky ones. I would regard the ones at peace as the lucky ones. Though their last minutes may have been painful, they are at peace now. I carry the scars beneath my skin. Deeper than any blade could cut. These scars are more painful than any bullet could inflict. I am in pain. A weapon of pain.

Always fighting for lands which are not our own. I am a soldier in the Royal British Army. The biggest and most ruthless empire of our time. I have fought on no British soil, only land they have claimed through war. I have never defended my home, my land or my family. Only defending outposts from other imposing empires or worse, the indigenous population. I say the indigenous populations are worse to fight and yes they are. They may be less advanced and less organised but they are worse. Because they are defending their homes, their land and their families. That makes for a hard enemy and makes for a hard war. These battles are not hard because the enemy are strong, it is because we are weak. It doesn't take a strong man to raise a gun and shoot a man wielding a stick. He who fights with honour is a man. I am no man. I find no honour in slaughtering these simple people for the betterment of the Empire. I am a survivor, I fight to survive like a wild dog. I survive so that I can return to my family but I fear that I won't return the same man who left.

You see killing someone becomes easy, so easy that you stop thinking about it. That's step one in losing your soul. Step two is clearing up the bodies and discarding them like rubbish. No burial or ceremony. Step three is believing that it all is okay. I progressed through the stages as any soldier does, and then I came across a body after a long battle with the local resistance. I came across a lot of bodies. It had been a massacre to say the least. Mostly men, however this one was different. It wasn't a woman's body, they used to be rare but recently they were becoming more common. Seeing women lying dead didn't bother me



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3.4 Student Merit exemplar (continued)

anymore. Another part of my soul gone. But this body wasn't a man's or a woman's. This body was a child's body. Lying there covered in a blanket of blood and surrounded by a sea bodies almost double its size. It stuck out, for his body was small and frail. His clothes hung from him like pieces of rags on a washing line. He seemed to be made of just bones. A pile of bones covered in clothing, lying in a bed of dead. He was riddled with holes, as his clothes bear witness to the damage inflicted by bullets. That wasn't what haunted me, what haunted me was the hole gaping in his stomach. Where a sword had made contact with his frail body. Someone had raised their sword and struck this boy who would have been eleven at the most.

What sort of monster would have killed an eleven year old boy. That monster had been me. I fell to my knees and I wept. I don't know how long I had been hunched over that dead body but most of the bodies had been cleared up and burned. However when they came to clear his body, I told them to not lay a finger on him. I wept some more, each tear trickling down my face was the remainder of my soul. Each of those tears carried what was left of my soul to the foreign soil, where it remained. What replaced it was death. The souls of the dead remained with me in my empty chest. For after that day I saw more death than I thought possible.

There is nothing that fazes a man without honour or a soul. He is a deadly weapon.
A weapon of pain.

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Internal Monologue Exemplar

Write the thoughts of a character in a painting – an internal monologue/reflection of inner thoughts. Choose a piece of art containing a person that appealed to you or disgusted you or evoked some sort of emotional response. Imagine yourself (or your third person character) as the person in the painting/photograph. Begin your story with the character mirroring what is happening in the art.



Walter Dendy Sadler
Married 1896
Mackelvie Trust Collection
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

I am going to write a story about the woman and her feelings towards the man who is ignoring her.

The claustrophobia is choking me. The thought of being stuck with this man for all eternity is one that fills me with dread. He shows not the slightest interest in anything I feel. It hardly seems fair that someone as vivacious as me should be betrothed to a man whose only pastime is reading his bloody books.

Joseph. Now there's a man I would like to share my body warmth with. He has a way of looking at me that makes me feel undressed, and I relish it. If Thomas only knew that I insist on sitting in the garden because Joseph will be tending it...

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Appendix

[Click here for image link to:](#) Pieter Breughel, Landscape with the Fall of Icarus, circa 1560

Musee des Beaux Arts

W H Auden

About suffering they were never wrong,
The old Masters: how well they understood
Its human position: how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along;
How, when the aged are reverently, passionately waiting
For the miraculous birth, there always must be
Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating
On a pond at the edge of the wood:
They never forgot
That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course
Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot
Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the torturer's horse
Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.
In Breughel's Icarus, for instance: how everything turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water, and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

Landscape with the Fall of Icarus

William Carlos Williams

According to Brueghel
when Icarus fell
it was spring
a farmer was ploughing
his field
the whole pageantry
of the year was
awake tingling
with itself
sweating in the sun
that melted
the wings' wax
unsignificantly
off the coast
there was
a splash quite unnoticed
this was
Icarus drowning

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Appendix (continued)

Appendix

Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird

Wallace Stevens

I

Among twenty snowy mountains,
The only moving thing
Was the eye of the blackbird.

II

I was of three minds,
Like a tree
In which there are three blackbirds.

III

The blackbird whirled in the autumn winds.
It was a small part of the pantomime.

IV

A man and a woman
Are one.
A man and a woman and a blackbird
Are one.

V

I do not know which to prefer,
The beauty of inflections
Or the beauty of innuendoes,
The blackbird whistling
Or just after.

VI

Icicles filled the long window
With barbaric glass.
The shadow of the blackbird
Crossed it, to and fro.
The mood
Traced in the shadow
An indecipherable cause.

VII

O thin men of Haddam,
Why do you imagine golden birds?
Do you not see how the blackbird
Walks around the feet
Of the women about you?

VIII

I know noble accents
And lucid, inescapable rhythms;
But I know, too,
That the blackbird is involved
In what I know.

IX

When the blackbird flew out of sight,
It marked the edge
Of one of many circles.

X

At the sight of blackbirds
Flying in a green light,
Even the bawds of euphony
Would cry out sharply.

XI

He rode over Connecticut
In a glass coach.
Once, a fear pierced him,
In that he mistook
The shadow of his equipage
For blackbirds.

XII

The river is moving.
The blackbird must be flying.

XIII

It was evening all afternoon.
It was snowing
And it was going to snow.
The blackbird sat
In the cedar-limbs.

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Appendix

Wordsworth's Skates

Seamus Heaney

Star in the window.
Slate scrape.
Bird or branch?
Or the whet and scud of steel on placid ice?
Not the bootless runners lying toppled
In dust in a display case,
Their bindings perished,
But the reel of them on frozen Windermere
As he flashed from the clutch of earth along its curve
And left it scored.

Other works for use



Joseph Mallord William, Turner James Pyne
The Wreck of a transport ship c 1810
Mackelvie Trust Collection
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki purchased 1956

Creative Writing in the Gallery

Other works for use



Eugène von Guérard
*Lake Wakatipu with Mount Earnslaw,
Middle Island, New Zealand 1877-1879*
Mackelvie Trust Collection
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki purchased 1971



Le Blond & Co, Abraham Le Blond
Venice 1849-1893
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki purchased 1974

Creative Writing in the Gallery

Other works for use



Gottfried Lindauer
Wiremu Tamihana C1900
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
gift of Mr H E Partridge 1915



Boyd Webb
Wrack wring 1997
Chartwell Collection
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki 2000

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Other works for use (continued)



W D Hammond
Passover 1989
Chartwell Collection
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki 1991



Creative Writing in the Gallery

Works for use links

[Joseph Mallord William, Turner James Pyne, *The Wreck of a transport ship*, C 1810](#)

[Eugène von Guérard, *Lake Wakatipu with Mount Earnslaw, Middle Island, New Zealand*, 1877-1879](#)

[Le Blond & Co, Abraham Le Blond, *Venice*, 1849-1893](#)

[Boyd Webb, *Wrack wring*, 1997](#)

[W D Hammond, *Passover*, 1989](#)

[Gottfried Lindauer, *Wiremu Tamihana*, C1900](#)

[Tony Fomison, *Self portrait*, 1977](#)