

91474R



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY  
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

QUALIFY FOR THE FUTURE WORLD  
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## Level 3 English, 2019

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

9.30 a.m. Friday 22 November 2019  
Credits: Four

## RESOURCE BOOKLET

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

Check that this booklet has pages 2 and 3 in the correct order and that neither of these pages is blank.

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

**TEXT A: PROSE**

In this passage, the writer discusses the issue of water quality in Aotearoa New Zealand.

**Troubled Waters**

It was snowing on the Rock and Pillar Range as I stood on a schist outcrop and surveyed the Taieri River coiling like a snake across the floodplain below. The “old water dragon”, as a poet once called it, is one of the strangest rivers in the country. It scrolls northward across the Maniototo Plain, makes a U-turn at the end of the Rock and Pillars, runs southward through the Taieri Gorge, then eases across another set of plains near Dunedin before entering the sea a few dozen kilometres north of its more famous cousin, the Clutha. 5

Like all rivers that flow through pastoral land, the dragon is less sleek, less robust now than it was when the poet was writing his lines at Taieri Mouth more than 50 years ago. Its flow is weakened by irrigation takes, and it bears a burden of contaminants on its 200-kilometre journey from source to sea. 10

Nitrate, phosphate, sediment and microbes—these are the four horsemen of the aquatic apocalypse that ride across the country’s freshwater estate. Their scourges are many: murky river reaches that once ran gin-clear, dead zones in lakes where oxygen levels have dropped to zero, slime-covered stream beds, algal blooms, the steady disappearance of freshwater fish and invertebrates from traditional habitats, the steady rise of faecal bacteria such as *E. coli*. 15

An upwelling of public dismay has emerged over the parlous state of freshwater, particularly the pollution of favourite swimming holes, and in extreme cases, those swimming places drying up. Water—both in its quality and quantity—is now the country’s number-one environmental issue. In a 2016 survey, people judged rivers and lakes to be the worst-managed parts of the environment. Almost two-thirds of respondents regarded farming as the main culprit—more than double the number who held that view when the same survey was conducted in 2000. 20

The country is having a Rip Van Winkle moment, an awakening to a changed reality. It has split the public into polarised factions: town vs country, conservation vs development, individual rights vs the common good. Passions are inflamed. Duelling narratives compete for dominance: Who are we if not a farming nation? Who are we if not a country of healthy rivers and lakes? 25

“It’s an issue that is both very technical and difficult and also something that resonates with our sense of what’s right and wrong at a visceral level,” said Gary Taylor, executive director of the Environmental Defence Society. “Of course, it’s all very well feeling passionate and angry about the state of freshwater. The question is, what do you do about it?” 30

Stepping into this fray, seeking a way through it, is a group of scientists attached to a National Science Challenge. Our Land and Water—Toitū te Whenua, Toiora te Wai (let the land be preserved, let the water abound) has \$97 million to spend on its mission: “To enhance the production and productivity of New Zealand’s primary sector while maintaining and improving the quality of the country’s land and water for future generations.” 35

Increase production while improving quality. Is there not an inherent contradiction—or at least a very large assumption—with that objective? Can we really have our environmental cake and eat it too?

**TEXT B: POETRY**

In this poem, the writer describes the experience of being in a boat on a flooded river.

**Whirlpool**

*Tarei-pou-kiore*

When the river floods the water squeezes  
through a cleft between a massive cliff-face  
and a mass of boulders, swift and yellow.  
At its base a pool too deep to measure,

gaping, sucking, roaring from its gullet 5  
like a hungry monster, caged and pacing  
round its walled enclosure, bent on killing.  
Past the cliff the twelve-foot waves come rushing.

“Don’t go through in high flood,” say the bosses.  
“Turn or tie up, wait for it to quieten.” 10  
On the other hand, there’s pride in running  
services exactly to a schedule.

Cross the beast by charging at its centre;  
get a full steam up and make for safety;  
keep within arm’s reach the only lifebuoy 15  
we possess, in case the skipper fumbles.

Engine flooding, vessel heeling madly,  
clinging to the boat’s the only option;  
though it might go under, no use jumping—  
diving in would only kill you quicker. 20

But then the boat is righted, and flung free  
as though the whirlpool spits it in distaste.  
Dog-like, it shakes the water from its decks.

**Glossed words**

Tarei-pou-kiore a rapid with a whirlpool on the Whanganui River

