

# INFORMATION DOCUMENT

## COMPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**  
Grade 6  
514-600

June 1999

# **COMPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**  
Grade 6  
514-600

June            1999

Direction de la formation générale des jeunes

## CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>Objectives of the Assessment.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>General Nature of the Assessment.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Learning Principles Incorporated Into the Assessment .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Evaluation Principles Incorporated Into the Assessment.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Assessment Materials .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>The Components of the Assessment .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>6.1</b>	<b>Overview.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>6.2</b>	<b>Responding to Literature.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>6.3</b>	<b>Writing a Personal Narrative Account.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>6.4</b>	<b>Language Conventions.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>6.5</b>	<b>Reading for Information .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Performance Criteria for Response to Literature.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Performance Criteria: Personal Narrative Account .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Performance Criteria for Conventions of Print.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Distribution of the Assessment .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Administering the Assessment.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Correcting the Assessment and Follow-Up .....</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>APPENDIX: Exemplars of Response to Literature .....</b>	<b>8</b>

## 1 Objectives of the Assessment

Complementary assessments in English Language Arts are optional evaluation practices that the Ministère develops in co-operation with teachers and consultants in the province. They have, as their principal aim, a desire to offer quality instruments in language assessment to schools that may not necessarily have the time nor training to develop their own instruments. Nor may these schools wish to purchase existing standardized tests that do not reflect teaching practices in classrooms.

In addition, these assessments offer:

- models that schools may adapt or revise according to their own wishes
- opportunities for staff development in grading student work according to specified criteria that have been developed for these assessment
- realistic information about what our students are capable of doing, drawn directly from sample work of Anglophone students in Québec schools
- insights into assessment approaches that are new and of proven validity
- concrete, descriptive evidence of student ability, which is useful for feedback to students, reporting to parents within the school community, and professionally informative for teachers themselves

## 2 General Nature of the Assessment

The June 1999 assessment offers a number of core activities which target key language abilities. All activities can be modified and/or incorporated into existing evaluation practices.

The activities are designed in such a way that they yield information on the following:

- personal response to literature
- writing a personal narrative account
- mastery of language conventions
- reading for information

The assessment reflects practices consistent with the *Elementary Language Arts I-VI* program and the document *Elementary Language Arts: Definition of Domain, Cycle One and Cycle Two*. As well, the assessment offers guidance to teachers who seek to inform themselves about the effectiveness of their classroom practices. All activities are realistic in that they give students opportunity to use language in real situations.

### **3 Learning Principles Incorporated Into the Assessment**

These principles include :

- giving students time to work through a task in more than one session
- fostering the integrated use of all the language processes (responding, communicating orally and composing in a specific context)
- providing students with real audiences and clear purposes for their writing
- allowing social interaction by thinking together, trying out ideas and seeking feedback

### **4 Evaluation Principles Incorporated Into the Assessment**

These principles include :

- providing students with precise information about what is expected of them
- defining precisely what is valued or expected of the students in their work (performance criteria)
- providing calibrated descriptive ranges of performance of these performance criteria
- providing students with scoring criteria in advance
- ensuring that what is defined is measurable, and that what is measurable is consistent with curriculum
- using multiple examples of student work when evaluating performance

### **5 Assessment Materials**

The assessment includes the following materials:

- *Resource Booklet*
- *Student Booklet*
- *Teacher Guide*
- *Correcting Guide*

## **6 The Components of the Assessment**

### **6.1 Overview**

The assessment will focus on the following language abilities: response to literature; writing a personal narrative account; mastery of language conventions; and, reading for information.

### **6.2 Responding to Literature**

Exemplars, drawn from the June 1997 complementary examination, as well as revised criteria for response are included in this document. See Appendix page 8, for the exemplars and page 4, for the performance criteria.

### **6.3 Writing a Personal Narrative Account**

A personal narrative account model will be included in the examination which teachers will use to demonstrate the writing characteristics of the personal narrative account. The performance criteria for this task are included in this document, page 5.

### **6.4 Language Conventions**

Performance criteria will be provided for this measure, see page 6. The students' personal narrative account writing will serve as the basis for these criteria. Students will be given time during the examination to draft and revise their writing.

### **6.5 Reading for Information**

Students will read a written account which details procedural information at the literal and inferential levels. They will be asked to make use of their understanding of this text in a series of tasks which require the following operations: listing, ordering, explaining and inferring. Performance criteria will accompany these task-questions.

## 7 Performance Criteria for Response to Literature

### Performance Level One

1. The student draws meanings from the text which are **comprehensive** and **substantive** as well as **perceptive** and **personalized**. The response shows that these meanings:
  - **extract** understandings from the text that go beyond surface coverage and reveal a balanced examination of story events and occurrences, including those story details which offer insight into human experience;
  - **explore and elaborate**, with story details, on certain of these understandings in a manner which shows how the reader relates to the text in terms of his or her own experiences;
  - **extend** the reader's self-knowledge appreciably in terms of broader applications of the story to life, relationships and values.

### Performance Level Two

2. The student draws meaning from the text which are **comprehensive** and **personalized**. The response shows that these meanings:
  - **extract** understandings from the text that go beyond surface coverage and reveal a balanced examination of story events and occurrences and some of the story details which offer insight into human experience;
  - **explore and elaborate** on certain of these understandings in a manner which shows how the reader relates to the text in terms of his or her own experiences;
  - **extend** the reader's self-knowledge in terms of broader applications of the story to life, relationships and values.

### Performance Level Three

3. The student draws meaning from the text that can be described as **limited** in coverage and **literal** in interpretation. The response shows that these meanings:
  - **extract** surface-level understandings from the text, often in a selective manner;
  - **explore and elaborate** on these understanding in a limited way;
  - **extend** the reader's self-knowledge minimally in terms of broader applications of the story to life, relationships and values.

### Performance Level Four

4. The student draws meanings from the text that are **disconnected**, even **irrelevant**, from story events and occurrences. The response shows that meanings:
  - **extract** details which are only a sequential relating of story events and occurrences;
  - **explore and elaborate** on understandings insufficiently or may step outside of the text altogether in relating his or her own experiences;
  - **extend** the reader's self-knowledge insufficiently in terms of broader applications of the story to life, relationships and values.

## 8 Performance Criteria: Personal Narrative Account

1. The narrative includes elaboration of time, place and character.
  - It shows thoughtful attention to detail.
  - Events are sequential and the story is drawn to a satisfying conclusion.
  - The writing is individualistic and holds the reader's attention all of the time.
  
2. The narrative includes some elaboration of time, place and characters.
  - The writing shows attention to detail.
  - The events are in order and it is drawn to a conclusion.
  - The writing is interesting and holds the reader's attention most of the time.
  
3. The narrative has essentials of time, place and character.
  - It contains sketchy details.
  - Some events may be missing or extraneous and it has a simple ending.
  - The writing holds the reader's attention some of the time.
  
4. The narrative is a simple account with little or no reference to time, place or character.
  - There is no elaboration or detail.
  - It is a simple listing of events.
  - The writing does not hold the reader's attention.

## **9 Performance Criteria For Conventions Of Print**

- 1. The writer demonstrates throughout a firm grasp of writing conventions (spelling, grammar, punctuation and paragraphing).**
  - Errors are minor and do not affect the reading of the text.
- 2. The writer demonstrates a reasonable grasp of writing conventions (spelling, grammar, punctuation and paragraphing) most of the time.**
  - Errors do not make the text difficult to read.
- 3. The writer demonstrates throughout a weak grasp of some of the writing conventions (spelling, grammar, punctuation and paragraphing).**
  - Errors make the text difficult to read.
- 4. The writer demonstrates a weak grasp of most writing conventions (spelling, grammar, punctuation and paragraphing).**
  - Errors make the text almost impossible to read..

## **10 Distribution of the Assessment**

School boards and private schools are sent two copies of the assignment materials. They assume responsibility for photocopying sufficient booklets. In the case where the Ministère assumes responsibility for the printing, sufficient copies will be sent to each institution.

## **11 Administering the Assessment**

Schools are responsible for administering the assessment, following the guidelines stated in the *Teacher Guide*. Schools are, however, given latitude in determining when the assessment is used, and which parts of it. The June calendar date chosen for this assessment allows schools a time for teachers to meet and confer about exemplar papers that will be used as the standards for performance in each mark range.

## 12 Correcting the Assessment and Follow-Up

All versions of the assessment are corrected locally, using the scoring criteria found in the *Correcting Guide*. Exemplar papers (representative samplings) of student work in each mark range will be selected and agreed upon by teachers. These, in turn, will serve as benchmarks for the subsequent marking of student work. These exemplars should be drawn directly from the students' own work.

The Ministère will make every effort to offer schools in the province an anecdotal selection of student work in a variety of writing forms and across all the mark ranges. It is foreseen that such a collection will aid teachers, as well as students, in assessing their own work. Such a bank of materials would be updated over the years and would undoubtedly serve to inform schools, staff and students about their particular needs.

All schools using this assessment are asked to forward to the Ministère, by June 30, 1999, samples of corrected student work from each performance level for each component activity. Teachers interested in working on the follow up analysis, (scheduled for 5 days in August), are also encouraged to contact:

Beverly Steele, Provincial Coordinator: Evaluation  
600 Fullum Street, 8th floor  
Montréal (Québec) H2K 4L1  
Telephone: (514) 8973-2161  
Fax: (514) 873-2571

## APPENDIX

### EXEMPLARS OF RESPONSE TO LITERATURE

(from June 1997 examination)

#### Exemplar One:

##### *Greyling*

*Greyling is a most intriguing story which I very, very much enjoyed. It told a story of life, a fact that all parents must face; their beloved babies do grow up. Though parents wish to keep their babies in their tight clasps forever, they must go, if parents kept their children forever, it would be discriminating a human soul, there would be no child – there would be Mama’s and Papa’s wee babe but if the babe is held on to forever it will not be able to discover itself, whom they are without their parents. Besides, parents always have their babies just, (as they grow) in different forms. Like Greyling, he is still the fisherman’s and the fisherman’s wife’s child, just in a different form, the form of a seal.*

*I think maybe the author told this fact of life without even realizing it as I only recognized the other side to this anecdote after I had reread the story and explored it thoroughly. The first time around I was captured by the Selchien and the “cover part” of the story.*

*When I say “cover part” I mean that usually, stories have more than one layer; there was the story about the lonely fisherman and his wife who one day found a seal that transformed to a boy who (in attempt to save his drowning father) morphed back into the form of the seal and, then there’s the more general story of parents having to let their children grow up. Like two different stories running parallel to each other. I find stories constructed this way to be very interesting.*

*This story reminded me of Roan Inish which also deals with Selchies. It also reminded me of Ternanag although this is an Irish tale and tells of horses that transform to ghosts in the water. I guess the same idea of morphing, the era that both legends take place in and mystery that lies behind both, (to my eyes) made them similar.*

*It just occurred to me that there is another, very mysterious, layer to this story; you’re left wondering if Selchien really do exist. I believe they do.*

*I found this story to be (as I have already mentioned) very mysterious. “And in his secret heart, he wanted one (child) too. Yet he felt somehow it was wrong.” This sentence leaves you in debate, is it wrong to keep the seal or, should he be left free. After thinking hard and long I come to the conclusion that yes, it was right to help the pup, crying for its own but, I wouldn’t keep him – that’s captivating a wild animal; a free soul.*

*Another something I found mysterious about this story was that upon land, Greyling longed for something but, didn’t know what. I know what he longed for, he longed for the ocean. Him longing for something taught me a little bit more about Selchies; they only remember faintly their life as seals.*

*Though the end was sad (Greyling having left) it was a happy ending. Greyling was happy, his caged soul had been set free. I think that though the fisherman's wife wept and wailed, I think that the Selchies' parents felt their son's joy. And, Greyling still visits the fisherman and the fisherman's wife now and then as all grown up children do even if they've gone off to live somewhere far away, there is always love between parents and children.*

### **Commentary:**

Amelia makes it clear from the beginning that she has searched this story for all levels of meaning. She offers several: *beloved babies do grow up; morphing; and upon land, Greyling longed for something but did not know what it was.* These insights are perceptive as well as personalized. They also tell us that Amelia has responded to this story in a comprehensive as well as substantive way. She is also intrigued with the layers of the story. She calls this mysteriousness: *And in his secret heart, he wanted one (child) too. Yet he felt somehow it was wrong.* In this way, Amelia shares her personal views about these events with us in revealing her own private intrigue with the story events and what has caught her attention. She offers her own judgements as well as relates this story about selchies to other stories she has read. You sense in this response that Amelia has gone beyond the story details and ventured into the realm of human experience. The story has contributed to her understanding about relationships and values in life and you are left with the impression that Amelia has carried from this story many insights about life itself.

### **Exemplar Two**

#### ***Eleven***

*If I were Mrs. Price I would have asked Rachel if it was her sweater before jumping to conclusions because Rachel is the one who knows if it belongs to her, not Sylvia who told Mrs. Price she thought it belonged to Rachel and if Rachel told me it didn't belong to her I would trust her instead of ignoring her.*

*I know exactly what the author meant when they explained that you don't feel eleven for days. I remember the countless times when my parents would be more excited than I was about becoming a year older. I always wonder what to answer when people ask me what it feels like to be a year older because I don't know, I feel just like I did yesterday and the day before.*

*I like the examples the author gave when she was describing how we grow old because the examples had nothing in common and were interesting in the way that you didn't expect someone to relate aging to onion rings, tree trunks and dolls.*

*I think Mrs. Price is not an understanding person because she wasn't tactful in the story when Rachel said it wasn't her sweater.*

*If I was the writer I wouldn't have said "You don't feel eleven" so much. Instead I would have used different words that mean the same thing everytime I wrote it.*

## **Commentary:**

Stephanie gets right to the point in her response. Although later she offers details and elaborations to show she has understood the story as a whole, her main concern is to make a judgement about Mrs. Price as a teacher and how she has handled the situation with the sweater. Stephanie obviously gives weight to this criticism of Mrs. Price because she returns to the point later on with a claim that she feels Mrs. Price is not *an understanding person*. You could say that this is the point in the story that Stephanie has chosen to develop or elaborate in her response.

Yet, Stephanie also shows us that she understood other aspects of this story. She relates to the idea that a birthday day does not necessarily change you dramatically. She also ventures into a bit of literary criticism with her comments on the interesting way the author has related aging to *onion rings, tree trunks and dolls* – astute commentary from a young reader. Stephanie offers us some negative criticism of the repetition also: *I would of used different words*.

There has been sufficient reference to the story and elaboration of story details to satisfy us that Stephanie has been involved enough in this story to relate to it and reach her own judgement about the story's merit. Notice that she does not overly-elaborate but, even so, there are enough references to satisfy us that Stephanie has drawn meanings from the story. Stephanie is a good example of a student who responds indirectly by cementing her comments in key story details but who chooses not to overly-elaborate on story references. Even so, they are there.

## **Exemplar Three**

### ***Part of the Family***

*Part of the family to me is about family troubles.*

*When Kate's older sister Marilyn comes for a visit, she tries to change the way her family lives. She wants them to be more of a T.V. family, the kind of family who get all excited and beam when their having chicken noodle soup for supper.*

*The kind they aren't, Kate explains.*

*Even though I'm an only child, and will never have an older sister to try and turn my family into a family on a screen, I think Kate over exaggerated a little. I mean it seems to me that Marlyn was only there for a bit, so for that bit Kate could of acted like a T.V. family, and who knows, maybe she would of enjoyed it! If she didn't, well Marilyn would be gone and they can return to a normal family.*

*Almost all my friends have an older brother or sister, but never, in all the years I've heard them fight, I've never heard them refer to each other as insects. In the story even Kate's father is calling Marilyn a type of insect, he says "But Marilyn's not exactly a butterfly, April. She's more like ... Tent Catipillar." I couldn't believe what I was reading ... The father was referring to his own daughter as tent catipillar! And then when Kate demands what she is, he replies "A mosquito!" Her own father! Wow, what a nice guy! Personally I wouldn't want him as my dad! He certainly wasn't my favorite character. I for some strange reason liked ... Marlyn! She was to me the whole story! But if you beam when your having chicken noodle soup, go to the mall all day, do all the things you love to do together, and talk non-stop you're a T.V. family, right?? And if you are I wonder, is that a good thing?*

### **Commentary:**

Marissa steps into this story as quickly as did Stephanie. Admitting she is an only child and may not fully grasp the role of big sisters, Marissa defends the visit of Marilyn and offers an opinion that it wouldn't have hurt to try and act like a *TV family* once in awhile. There are signs that Marissa relates even though she is an only child.

Marissa steps into this story in yet another way: she reaches her own conclusions about the family in question and clearly applies these thoughts to family life in general. In this way, she goes beyond the story and applies it to a lesson on life within the family. There are two hints of this, one drawn directly from the story – she disapproves of the father's way of comparing his daughter to an insect – and the other is an extension of Marissa's own thinking – she wonders if we should really envy the ideal TV family, as she understands it.

Marissa has extracted beyond a surface level reading and she has stepped into the story itself in terms of her own experiences and personal judgements. In this way, she extends story events into statements about her personal views on family life. Like Stephanie, Marissa responds in broad sweeps, yet includes enough story references to show her readers that she has drawn comprehensive as well as substantive meanings from her encounter with this story.

### **Exemplar Four**

#### ***Dreams of the Animals***

*Dreams of the Animals was a great poem. There were great dreams that had great imagination. For example: I liked when the frogs dream of green and gold frogs, sparkling like wet suns among the lilies because it makes you feel how the frogs feel about their environment and it makes you understand how they feel and how they think. I can relate to dreams of joy like that or dreams of courage like the iguana when it dreams of escaping from the cage. Every dream of every animal that the author wrote about makes sense. For example: moles dream of darkness because they're always underground where it is dark; red and black striped fish dream of red and black striped dreams because they see their red and black striped reflection in the water. The*

*animals do have dreams like us and the author is trying to tell us that we are all different, but we do all have dreams. We all have imagination and dreams are beautiful. Everyone and everything dreams. The writer expresses why they have dreams and why they have those kinds of dreams. The author says they have these kinds of dreams because they are different sizes, characters and basically because they live in different places.*

*What do mice think of? Mice think of claws because cats always chase them, they're always scared of them, and they are always frightened, so they have nightmares thinking of them. Iguanas that are trapped in cages always think of water – dish and sawdust, because that is what they see all day long. If I were thinking of escaping from a cage, then of course I'd dream of it. If you've got something on your mind, and when you go to bed you're still thinking of it, you'll dream about it. I agree with the writer when she says that animals have dreams because when I think of something at night, I dream about it. So it would be the same thing if a horse thought of something: I believe that the horse would dream about it, or anyone else, or anything else.*

### **Commentary:**

This is a response to what must be considered a demanding poem to read. It is evident that Claudio is having difficulty in making sense of the hidden meanings here, especially the metaphors. This might explain why Claudio in his response cites so many details from the poem. He sticks to the text, word for word. Perhaps he hesitates to venture too far afield.

There are times when Claudio does grasp the metaphor of freedom, even though he never does spell it out completely. He comes close: *like the iguana when it dreams of escaping from its cage*. Trouble is, Claudio's reference is inaccurate. In the end, Claudio settles for making a case that everyone has dreams, not just humans, and these dreams are related to their own particular circumstances. That's why mice dream of cats, while humans may not. When you think about it, there is plausibility to the meanings that Claudio makes and he certainly lands each example with detailed references to the poem. Others may well see in this poem meanings of a different kind, but that does not detract from Claudio's interpretation. His comes very close to getting at deeper levels of meaning that are here. *If I were thinking of escaping from a cage, then of course I'd dream of it.*

Claudio's response differs from Stephanie's and Marissa's in that he works with the text at a highly explicit level. This could be because of his own uncertainty to venture too far from the surface level and draw inferences about meanings. Yet, even at the surface level, Claudio presents a response that holds. His response may not be as substantive as it is literal but you have to agree he has made a prodigious effort to get at meanings.

