



# Creative Writing

in the Gallery

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## 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)

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### ‘Art as a starter...’

#### AS 91101 v2 (2.4)

Produce a selection of crafted and controlled writing.

**Level 2** – 6 credits

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<b>Achievement</b>	<b>Achievement with Merit</b>	<b>Achievement with Excellence</b>
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



# Creative Writing

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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

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#### **Achievement**

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

#### **Achievement with Merit**

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

#### **Achievement with Excellence**

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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.

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### 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.

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### 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

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### 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 in the Gallery

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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



## Creative Writing in the Gallery

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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

# Creative Writing in the Gallery

## Appendix (continued)

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### 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.

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### 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

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## 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

# Creative Writing in the Gallery

## Other works for use (continued)



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



## Creative Writing in the Gallery

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### 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](#)