**English Year 12 Level Two 2016**

**Assessment Resource Task for Internal 91105**

**Versions : Two 20 November 2014 Credits:** 4

**Standard Title:** Use information literacy skills to form developed conclusion(s)

**Task Title: Voicing a protest**

**Assessment Criteria**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Achievement** | **Achievement with Merit** | **Achievement with Excellence** |
| Use information literacy skills to form developed conclusion(s). | Use information literacy skills to form developed conclusion(s) convincingly. | Use information literacy skills to form developed conclusion(s) perceptively. |
|  |  |  |

**Introduction**

This assessment activity requires you to carry out an independent inquiry into a topic which has been widely discussed in the media (either currently or historically) and which has often polarised public opinion or evoked strong emotions. It is a controversial topic. You will use your information literacy skills to form developed conclusion(s), and to then present your developed conclusions in a formal essay (week 8) which may be read by your peers. Your Inquiry could be more powerful if the topic you select is linked to one of your other Year 12 subjects. You must consult with your teacher to ensure your fertile question and sub-questions can lead to developed and perceptive conclusions or recommendations.

You must collect information and form your conclusions in and out of class time.

You will be assessed primarily on whether your essay shows that you have carried out a systematic inquiry that leads to a developed and perceptive conclusion or recommendation based on the information that you have gathered. You will also hand in to your teacher your research folder for assessment of the information **literacy process.**

Task

***Choose a topic and frame your inquiry***

Choose a topic that is relevant, emotive, discussed in the media and possibly divisive of communities or countries. It may be related to the work you are doing, or going to be doing, in your other subjects. It is a good idea to access a range of opinion writing from newspapers and magazines, such as The Listener and The Sunday Star Times, in order to be aware of a range of issues before you make your selection.

The issue on which you base your inquiry needs to have enough scope to allow you to find a range of information or viewpoints about it. By choosing an issue that is controversial and supports several viewpoints, you will have a richer source of material from which to form your developed conclusions.

Once you have decided on an issue, you can embark on the inquiry process.

Consider:

* Presenting your developed opinions on a real life **sports** or **health** problem, for example terrorism sporting events, lack of inclusiveness, use of performance enhancing drugs, sledging, player pressures and problem behaviours (consider high profile players / sports people such as Oscar Pistorious, Ian Thorpe, Russell Packer, Zac Guilford…), obesity in NZ, diabetes e.g “Should there be a fat tax?”
* Presenting your developed opinions on a **science, warfare or environmental** issue, for example, genetic modification, animal experimentation, chemical run-off into our waterways, deep sea oil drilling, seabed mining, or the use of chemical weapons in war. For example: “Should the use of chemical weapons be better regulated?”
* Presenting your developed opinions on a **social science** issue, for example, NZ’s preparedness (or lack of) for natural disaster, or NZ’s involvement in war (WW1, WW2, Vietnam, Iraq etc.), pacifism and conscientious objectors, or NZ’s lack of nuclear and other armaments, For example: “ Why should New Zealanders defend foreign soils and not their own?”
* Presenting your developed opinions on an **identity** issue, for example the historical suppression of Maori language in New Zealand schools, tattooing and piercing in the workplace, traditional costume, moko, wearing of burqa, the NZ flag… For example, “Should celebrities like Robbie Williams wear Maori tattoos as fashion accessories?

**First stages of the inquiry process**

**Decide on an issue of interest to you and that may be relevant to your pathway subject**

* predict possible views
* build background knowledge ( including finding out others’ views about your topic)
* form a fertile question (an opinion or starting point that you will proceed to test through your inquiry, using the evidence that is available, for example, “Should all schools be single sex?”).
* form **3 to 4** sub-questions
* organise your inquiry folder which will include
* setting up your inquiry reflection
* setting up evaluation of the usefulness and reliability of sources of information (see Resource 1)
* setting up **a place to** record your sources of information
* **knowing how to** record your sources of information (APA referencing)
* setting up a place to make notes and to highlight key pieces of relevant information for each sub-question
* consider a range of possible sources of information (primary and secondary) – **at least six different texts - minimum of two for each sub-question**
* know where to look for information
* know how to make notes effectively

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL – (Exemplar)**

|  |
| --- |
| **FERTILE QUESTION:** |
| Should we be banning young children from heading the ball in soccer? |

|  |
| --- |
| **MY HYPOTHESIS:** My opinion on this topic and what I expect to find. Why it is important to me/us. |
| I currently think that it is a ridiculous idea to ban kids from heading the ball in soccer. My friends and I have been playing soccer and heading the ball since we were five years old and none of us have brain injuries. I expect I will find research that suggests there is a risk but I would be surprised if the risk is very big. I would need to see some pretty clear facts to change my mind on this. It is an important issue to look into though because a lot of kids play soccer and it would be bad if they really were putting their brains at risk. |

|  |
| --- |
| **MY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:** |
| 1. Why do people need to head the ball in soccer? |
| 2. What are the risks associated with heading the ball? |
| 3. What would be the impacts of removing heading from the game of soccer? |
|  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS ON MY TOPIC I HAVE IDENTIFIED:** | | |
| Doctors and medical staff would probably think it is a good idea to restrict heading. | Big soccer fans will probably be against this idea and think it is stupid and will ruin the game. | Some people might think that it all depends on the age of the person and the situation. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **A RANGE OF SOURCES I COULD USE:** | **STRATEGIES I WILL USE TO SELECT MY INFORMATION:** |
| **Text Type:** Newsparer articles, academic journals about sports injuries (particularly concussion), football fan magazines | Epic database search  Craap test – assessing for reliability and usefulness  Boolean Google search  Library database searches  Search You Tube for documentaries |
| **Text Type:** Wed sites – sports injury/concussion websites  Football fan websites and discussion forums |
| **Text Type:** Interviews with doctors, PE staff, survey of students |

**Literacy Skills Needed for Effective Research:**

**1. Evaluating Sources for Reliability and Usefulness**

Evaluating resources for reliability and usefulness is vital to ensure that the information you are gathering to help you form an opinion or make a decision is worthy of your consideration, and that it is going to lead you to **a well-founded and defensible conclusion.**

All good and trustworthy decisions are based on reliable, useful information. Imagine if the New Zealand government made the decision to inoculate all new- born babies against a particular disease (such as whooping cough), based on unreliable, useless information. Perhaps they relied on a rumour that spread through social media, an out-of-date medical journal and a You Tube clip made by amateurs with no medical qualifications. How outrageous would that be? We might then find out (too late for all those babies) through reliable, useful research, that the death rate from inoculation was far higher than that for new- born without inoculation, and all of those babies inoculated would now have a significantly shortened life span. Aue!

Applying the CRAAP Test to Evaluating Sources

Title of source:

URL:   
**Directions: Use your judgment in allotting points for the various categories. Add up the points for the total score.  *C*urrency (0 to 10 Points)**  
If relevant, when was the information gathered?

When was it posted?

When was it last revised?

Are links functional and up-to-date?

Is there evidence of newly added information or links?  
***R*elevance/Coverage (0 to 10 Points)**  
What is the depth and breadth of the information presented?

Is the information unique?

Is it available elsewhere, in print or electronic format?

Could you find the same or better information in another source (for example, a general encyclopedia)?

Who is the intended audience? Is this easily determined?

Does the site provide the information you need?

Your overall assessment is important. Would you be comfortable using this source for a research paper?

***A*uthority (0 to 10 Points)**  
Who is the author/creator/sponsor?

Are author's credentials listed?

Is the author a teacher or student of the topic?

Does the author have a reputation?

Is there contact information, such as an e-mail address?

Has the author published works in traditional formats?

Is the author affiliated with an organization?

Does this organization appear to support or sponsor the page?

What does the domain name/URL reveal about the source of the information, if anything? Example: .com .edu .gov .org .net  
***A*ccuracy (0 to 10 Points)**  
Where does the information come from?

Are the original sources of information listed?

Can you verify any of the information in independent sources or from your own knowledge?

Has the information been reviewed or refereed?

Does the language or tone seem biased?

Are there spelling, grammar, or other typos?  
***P*urpose (0 to 10 Points)**  
Are possible biases clearly stated?

Is advertising content vs. informational content easily distinguishable?

Are editorials clearly labeled?

Is the purpose of the page stated?

Is the purpose to: inform? Teach? Entertain? Enlighten? Sell? Persuade?

What does the domain name/URL reveal about the source of the information, if anything? Example: .com .edu .gov .org .net

***SCORING***

***45 - 50 Excellent  
40 - 44 Good  
35 - 39 Average  
30 - 34 Borderline Acceptable  
Below 30 - Unacceptable***

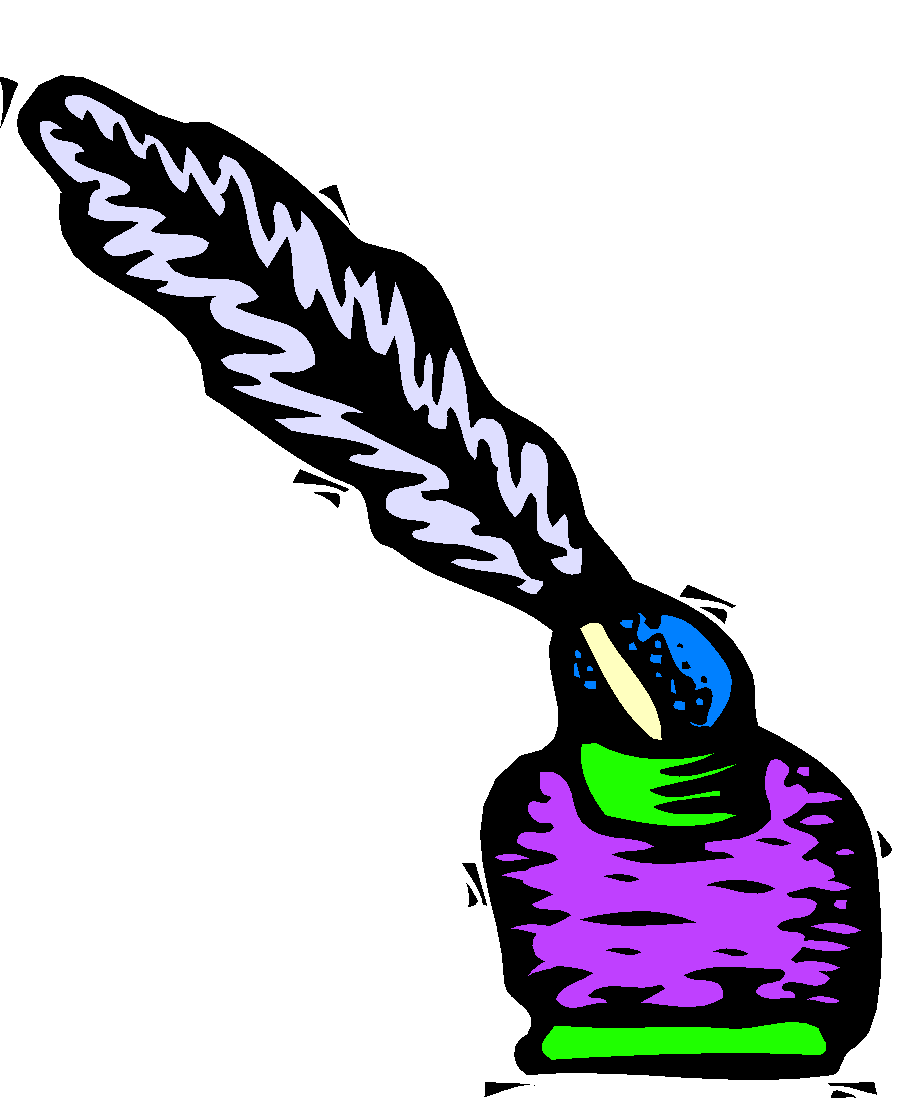
**TOTAL SCORE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**2. Notetaking**

**Notetaking** is a way of **recording** key information and ideas from resources and texts. You must write in a **shortened** form. You can:

* Write briefly, using keywords and phrases (not full sentences)
* Use bullet points/lists/mindmaps/charts etc
* Use abbreviations/symbols, e.g.,

*imp=important,# = number*



**Further Note-taking Tasks**

NZCER Website- username **ARB** – Password **Guide** - WL 3708; WL 3608

**Notemaking:** <http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/factfrenzy/opening.html>

**Other Useful websites**

**Skimming:** <http://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/elc/studyzone/570/pulp/hemp1.htm>

**Advanced Boolean searching:** <http://lib.colostate.edu/tutorials/advboolean.html>

**EPIC:** <http://www.tki.org.nz/r/epic/> (school user name - papamoa69 - and password - college63 - needed)

**INNZ:** <http://www.tki.org.nz/e/tki/innz/> (school user name - papamoa69 - and password - college63 - needed)

Example: **Note-taking, recording sources, evaluating for reliability and usefulness**

**NOTE TAKING SOURCE SHEET (Exemplar)**

|  |
| --- |
| **Source Details:**  **Author:** Emine Saner  **Title:** Not on me head, son – is heading a football a health hazard for kids Date Published and Publication Details / Date retrieved and URL: Retrieved from The Guardian newspaper. Tuesday 10 November 2015 17.35 GMT Last modified on Wednesday 11 November 2015 10.03 GMT **REMINDER - Have you checked this source for reliability and usefulness? Y** |

|  |
| --- |
| **SOURCE NOTES:**   * Force of heading the ball in women’s football can be the same as a punch in boxing * US Soccer Federation plans to ban heading for younger kids and limit heading for 11-13 year olds * There is, says [Dr Michael Grey](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/sport-exercise/staff/profile.aspx?ReferenceId=9921), a reader in motor neuroscience at the University of Birmingham’s School of Sport, “increasing evidence to suggest there may be a problem” with head injuries in football, and particularly in younger players. * It’s not just the actual heading of the ball but also the contact with elbows and hitting the ground which can happen when attempting a header. * According to Dr Grey, Children more at risk because their heads are “disproportionately large” compared to their brains and their neck muscles aren’t as strong. * FA (Football Association) monitoring the evidence before they make a decision. * Headway (Brain Injury Association) says still not enough evidence to be sure that heading is really dangerous. * Experts, like Dr Grey, are calling for more research. |
| **Source Evaluation – for reliability and usefulness:**  **Reliable?** Using Craap test. Very recent posting which was updated to allow the Football Association (FA) to comment. Quotes a Neuroscience expert – Dr Grey. Offers a range of perspectives (FA, Dr Grey, Headway). No bias is detected – all agree more evidence needed. Have cross referenced Dr Grey’s comments about the dangers of heading the football and they seem similar to other experts’ advice.  **Useful?** Yes. It had information on some of the dangers associated with heading the ball, particularly for young children. This will help with answering question 2 – What are the risks associated with heading the ball? |

# Sample Resource: Not on me head, son – is heading a football a health hazard for kids?

# By Emine Saner

# Tuesday 10 November 2015 17.35 GMT Last modified on Wednesday 11 November 2015 10.03 GMT

The issue of head injuries in football, [predicted the world players’ union Fifpro](http://www.theguardian.com/football/2014/jul/14/concussion-players-union-pressure-rules-change) after a number of players suffered concussions during last year’s World Cup, was about to become “a tidal wave that will engulf” the sport. Evidence that even lightweight balls can wreak lasting brain damage continues to grow. Last week, the Guardian [reported](http://www.theguardian.com/football/blog/2015/nov/01/football-heading-brain-damage) on work by researchers which found that in the women’s game, the force of heading back goal kicks was comparable to punches in boxing, or American footballers colliding. This week, [the US Soccer Federation announced](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/10/sports/soccer/us-soccer-resolving-lawsuit-will-limit-headers-for-youth-players.html?module=WatchingPortal&region=c-column-middle-span-region&pgType=Homepage&action=click&mediaId=none&state=standard&contentPlacement=5&version=internal&contentCollection=www.nytimes.com&contentId=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.nytimes.com%2F2015%2F11%2F10%2Fsports%2Fsoccer%2Fus-soccer-resolving-lawsuit-will-limit-headers-for-youth-players.html&eventName=Watching-article-click) it would be issuing guidelines that will limit the number of headers 11- to 13-year-olds can take in training, and ban them altogether for younger children.

There is, says [Dr Michael Grey](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/sport-exercise/staff/profile.aspx?ReferenceId=9921), a reader in motor neuroscience at the University of Birmingham’s School of Sport, “increasing evidence to suggest there may be a problem” with head injuries in football, and particularly in younger players.

Even if a player doesn’t suffer an obvious concussion from heading the ball (or going for a header – more often concussions occur from head-to-head or elbow contact with other players, or hitting the ground), the cumulative effect of repeatedly heading a ball could be damaging. “We call these subconcussive events that might not lead to [an obvious] brain injury each time but a little bit of damage builds up over time. There is some belief that these subconcussive blows may lead to neuro-degeneration.”

And children are more susceptible to head injuries than adults, he says. Children’s heads are disproportionately large, and their neck muscles are not sufficiently strong to brace against the impact of a header. “Therefore the brain is shaking around in the cranium more. Maybe we need to be looking at things like training for neck strength, and not allowing heading practice for children with particularly weak neck muscles.” Children develop at different rates, so it’s not enough to limit headers simply by age, he says. Another difference is brain maturity – for instance, the brains of children and adolescents haven’t fully developed the myelin that covers nerve cells, and could be more vulnerable to brain injuries.

Should there be a similar ban in the UK? A spokesperson for the told us that “The FA is committed to making the game as safe as possible and has noted today’s new rule changes outlined by US Soccer and will closely monitor any available new research in this area.” It also added that it was soon to announce “new guidelines – formed by an independent expert panel – which look at how to identify, manage and treat suspected head injuries and to manage a player’s safe return to play at all levels of football.”

Headway, the brain injury association, says there is “currently insufficient evidence on the risk of brain injury to justify a similar ban in the UK at this stage”.

Grey says there needs to be more research, but adds he is “in favour of the idea of restricting this type of contact for very young children. Because there is increasing evidence that would suggest that this might be a problem, at least for children we need to err on the side of caution.” In the absence of a ban, should parents try to stop their children heading the ball? “If I had a child of that age, I would have them playing football – all kids should be out there playing sport – but I would have them on a team that doesn’t practise headers.”

**3. Reflection**

|  |
| --- |
| **Reflecting on my Fertile Question:** Ask yourself questions like -is my Fertile Question open, rich, connected, charged and practical? Is there enough scope for a range of views and sources to be investigated? Is it providing a strong direction for my research? |

|  |
| --- |
| **Reflecting on my Hypothesis** Ask yourself questions like -is my original opinion on my topic still the same? **HOW** has my research impacted on my original opinion? Am I finding the ideas and details that I expected? What other information have I found that I wasn’t expecting? How has my research helped my understanding of the topic? |

|  |
| --- |
| **Reflecting on the Relevance of my topic:** Ask yourself questions like –why am I interested in this topic? Is my fertile question connected to my life in some way?  Is my research making me think about certain actions or certain recommendations that I can make to my audience or the wider community? |
| **Reflecting on my Research Questions:** Ask yourself questions like –are my questions open enough to explore a range of sources and perspectives? Do my research questions break down a range of angles on my Fertile Question? Has my research prompted me to ask new or different questions? What have I done with these new questions? |

|  |
| --- |
| **Reflecting on the Balance of Viewpoints I have researched:** Ask yourself questions like –have I identified more than just one side of the topic? Have I checked that I have used balance in the sources I have used? Have I found any bias or prejudice in my sources? What have I done to counteract these sources? |

|  |
| --- |
| **Reflecting on my use of a Range of Sources:** Ask yourself questions like –Have I used **six** different text types? What text type have I used the most? What text type have I had difficulty accessing? How am I going with finding and using a Primary Source? Are my sources providing enough information to help answer my research questions? What do I need? |

A sample reflection, completed after a few days working on the questions and some research for an Inquiry:

**Feb 24th** I have now completed my fertile question and sub-questions. It was tricky framing the fertile question as it was hard to come up with wording that made it nice and open, especially as I have an opinion strongly for one side of the question. Already I am starting to change my mind about the topic a bit. I didn’t realise that heading a football at speed can be almost the same as a punch to the head. I still worry about what it will mean for the game though. Heading is such a great part of the game and I’d hate to see it go. I now need to look for more evidence of how many kids get concussion from heading to see if it really is that bad or if it is just overstated.

**4. APA Referencing**

**1. Book with one author:**

King, M. (2000). Wrestling with the angel: A Life of Janet Frame. Auckland, New Zealand: Viking.

**2. Book with two to five authors:**

Smith, M., Brown, C., & Jones, N. (2006). Teaching and learning (2nd ed). Auckland, New Zealand: Puffin.

**3. Book or report by an organisation or government department**

University of Waikato. (2010). The Mighty Waikato (Information series No.3). Hamilton, New Zealand: Author.

4. **Film**

Zhang, Y. (Producer / Director). (2000). *Not one less* China: Columbia Pictures.

5. **Journal Article – academic / scholarly (internet only – no print version)**

Snell, D. The story of a war. *Gallipoli,100* Retrieved from <http://www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/tkka>

6. **Magazine article – popular / trade / general interest**

Goodwin, D.K.(2012, February 6) How I caused that story. Listener, 159 (5),69.

7. **Newspaper article (Database like stuff.co.nz)**

Harris, G. (2014, February 5). Violence in Waitangi. The New Zealand Herald. Retrieved from [www.nzherald.co.nz](http://www.nzherald.co.nz)

8. **Newspaper article – (Print version)**

Smith,J. (2014, January 12) Boy racers. Bay of Plenty Times, p.3

9. **Web pages (When multiple pages are referenced, reference the homepage)**

Statistics New Zealand.(2014). New Zealand in profile 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.stats.govt.nz>

Checklist –

**Task Yes / No Teacher**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| I have formed a fertile question |  |  |
| I have formed sub-questions |  |  |
| I have recorded my sources of information using APA referencing |  |  |
| I have evaluated my resources for reliability and usefulness |  |  |
| I have used at least 6 different sources of information |  |  |
| I have recorded my information using my own notes and highlighting key information from resources |  |  |
| I have maintained a regular reflective log |  |  |
| I have looked at both sides of my issue |  |  |
| I have drawn together my ideas and come to a conclusion that answers my fertile question |  |  |
| I have drafted my conclusion in a formal persuasive essay |  |  |
| I have redrafted my essay into a polished and publishable piece of writing ready to hand in to my teacher week \_\_\_\_ (completed in class under test conditions) |  |  |
| I have my research folder complete and ready to hand in to my teacher Week \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |  |  |

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (student)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (teacher)

**Link to English Exemplars**

[*http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-standards/qualifications/ncea/subjects/english/annotated-exemplars/*](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-standards/qualifications/ncea/subjects/english/annotated-exemplars/)

**Assessment schedule: English 91105 Dissenting voices**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Evidence/Judgements for Achievement** | **Evidence/Judgements for Achievement with Merit** | **Evidence/Judgements for Achievement with Excellence** |
| The student uses information literacy skills to form developed conclusion(s). This means that the student undertakes the work within the context of the English learning area, and:   * selects information from written, oral, and/or visual texts * selects his/her own texts * uses information literacy skills in completing a systematic exploration into a valid area for inquiry in order to form conclusion(s) * frames an inquiry within an authentic, relevant context and based on carefully considered information needs. This could include identifying an area or direction for investigation or posing a question(s) * selects and uses appropriate strategies for locating and processing information * evaluates the reliability and usefulness of selected information in relation to the inquiry * questions, challenges, and evaluates ideas or information gathered in the inquiry * develops and expresses an opinion or judgement, reaches a decision, or suggests a solution, and/or evaluates the conclusion(s). | The student uses information literacy skills to form developed and convincing conclusion(s). This means that the student undertakes the work within the context of the English learning area, and:   * selects information from written, oral, and/or visual texts * selects his/her own texts * uses information literacy skills in completing a systematic exploration into a valid area for inquiry in order to form conclusion(s) * frames an inquiry within an authentic, relevant context and based on carefully considered information needs. This could include identifying an area or direction for investigation or posing a question(s) * selects and uses appropriate strategies for locating and processing information * evaluates the reliability and usefulness of selected information in relation to the inquiry * questions, challenges, and evaluates ideas or information gathered in the inquiry * develops and expresses an opinion or judgement, reaches a decision, or suggests a solution, and/or evaluates the conclusion(s) * forms reasoned and clear conclusions that are connected to the purpose of the inquiry. | The student uses information literacy skills to form developed and perceptive conclusion(s). This means that the student undertakes the work within the context of the English learning area, and:   * selects information from written, oral, and/or visual texts * selects his/her own texts * uses information literacy skills in completing a systematic exploration into a valid area for inquiry in order to form conclusion(s) * frames an inquiry within an authentic, relevant context and based on carefully considered information needs. This could include identifying an area or direction for investigation or posing a question(s) * selects and uses appropriate strategies for locating and processing information * evaluates the reliability and usefulness of selected information in relation to the inquiry * questions, challenges, and evaluates ideas or information gathered in the inquiry * develops and expresses an opinion or judgement, reaches a decision, or suggests a solution, and/or evaluates the conclusion(s) * forms reasoned conclusions that are connected to the purpose of the inquiry and show insight or originality in thought or interpretation. |

Final grades will be decided using professional judgement based on a holistic examination of the evidence provided against the criteria in the Achievement Standard.

**91105 – Inquiry Conclusion Formal Writing – Low Excellence Exemplar**

**Fertile question:**

New Zealand, land of the long white cloud, one hundred per cent pure. That is how we sell our country – as a clean, green nation. It has been a successful campaign – so successful that other countries view us as a clean, green nation, a leader in all things environmentally friendly. However, this “100% Pure” tourism campaign makes no mention of our treatment of animals. It couldn’t, could it? Because the statistics indicate that the way we treat animals isn’t humane – or pure – at all. New Zealand’s treatment of pigs and hens and the irony of our laws, which contradict our “pure” image, run the risk of damaging the reputation we have fought so hard to build. Some organisations are attempting to raise awareness of this issue, but finding a solution to the problem is often easier said than done.

Pigs and chickens face the full brunt of it. Approximately 2.4 million battery hens are farmed each year (chickenrescue.net.nz), and every single one of these birds is unable to walk or stretch her wings and her living space is merely the size of an A4 sheet of paper (chickenrescue.net.nz). She spends her entire life cooped up inside a cramped cage like a prisoner in a concentration camp, standing on mesh floors, her beak cut off at just five days old. Pigs don’t fear any better. They too, are confined to a small area of space, unable to sit down, screeching and even lying in their own excrement. In fact, the situation for the pigs is almost worse. We don’t condone this kind of treatment of human beings, so why do we allow it for animals? Thanks to the bold action of activists, New Zealanders have become more aware of the battery hen situation, while many believe pigs wallow around in green, open field all day long with a fresh breeze and endless sky to keep them company.

The ironic aspect of the whole debacle is that treating animals this way is one hundred percent legal. Current laws condone this treatment of animals. The Government is advised by the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee on the minimum legal standards for animals, both farm and domestic. By law, a farm animal must be able to exhibit its natural behavior. Cunningly, this committee is instructed to take economic consideration into account in its decision making, meaning, in the case of chickens and pigs, it may be legal for them to be cooped up in tear jerking conditions if having to exhibit “natural behavior” becomes “difficult” for the farmer.

While this may shock us, it is not news for animal welfare campaigners. Organisations such as the SPCA and WSPA have been campaigning for years, publicizing footage of suffering animals in the hope that New Zealanders open their eyes to their living conditions. Think back to February, when animal rights protesters spent the night chained to silos on a battery hen farm south of Auckland. They were aiming to raise awareness about the proposal to change battery hen cages to “enriched colony systems” (nzherald.co.nz). Yes, the quotation marks say it all. Basically, the conditions would remain; all these “systems” are doing is changing the name with complicated synonyms. Strangely enough, the Egg Producers’ Federation is in favour of the new system, stating that the colonies meet the requirement of the law and ensure eggs remain affordable during tough economic times. This basically summarises all the farmers are concerned about – did the federation “accidently” omit the fact that hens would continue to live the majority of their lives on an area the size of this page? As Ms. Sims, one of the protesters, said, “A cage is a cage no matter how the Egg Producers’ Federation tries to spin it.” (nzherald.co.nz)

So what is stopping us from making a change? The farming industry plays a very important role in New Zealand’s economy, and no one is more aware of this than the Government. If we were to increase the standards for animal welfare, the price of products would rise, and this, no doubt, would affect growth in the sector. A change could force farmers into a situation where the viability of their business is in danger. This could lead to issues with the economy, such as job losses, as well as fire up tempers left, right and center. As a possible solution, perhaps the Government could offer incentives or subsidies to the farmers to bring their practices into the twenty first century.

Like everything these days, there is a political angle to the issue. The very idea of having to tell farmers they have to alter their facilities is a politician’s worst nightmare. There are a lot of farmers in this country, and that means a lot of votes! Parliament is seeing hens as producers of eggs instead of living creatures. The politicians, instead of taking the time to review the code of animal welfare, sit down at the dinner table every week to enjoy poultry and pork. Maybe they are not aware of the risks consumers take when they eat animals or eggs produced in unsanitary conditions, such as salmonella (animalvisuals.org).

What we need is equal weight on both sides of the scale. Currently, a life of suffering is ignored because it saves a couple of cents on an egg (greens.org.nz), and parliament is more interested in looking after the economy than responding to animal welfare campaigns. The suffering of animals should not be ignored in order to save money and bring higher profits to the egg industry. Animals should have the right to decent living conditions, just like human beings, and we should be mindful that other countries’ perceptions of New Zealand could be tarnished by our barbaric treatment of animals, which could harm our tourism trade. We must practice what we preach and be one hundred percent pure on all fronts. On the other hand, we need to bear in mind the key role farming plays in our economy and ensure that job losses and cost rises are kept to a minimum. Ultimately, the consumer has the power. If we don’t by battery eggs then the farmers will have to change their systems. Free range, or living hell? It’s your choice.