INFORMATION DOCUMENT

COMPULSORY EXAMINATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
Elementary Cycle Three   **514-600**

June 2010

Québec

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

This document conveys information concerning the end of Cycle Three English Language Arts Examination scheduled for administration in May 2010. The primary aim is to provide, in advance, general information about the examination and its administration. As it contains important information regarding the nature, scheduling and scoring of the examination, it should be distributed without delay to all Cycle 3 English Language Arts teachers and consultants, including other personnel concerned with examination scheduling.

It is useful to recall at this time that features incorporated into this examination have been determined through direct and ongoing consultation with English Language Arts teachers and consultants throughout the province. Feedback that was received following the 2009 Elementary Cycle Three Examination has also been given consideration.

The intention of this examination is to provide opportunity for students to demonstrate competency and to provide teachers the opportunity to judge competency.

Data obtained from student performances on the tasks prescribed in this examination, in conjunction with data collected from performances during the cycle, will help the teacher form judgments about the levels of competency attained by the end of the cycle for the end-of-cycle report (as described in the *Scales of Competency Levels, Elementary Education Cycle Three).*

1 STRUCTURE OF THE COMPULSORY EXAMINATION

1.1 General Characteristics

The English Language Arts examination is characterized by distinctive features:

- It is developed following an inquiry approach to provide purpose and context for the tasks: the tasks are directed by a guiding question and/or by sub-questions.

- It is a context-based examination that incorporates the processes and strategies commonly associated with reading, viewing, discussing, responding and writing production.

- It is made-up of distinctive tasks that stem from both context and guiding questions. Students will be placed in a context that establishes the situation and a focus for the tasks. The tasks are linked through talk and discussions and include a reading response and synthesis, narrative writing and the creation of a media text.

- Three tasks will be formally assessed: reading response/synthesis, narrative writing and a media text production.

2   MATERIALS

2.1   Materials Provided for the Examination

Materials for the Teacher	Materials for the Students
Video (DVD)	Literature Booklet
Teacher's Guide	Three Magazines
	Processfolio* (Student Booklet)
N. B. Schools must ensure accessibility to equipment to view the video.	
* Students will write the tasks in the *Processfolio* (provided with the materials) designed for each part of the examination.	

3   DESCRIPTION OF THE TASKS

3.1   Response to Literature

Reading performance will be assessed through a written response to illustrated literature requiring students to interpret and make meaning from the text(s) and the illustrations. The reading task will also call for students to read, to think critically and to synthesize the ideas and information in the text(s). Approximately three hours of time should be allocated to this section of the examination.

3.2   Narrative Writing

Writing performance will be assessed through narrative writing requiring students to create a modern day story or traditional tale for a selected audience. Students must be given sufficient time during the examination to draft, to seek feedback from peers and to revise their writing before submitting the final version. Approximately three hours of time should be allocated to this section of the examination.

3.3   Producing a Media Text

Performance in media literacy will require students to produce a media text in relation to the underlying issue within the context of the examination. Approximately one hour of time should be allocated to this section of the examination.

3.4   Using Language to Communicate and to Learn

Talk for communication and learning will be embedded throughout the examination. Students will participate in activities that will require them to brainstorm and discuss issues derived from the contents of three magazines. Talk for learning is emphasized throughout the activities in both small and large group settings.

4   CONDITIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR ADMINISTRATION

Schools are responsible for administering the Examination, following the guidelines stated in the *Teacher's Guide*. All tasks are to be completed on school premises, preferably in the normal classroom setting, unless otherwise indicated.

In the case of combined classes, that is, classes made up of Cycle Three students from both Year 1 and Year 2, teachers may wish to have all their students undertake the activities and tasks in the examination.

4.1   Time Allocation

Generally, the examination should take approximately seven hours in total. The suggested time allocations are approximations only—if necessary, more time may be allocated. Teachers will need to designate a block of time accordingly during which they will administer the Examination in a sustained, continuous procedure.

It should be noted that **sustained time** on tasks is required to allow students to engage in activities that call for critical thinking and problem solving—components characteristic of competency-based learning. As students require sustained time to contextualize and to become familiar with the tasks, as well as to undertake both group and independent activities, some individual tasks may take some students longer to complete than others. Time required to complete tasks will vary within classrooms across the province. Adjustments may be made according to the differing needs. As some tasks may take more than one hour to complete, such as composing and revising a narrative text, schools are asked to adjust schedules accordingly.

5   STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Students with special needs may be entitled to measures that adapt the conditions for administering ministerial examinations to enable them to demonstrate their learning. The Direction de la sanction des études will soon make available to schools a reference document presenting guidelines for the implementation of these measures.

6   SCORING PROCEDURES

6.1   The Marking Centre

It is recommended that Cycle 3 English Language Arts teachers come together in a marking centre to collaborate on the scoring of the students' performances. This opportunity to analyze and discuss students' work ensures uniformity of interpretation of the criteria and indicators as well as equity and reliability. It also offers an excellent opportunity for professional training in evaluation as teachers work collaboratively to select anchor papers drawn directly from the students' work. The anchor papers, representative samplings of each level of competency, serve as benchmarks for the subsequent marking of student work. Scoring criteria (rubrics) found in the student *Processfolio* and the *Teacher's Guide*.

6.2 Criterion-Referenced Rubrics

Rubrics for scoring the three tasks are provided in the Appendices. Each rubric describes five levels of performance.

Whereas the performance criteria are elaborated using professional language, teachers will find that examining the exemplars with their students provides an ideal opportunity for helping students to understand the expectations of the tasks (what quality work looks like), as well as to understand the criteria in a language that is more familiar to them.

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APPENDICES

USING RUBRICS TO ASSESS PERFORMANCE

A **rubric** is a qualitative tool, designed to assess complex tasks. It is set of criteria and performance indicators based on what are the most significant attributes of specific tasks, arranged according to expected levels of performance. The rubrics provided for the assessment of the examination are designed to tell both the students who have performed the tasks and the assessors who will judge the performance exactly what elements are most valued and that should be evident in the performance. The **criteria** describe the essential components of the task being evaluated and the **indicators** (performance levels) describe the relative quality of the performance for each criterion.

Wherever possible, students should become familiar with the scoring procedures. Teachers can invite their students to examine the assessment criteria by applying the scoring procedures to samples of students' work. Working with exemplars presents students with concrete examples of quality work, and provides assistance with the vocabulary used to describe it. Students can then develop an understanding of the characteristics of quality work or performance. Therefore the evaluation tools are provided in advance of the examination to allow students to fully experience how their work will be assessed.

The rubrics are task-specific and describe five levels of performance for each criterion. They provide details about the task and describe the possible range of achievement for the task as well as conveying information about expectations and goals. Students meet or do not meet the criteria on a range from fully attained to incompletely attained.

Scoring Student Work

Optimal conditions for scoring students' work include teacher collaboration, marking in groups and shared decision-making. The rubrics for scoring students' work are included in the *Processfolio* in which all the work is collected.

Using the Rubrics

1. Before beginning to score a student's work, read the student's entire *Processfolio*. This will provide an overall general impression of the student's performance on all the tasks.

2. Using pre-selected anchor or benchmark papers refer to the rubrics provided to score each task to be assessed. On each rubric, indicate the performance description that best fits the student work for each criterion.

3. Provide a global score for the task. This may call for analysis and judgment, looking for which level of performance description best fits the criteria and the student's overall work on the task.

Student Profile

Performance from this examination alone is not sufficient to determine the information required for the students' end-of-cycle competency reports. Information obtained from complex tasks undertaken over the year or cycle should also be included to form a final judgment. (Refer to the *Scales of Competency Levels for Elementary Cycle Three)*.

Rubric for Narrative Writing

Criteria	Range of Competency				
	Advanced Level 5	Thorough Level 4	Acceptable Level 3	Partial Level 2	Minimal Level 1
Organization and Ideas	Sustains a sharp focus on details that lend authenticity to unfolding events resulting in a smooth-flowing, entertaining story that culminates in a rewarding resolution. The situation/events are cleverly crafted to impact the reader.	Sustains a careful focus on details throughout; events unfold logically and culminate in an interesting and satisfying resolution. The situation/events are believable and capture the reader's attention.	Details are offered that contribute to predictable events or ideas; sequence and order of events may falter but unfold to reveal a resolution. The situa-tion/events are understandable and hold the reader's attention for the most part.	Details are introduced that follow a narrative structure; ideas and events are strung together and culminate in a sudden conclusion. The situation/events are disconnected.	Attempts a simple narrative; ideas and events are garbled with little direction or development.
Voice	Reader engagement is enduring; the writer's voice is compelling and enhances reader involvement.	Carefully attends to engaging the reader; the writer's voice is sincere and confident and invites the reader to connect.	Communicates with the reader, but lacks consistent engagement; the writer's voice is discernible.	Addresses the reader's attention unevenly; the writer's voice is indistinct or inauthentic.	The reader is not engaged; the writer's voice is flat or absent.
Structures and Features	Uses structures and literary elements in a deliberate, intentional manner; skilful use of features such as dialogue, vocabulary and figurative language enrich the narrative.	Uses essential structures and literary elements in a sustained manner; careful attention to features such as dialogue, vocabulary and figurative language elaborate the narrative.	Uses essential structures; attention to unfolding events is evident. Some features such as dialogue, word choice and figurative language contribute to the narrative.	Uses narrative structures in a simple sequence, such as beginning, middle and end. Attempts at dialogue are evident, but story is undeveloped and inconclusive.	Uses basic narrative structures in partial sequence that may suggest a story.
Grammar and Paragraphing	Exercises firm control of syntax; the writing flows smoothly. Control of paragraphing and transitions is evident.	Control of syntax is evident; errors, if any, are infrequent and minor. Paragraphs are indicated consis-tently.	Errors appear and interfere with meaning at times. Paragraphs are apparent but inconsistent.	Multiple and repetitive errors make the writing difficult to understand. Ideas are grouped in a semblance of paragraphing.	Serious errors impair meaning. Knowledge of English is undeveloped. Ideas are listed as randomly occurring events.
Spelling and Punctuation	Spelling is standard and highly controlled. Firm control of punctuation and capitalization is evident and enhances communication.	Applies spelling rules and uses visual and meaning-based strategies. Errors, if any, are insignificant. Applies rules of punctuation and capitalization consistently.	Control of common spelling patterns, high frequency words and use of the apostrophe are evident. More attention to proofreading is required. Application of punctuation and capitalization rules is evident; occasional errors do not impede meaning.	Spelling strategies are generalized and applied haphazardly. Multiple re-occurring spelling errors make the writing difficult to read. Use of basic punctuation and capitalization is inconsistent. Uncertainty with basic rules, such as the use of apostrophe, among others, is evident.	Spelling strategies are undeveloped; multiple spelling errors of high frequency words affect meaning. Missing punctuation and standard capitalization, including misuse of the apostrophe, impede communication.

For each statement, put a check mark (√) in the box that best describes the student's performance. Determine an overall or global level of performance.

Rubric for Response to Literature

Criteria	Range of Competency				
	Advanced Level 5	Thorough Level 4	Acceptable Level 3	Partial Level 2	Minimal Level 1
Meaning	Draws comprehensive meaning from the text. Connects ideas in the text and makes inferences based on these ideas. Justifies understanding with references to the text.	Draws deeper meaning from the text. Makes inferences from the ideas in the text. Supports understanding with references to the text.	Draws general meaning from the text. Understanding is apparent, but some references to the text may be unsupported.	Summarizes details from the text. Partial understanding is evident; may make vague references to the text.	Retells the text, listing details from the text. Understanding is uncertain.
Connections	Reflects on, and integrates values and experiences with the text. Connections are perceptive and make reference to issues extending beyond the text.	Makes connections beyond personal experiences with the text. Connections are thoughtful and make reference to other texts, including media.	Associates personal experiences with the text. Obvious or simplistic connections are made to other texts including media.	Offers highly obvious connections to the text. Connections may be forced, superficial or uncertain.	Offers tentative or illogical connections that may relate vaguely to the text.
Structures and Features	Explains how the narrative structures and specific features in the text reveal the author's purpose and enhance meaning.	Refers to narrative structures and features in the text and explains how they contribute to and support own ideas and meaning.	Identifies structures and features that characterize the narrative text and tells how they contribute to the text.	Mentions obvious structures of narrative text such as characters, place, or events.	Refers to the story in the narrative text.
Judgment (Synthesis)	Extends understanding by including ideas from the text with own interpretation. Supports judgment with insightful explanations that apply to life in general.	Interprets the text by adjusting own thinking and integrating these ideas with those suggested in the text. Ideas are justified with thoughtful explanations.	Reacts to the text by considering new ideas in light of own ideas. Offers logical explanations for impressions.	Offers opinions about ideas from the text without explanation.	Comments on the text with likes and/or dislikes.

For each statement, put a check mark (√) in the box that best describes the student's performance.
Determine an overall or global level of performance.

Rubric for Media Text

Criteria	Range of Competency				
	Advanced Level 5	Thorough Level 4	Acceptable Level 3	Partial Level 2	Minimal Level 1
Purpose and Audience	Displays an intuitive understanding of purpose and audience is prominent. The message and concept are perceptive and insightful.	Displays a thorough understanding of purpose and clearly attends to audience. The concept is thoughtful and the message is communicated effectively.	Displays awareness of purpose and audience is considered. The message is clearly communicated.	Displays an unclear understanding of purpose and audience is difficult to identify. An idea is apparent, but simple.	Displays little or no awareness of purpose and/or audience. Generally fails to communicate.
Structures and Features (Media Conventions)	Cleverly attends to design and visual elements. Unusual or individual aspects indicate originality and sophistication.	Carefully attends to design and visual elements. Selected aspects are relevant and engaging.	Attends to design and visual elements. Conventional aspects portray a message.	Indicates little attention to design. Elements distract or confuse the message.	Lacks attention to design. Elements are inappropriate or missing.

For each statement, put a check mark (√) in the box that best describes the student's performance. Determine an overall or global level of performance.