

INFORMATION DOCUMENT

COMPULSORY EXAMINATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
Elementary Cycle Three

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 2011. 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.

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 2010 Elementary Cycle Three Examination has also been given consideration.

The intention of this examination is to provide opportunity for students to demonstrate knowledge and competency, as well as to provide 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.

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, 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. 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/synthesis and narrative writing.
- Two tasks will be formally assessed: reading response/synthesis and narrative writing.

2 MATERIALS

2.1 Materials Provided for the Examination

Materials for the Teacher	Materials for the Students
Animated Film (DVD)	Literature Booklet
Teacher’s Guide	<i>Processfolio</i> * (Student Booklet)
N. B.: Schools must ensure accessibility to equipment to view the film.	
* 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 that incorporates illustrated literature and animated film. The task will require students to view an animated film, to read illustrated literature, to interpret and make meaning from the texts. Finally, students are called upon to think critically and to synthesize the ideas in both texts. Approximately three and one half hours of time should be allocated to 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

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 literary element of character development in narrative writing. 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 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 literature and film. Talk for learning is emphasized throughout the activities in both small and large group settings and may be assessed at teacher discretion.

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 six and a half 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. For further information on the implementation of these measures, please refer to the documents made available to the schools by the Direction de la sanction des études.

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 student *Processfolio* and the *Teacher's Guide*.

6.2 Criterion-Referenced Rubrics

Rubrics for scoring the two 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 a set of criteria and performance indicators based on 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 inform both the students who perform the tasks and the assessors who judge their performance exactly which elements are most valued and 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. The evaluation tools are therefore 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 while conveying information about expectations and goals. Students meet or fall short of meeting the criteria on a range from fully attained to incompletely attained.

Scoring Students' 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 preselected 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 to identify 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 in forming a final judgment.

RUBRIC FOR NARRATIVE WRITING

Criteria	Level 5 Advanced	Level 4 Thorough	Level 3 Acceptable	Level 2 Partial	Level 1 Minimal
Character Development	<p>Crafts memorable and distinctive characters; complex, true-to-life characteristics give insight into the characters that remain with the reader.</p> <p>The element of character is crafted in a way that is significant to the story and impacts the reader.</p>	<p>Clearly develops and reveals memorable characters; credible characteristics invite the reader to empathize with the character.</p> <p>The element of character is kept in focus and evolves to contribute to story development and reader engagement.</p>	<p>Establishes one or more ordinary characters with plausible characteristics; the reader can identify with the character.</p> <p>The element of character contributes to the story development and holds the reader's attention for the most part.</p>	<p>Presents one or more characters; the element of character is undeveloped and characters remain obscure.</p>	<p>Suggests one or more characters; for the most part, characters remain lifeless.</p>
Organization and Ideas	<p>Sustains a sharp focus on details that lend authenticity to unfolding events; character and events work together to establish a smooth-flowing, entertaining story that culminates in a thought-provoking resolution.</p>	<p>Sustains a careful focus on details throughout; character and events work together to unfold the story and culminate in an interesting and satisfying resolution.</p>	<p>Details are offered that contribute to predictable events or ideas; character and events are logically connected and come to a resolution.</p>	<p>Details are introduced that follow a narrative structure; character and events are strung together and culminate in a simple conclusion.</p>	<p>Attempts a narrative; character and events are disconnected with little direction or development.</p>
Voice	<p>Sustains reader's engagement throughout; the writer's voice is compelling and enhances the reader's involvement.</p>	<p>Carefully attends to engaging the reader; the writer's voice is sincere, distinct and confident.</p>	<p>Holds the reader's attention for the most part; the writer's voice is discernible.</p>	<p>Addresses the reader's attention unevenly; the writer's voice is indistinct or inauthentic.</p>	<p>Disregards the reader's attention; the writer's voice is flat or absent.</p>
Structures and Features	<p>Uses structures and literary elements in a deliberate, intentional manner; skillful use of features such as dialogue, vocabulary and figurative language enrich the narrative.</p>	<p>Uses essential structures and literary elements in a sustained manner; careful attention to features such as dialogue, vocabulary and figurative language elaborate the narrative.</p>	<p>Uses essential structures; attention to unfolding events is evident. Wavering attention to features such as dialogue, word choice and figurative language undermines the narrative.</p>	<p>Uses narrative structures in a simple sequence, such as beginning, middle and end. Attempts at dialogue are evident, but story is undeveloped and inconclusive.</p>	<p>Uses basic narrative structures in partial sequence that may suggest a story.</p>
<p>Score for narrative writing: _____</p> <p>Score for language conventions: _____</p> <p>Overall score for narrative writing: <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/></p>		<p>For each statement, put a check mark (✓) in the box that best describes the student's performance.</p> <p>Combine this score with the one obtained from assessing the written language conventions.</p> <p>Determine an overall or global level of performance.</p>			

RUBRIC FOR WRITTEN LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS

Criteria	Level 5 Exemplary	Level 4 Thorough	Level 3 Acceptable	Level 2 Partial	Level 1 Minimal
Syntax	Demonstrates control through effective revision and editing of the final version; varied sentence structure and language are skillfully used to enhance meaning and style.	Demonstrates attention to careful revision and editing of the final version; sentence structure is varied and syntax errors, if any, do not interfere with meaning.	Demonstrates attention to editing in the final version; incorrect language usage and run-on sentences are apparent, but have only a minor effect on meaning.	Demonstrates minor editing in the final version; serious errors in syntax and sentence structure make meaning unclear.	Multiple and repetitive errors in syntax impair readability.
Paragraphing	Uses paragraphs consistently to reinforce the structure.	Organizes paragraphs to shape the structure.	Groups ideas to suggest paragraphs.	Use of paragraphs is not evident.	Writing is disorganized.
Spelling	Applies spelling rules effectively; errors, if any, are few and insignificant and do not affect meaning.	Applies spelling rules; minor errors are noticeable, but infrequent and do not affect meaning.	Applies spelling rules inconsistently; frequent errors are apparent and interfere with meaning.	Repetitive spelling errors (including high frequency words) make the writing difficult to read and impede meaning.	Multiple spelling errors impair readability.
Punctuation and Capitalization	Applies punctuation and capitalization consistently to guide the reader smoothly through the text and to enhance communication.	Applies punctuation and capitalization effectively. Missing punctuation is not sufficient to interfere with communication.	Uses punctuation and capitalization inconsistently. Occasional errors interfere with communication.	Uses punctuation and capitalization randomly. Serious errors interfere with communication.	Missing punctuation and capitalization impede communication.
<input type="checkbox"/> Score	<p>For each statement, put a check mark (√) in the box that best describes the student's performance.</p> <p>Directions: Combine the global score from conventions with the global score from narrative writing.</p> <p>*A global score of Level 3 or more for language conventions allows a narrative writing global score of Level 3 or higher.</p> <p>**A global score of less than Level 3 for language conventions allows a narrative writing global score of Level 3 or less. Determine an overall or global level of performance.</p>				

RUBRIC FOR RESPONSE TO LITERATURE

Criteria	Level 5 Advanced	Level 4 Thorough	Level 3 Acceptable	Level 2 Partial	Level 1 Minimal
Meaning	Draws comprehensive meaning from the texts by interpreting the characters' actions and interactions in the texts. Connects ideas and makes inferences based on these ideas. Justifies understanding with references to the texts.	Draws deeper meaning from the texts by attending to the characters' actions and interactions in the texts. Makes inferences from the ideas and supports understanding with references to the texts.	Draws general meaning from the characters' actions and interactions in the texts. Understanding is apparent, but some references to the texts may be unsupported.	Summarizes details from the characters' actions and interactions in the texts. Partial understanding is evident; may make vague references to the texts.	Retells events from the texts about the characters' actions and interactions, listing details. Understanding is tenuous.
Connections	Integrates values and experiences in light of ideas from the texts. Perceptive connections are made with reference to issues common to both texts, suggesting a world view.	Considers own values and experiences in light of ideas from the texts. Thoughtful connections are made with reference to both texts.	Associates personal experiences with the texts. Obvious or simplistic connections are made with reference to both texts.	Offers highly obvious connections to the texts that may be forced, superficial or uncertain.	Offers tentative or illogical connections that relate vaguely to either text.
Structures and Features	Explains how the visual and narrative structures and specific features in the texts reveal the author's/director's purpose and enhance meaning.	Refers to visual and narrative structures and features in the texts and explains how they contribute to and support own ideas and meaning.	Identifies structures and features that characterize the visual and narrative texts and tells how they contribute to the texts.	Mentions obvious structures of the visual and narrative texts such as characters, place or events.	Refers to the stories in the narrative and visual texts.
Judgment	Reacts to the qualities of the texts and supports judgment with elaborated and insightful explanations, which at times apply to life in general.	Reacts to the texts with specific opinions that are justified with thoughtful explanations.	Reacts to the texts and offers logical explanations for opinions.	Offers an opinion about the texts without justification.	Comments on the texts with likes and/or dislikes.
<input type="checkbox"/> Score	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.				

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