

COMPULSORY EXAMINATION

Elementary Cycle Three

Information Document - June 2012

English Language Arts

Elementary 6

514-600



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INTRODUCTION

This document conveys information concerning the end of Cycle Three English Language Arts Examination scheduled for administration in May 2012. 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 Three English Language Arts teachers and consultants, including other personnel concerned with examination scheduling.

The 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 2011 Elementary Cycle Three examination has also been given consideration.

The intention of this examination is to provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate knowledge and competency, as well as to give teachers the opportunity to judge literacy development.

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 determined by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, the student's final score compiled from the tasks in this examination should account for 20% of the final mark for the reading competency and 20% of the final mark for the writing competency.

1 STRUCTURE OF THE COMPULSORY EXAMINATION

1.1 General Characteristics

The English Language Arts examination has 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, statement 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 or statements to establish a situation and a focus for the tasks, which are linked through related activities, talk and discussions. The students are required to respond to materials viewed and read, as well as to compose a narrative.
- Two tasks will be formally assessed: reading response and narrative writing.

2 MATERIALS

2.1 Materials Provided for the Examination

Materials for the Invigilator/Teacher	Materials for the Students
A video clip (DVD)	<i>Literature Booklet</i>
<i>Teacher's Guide</i>	<i>Processfolio*</i> (Student Booklet)
N.B.: Schools must ensure accessibility to equipment to view the video clip.	
* Students will write the tasks in the <i>Processfolio</i> (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. The task will require students to read the literature and to construct meaning from the text through a response process. Students are called upon to think critically and to synthesize the ideas in the text. Approximately three hours of time should be allocated for this section of the examination—this time frame includes activities to set the context, as well as preparation time prior to the task.

3.2 Narrative Writing

Reading and Note Making: Writing performance will be assessed through narrative writing requiring students to craft a story for a selected audience. The task requires students to draw upon their knowledge of the structures and features of narrative writing (story) and the conventions of written language, and apply how they interact to inform/entertain their selected audience. Students must be given sufficient time during the examination to follow the writing process (i.e. to plan their writing, 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 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 discuss issues derived from the contents of the examination and the related activities. *To use language to communicate and to learn* is not formally assessed in this examination; however, opportunities are imbedded in the activities to facilitate further collection of data.

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.

Schools and school boards are required to notify, in advance, the Direction de la sanction des études of the number of copies necessary for each class of Cycle Three students. 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 complete the activities and tasks in the examination.

4.1 Time Allocation

Generally, the tasks required in this examination should take approximately six hours in total. The suggested time allocations are approximations only and do not include time allocated to preparation activities—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** for 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. The 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. Planning and collaboration among school administrators and teachers may be required in order to provide optimal conditions.

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. For further information on the implementation of these measures, please refer to the section *Guidelines for Adapting the Conditions for Administering Ministerial Examinations* in the document entitled *Administrative Guide for the Certification of Studies and Management of Ministerial Examinations*. This document is provided by the Direction de la sanction des études at the following address: <http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/sections/publications/index.asp?page=fiche&id=1849>.

6 SCORING PROCEDURES

6.1 The Marking Centre

It is recommended that Cycle Three 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 students' work. Scoring criteria (rubrics) are found in the *Teacher's Guide*.

6.2 Criterion-Referenced Rubrics

Rubrics for scoring the two evaluated tasks will be provided in January 2012, following the final validation. As in past examinations, each rubric will describe five levels of performance. Teachers are required to judge the overall level of performance for each evaluated task.

A specific numeric value is indicated for each level of performance and must be recorded as the student's score. Please note that the numeric values **do not indicate a range of scores**; rather, **only this numeric value can be applied as a score for each particular level of performance**.

Whereas the performance criteria are elaborated using professional language, teachers will find that examining 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.

