

91474R



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY  
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

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## Level 3 English, 2016

### 91474 Respond critically to significant aspects of unfamiliar written texts through close reading, supported by evidence

2.00 p.m. Tuesday 22 November 2016  
Credits: Four

## RESOURCE BOOKLET

Refer to this booklet to answer the questions for English 91474.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–3 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

**YOU MAY KEEP THIS BOOKLET AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.**

**TEXT A: PROSE**

In this passage, a New Zealand artist recalls experiences from his youth.

### **An Artist's Childhood**

My parents had always supported my art interests, and been unnecessarily proud of everything I produced. As I remember it, I was indulged my every wish. The habit of one or other parent giving up half a day, on weekends mainly, to drive their schoolboy son out to a chosen location and sit patiently while he drew or painted in the back seat of the car, peering out an open window, seemed perfectly normal to me. 5

If it was a golf day for my father, Mum would take me, knitting calmly in the front seat of the Hillman Minx, while I scribbled away or wrestled with irksome watercolours in the back. On occasions Dad would volunteer, our expeditions frequently turning into a competition: he would draw with a Black Beauty pencil in a Croxley Li-Flat spiral-bound sketch book while I went about my work behind him, so he couldn't cheat. 10

I now see these excursions as metaphors for my parents' devotion, the unconditional love with which I was surrounded. That I was trying to be a painter, something they knew very little about and for which there was no ready explanation, was of no concern at all: encouragement and opportunity were everything, and they believed that was their role. It must surely have been boring for them—I remember Dad falling asleep sometimes—but there was never a complaint, or a sign of impatience to get home. Not that I noticed, anyway. 15

There would have been some private rejoicing, however, when I passed my driver's licence just a few days after I turned fifteen. It meant I could now drive myself, and I was given the car, the only car, to wander off to places I wanted to paint, like the narrow streets of Dunedin's Palmyra district, a few blocks of rough, tilting old cottages leaning together along narrow, steep streets—as near as the city got to slums. Much influenced, also, by the loose and dashing paintings I'd seen by the reigning queen of the Art Society, Shona McFarlane, I spent weeks parked opposite tumbledown shacks with torn curtains and peeling weatherboards, drawing these sad, decaying houses. 20

One of my high-school teachers, Reg Graham, twice purchased watercolours from me while I was still at school—one, a crucifixion, a commission for which he paid me four guineas. Intriguing, given that a short time later he would marry an ex-nun. The encouragement this notice represented was immeasurable, as was his tutoring in the Camera Club, another of his own hobbies, which quickly became one of mine. More and more the cloying smell of developer and hypo fixing chemicals lured me into the depths of the darkroom, where ribbons of black negative film hung from overhead strings, and racks of curling prints lined one wall. For some this was a safe hideout for a rapid cigarette; for me it represented something else I wanted to be good at, another craft to master. 30

Source (adapted): Grahame Sydney: *Paintings 1974–2014* (Nelson: Craig Potton Publishing, 2014), pp. 35–37.

**TEXT B: POETRY**

In this poem, the writer reflects on a visit to the area where his father grew up.

**Back to the Wekaweka**

In old age Dad took us back to the Wekaweka  
to find the whare site of childhood on that  
failed farm. Just split timber, calico windows  
and camp oven, he told us. Nothing remained  
except the creek which gave him his bearings 5  
and he ranged through the wet undergrowth until  
he found the moss-encumbered rock he'd drilled  
into as a boy. How urgent he was to uncover  
the evidence of seventy years before, putting  
his little finger in the holes as if he were 10  
the doubting Thomas of whom he often preached.  
Pongas floated in the shadows, wet leaf mould  
sponged beneath our feet. A rain mist draped  
about the shoulders of the hills on which the  
kauri massed. It was a homecoming place in 15  
which my father greeted himself, wearing a  
self-referential half smile: an old man circled  
back to capture boyhood's elusive image. On that  
steep farm, reverted now to nature, he had lain  
nightly to dream a future and listen to kiwis 20  
and moreporks talk through the walls to him.  
Maybe he hears them now again in that endless  
strangely forested darkness of life's end  
lying calm in the knowledge of our love.

**Glossed words**

doubting Thomas (according to the Bible) a follower of Jesus Christ, who would not believe that Christ had returned from the dead until he had put his fingers in His wounds

