

INFORMATION DOCUMENT

COMPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Grade 6
514-600

June 2004

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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. As well, the assessment tools also serve as models for the June 2005 mandatory evaluation of Cycle Three elementary students.

In addition, these assessments offer:

- **for end of cycle 2004, models of authentic assessments that schools may adapt or revise according to their own wishes**
- **insights into assessment approaches that are new and of proven validity**
- **opportunities for staff development in grading student work according to specified criteria that have been developed for these assessments**
- **insights into teaching-learning-evaluation cycle when teachers who administer the exam meet together in a marking centre to discuss and interpret student performances in relation to teaching practices**
- **concrete, descriptive evidence of the performance of students in English schools in Québec at end of cycle for professional information in conjunction with students' year-long performance**

2. General Nature of the Assessment

The 2004 assessment offers a number of core activities that target key language abilities. For students with special needs, all activities can be modified and incorporated into their existing authentic evaluation practices.

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

- **personal response to literature through reading and/or viewing and listening to literary, popular and information-based texts**
- **writing self-expressive, narrative or information-based texts for a specific purpose and audience, using language conventions**
- **use of language to communicate and learn**
- **use of acquired information**

The assessment reflects practices consistent with the following documents: *Quebec Education Program, Evaluation of Learning At the Preschool and Elementary Levels Framework, and Competency Levels by Cycle, Elementary School*. 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 (listening, responding, communicating...)
- 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
- establishing a marking centre where teachers examine and mark student work by applying the performance criteria following procedures that ensure reliability of the scores; **three days should be allocated for evaluating students' work**

5. Assessment Materials

The assessment includes the following materials:

- *Resource Booklet(s)*
- *Student booklet*
- *Teacher Guide*
- *Bibliography and other resources, such as web sites, and/or video and/or CD*

6. The Components of the Assessment

6.1 Overview

The assessment will focus on the following language abilities: personal response to literature; writing for a particular purpose and audience; use of language conventions; use of information; and use of language to communicate and learn. Four-point rubrics will be provided for scoring the tasks.

6.2 Personal Response to Literature

The performance criteria for Personal Response to Literature will reflect the levels of competency that the student attains aligned with the program.

6.3 Writing for a Purpose and Audience

Based on the initial reading activity, a variety of writing tasks will be proposed, such as story, letter, personal account, script or diary. Students will select a text-type to use to write for a specific purpose and audience.

The students' writing tasks will serve as the basis for evaluating their use of language conventions. Students will be given time during the examination to draft and revise their writing.

6.4 Use of Language to Communicate and Learn and Use of Information

Following the reading/viewing of texts, the students will be asked to make use of their understanding by means of a series of tasks.

7. Distribution of the Assessment

School Boards and private schools are sent two copies of the assessment materials. They assume responsibility for photocopying sufficient booklets.

A booklet of exemplars of student writing from the June 2003 assessment will be sent to school boards for distribution to the schools by February. These will allow teachers to assist students in understanding and applying performance criteria.

8. Administering the Assessment

Schools are responsible for administering the assessment, following the guidelines stated in the *Teacher Guide*. After students have finished the exam, teachers should meet to establish anchor papers. These anchor papers serve as standards of performance. It is suggested that the June calendar date indicated on the official exam schedule from the Ministère be used for setting anchor papers.

Two more days should be provided for teachers to complete the evaluation of student work in a marking center to ensure reliability of the scoring. School Boards are responsible for providing release time for teachers to complete the marking.

9. Scoring the Assessment and Follow-Up

For June 2004, evaluation of student work is done locally, using the scoring criteria found in the *Teacher Guide*. Anchor 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 anchor papers should be drawn directly from the students' own work.

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

All schools using this assessment are asked to forward to the Ministère by June 30, 2003, samples of corrected student work from each performance level for each activity in the assessment. Included should be the teacher's reflections on the administration of the exam, as indicated in the *Teacher's Guide*. Teachers interested in working on the follow-up analysis are also encouraged to contact:

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