

90851R



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

QUALIFY FOR THE FUTURE WORLD
KIA NOHO TAKATŪ KI TŌ ĀMUA AO!

Level 1 English, 2015

90851 Show understanding of significant aspects of unfamiliar written text(s) through close reading, using supporting evidence

9.30 a.m. Monday 16 November 2015
Credits: Four

RESOURCE BOOKLET

Refer to this booklet to answer the questions for English 90851.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–4 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: FICTION

In this passage from a novel the writer is returning to her grandfather's farm, which her family has inherited following his death.

Arrival at Magpie Hall

The house was shuttered against the coming winter, and the spectre of my grandfather stood on the front step to greet me before dissolving into the shadows. I had left the rain behind, and the weak autumn light descended from the clouds and bounced off the cliffs to the north, playing tricks. The stillness frightened me. I had been coming here most of my life and my arrival was always accompanied by movement and sound: Grandpa waving, one of the dogs 5 wriggling its hips and coming over to sniff and bark hello, always at least one chicken out of its coop, scratching and nudging the earth with a crowing rooster not far behind. The bustle always diverted me from what I felt now — a slight panic, a creeping awareness of the places on the farm I had managed to avoid for twenty years staring at my back, willing me to turn and face them. 10

The looming presence of the house was exaggerated by the great shadows it cast with the sun behind its turrets and chimneys. Long spikes stretched across the paddocks. The flowers had retreated for the autumn and the ivy that climbed the grey stone walls had been reduced to a tangle. Rotten autumn leaves gathered on the ground in damp clumps and even the macrocarpas that lined the nearby paddocks seemed to have moved closer. 15

A single magpie perched on the nearest chimney. It leaned towards me, leering. I stood on the gravel and stared at it a while before turning away to unpack my books and bags from the back seat. I had a fresh tattoo on the inside of my left wrist, and it ached with the effort of carrying the weight in my arms. When I kicked the car door closed, the sound was like an explosion in the late afternoon air and the magpie beat its wings, protesting. 20

Glossed words

spectre (imagined) ghostly figure

macrocarpas large conifer trees often planted on farms to make hedges or shelter belts

Source: Rachel King, *Magpie Hall* (Auckland: Random House, 2009), pp. 13–14.

TEXT B: POETRY

The subject of this poem is the neighbour's dog.

Boy

There's a reason why my neighbour's always calling out to *Boy*,
 her wobbly-wobbly young black lab
 who spends too much time in my place,
 sniffing the compost, snacking there,
 pooping on the grass, peeing against the wall 5
 of my garage, and wagging his tail
 whenever he sees me, whenever I say his name,
 and the reason is you can't trust
 a dog you can't see. But I like *Boy*,
 the silly bugger, especially since he's not mine. 10
 So far he's proven to be a nice dog. He's left
 sheep and cattle alone, hasn't snarled
 or bitten anyone. But ever since he followed her son
 for two kilometres up the rail trail the other day,
 my neighbour's worried: she's scared 15
 he will make a habit of it and might get shot
 by one of the local farmers, especially while
 there's lambs all round the place like woolly maggots.
 I tell *Boy*'s owner not to worry unduly,
 that I've been reading about the incidence 20
 of dog attacks on other animals
 and what traits to look out for in a dog
 and guard against. "He's not in the high-risk category,"
 I tell her, and she looks relieved. So I can
 see a batch of scones coming up. You could opine 25
 it's as if I've finally learned how to say
 the right thing at the right time
 though I wouldn't bet a bundle on it.

Glossed word

opine give an opinion

TEXT C: NON-FICTION

In this extract, an inexperienced gardener reflects on growing his own vegetables.

Growing Pains

My cauliflower has bolted. It's yet another sign of the precarious grasp we both have on existence.

The plant that spontaneously goes to seed is the perfect metaphor for the gardening experience. It's nature doing what nature does, much to the frustration of those of us who dare to hope we can control it. 5

Gardening is a rich mix of diligent effort followed by frustration, confusion, sunburn and soiled hands. Regardless, we persevere because of the simple pleasures and the lessons that the many tasks of growing bring us.

In an age where consumerism means you don't have to leave your bed to order almost anything in the world, reading on the back of a packet of seeds that the expected time to maturity is 120 days is almost incomprehensible. 10

In the excitement of the garden centre the tiny seedlings, or the seeds with lush portraits of produce emblazoned on the packets, look so full of promise. Maybe you can find something to do with zucchinis? Yams seem interesting. Kale! Okay, maybe not kale. Fill all the garden! Plant all the things! 15

Gardening recreates the dramatic feast and famine cycles of old. For weeks, there's nothing but the expectation of something.

The time gives you a chance to get used to the fact that your vegetables won't be as perfect as the ones in store. Yours will be smaller, or larger, blemished, gnarled and often nibbled. Gardens are battlefields. If it's not the elements or muscular, tenacious weeds, it's the birds and butterflies, slugs, snails, toileting cats, the occasional goat and rabbits. 20

Then there is the glut caused by all of those seedlings you planted one euphoric spring afternoon ripening at once. Kilos of tomatoes, cucumbers, and zucchinis that miraculously quadruple in size overnight pile up, demanding not to be allowed to rest in the vege bin of the fridge until their only use is compost and they feed only the soil from whence they came. 25

But trying to grow something of your own will make you realise just how thankful we should be that there are experts out there to do it for us. The next time you are in a supermarket take the time to linger lovingly in the produce department. Marvel at the marrows. Behold the beans. Caress the cauliflower. Wash your hands first.

Looking at the cauliflowers that I tenderly transplanted from a cheap supermarket seedling punnet some weeks ago, I'm convinced the few that haven't bolted are actually cabbages. It's perplexing. On the positive side, they haven't gone to seed and will be a fine alternative to cauliflower. That's gardening. 30

Glossed words

bolted	gone to seed
tenacious	tending to cling or hold on firmly
euphoric	intensely exciting or joyful