

INFORMATION DOCUMENT

COMPULSORY EXAMINATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Cycle 3
514-600

June 2005

Québec 

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INTRODUCTION

This document conveys information concerning the End of Cycle 3 English Language Arts compulsory examination scheduled for April 2005. The primary aim is to provide, in advance, sufficient information about the examination.

The document contains essential information regarding the nature, scheduling and scoring of the examination and should be photocopied and distributed without delay to all Cycle 3 English Language Arts teachers and consultants, as well as personnel responsible for examination scheduling.

Designed around a learning and evaluation situation, the 2005 assessment offers core activities that target key language abilities. 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. Written commentaries that were received following the June 2004 examination have also been given consideration.

Please be advised that during the summer of 2005 there will be a provincial study of End of Cycle 3 student performances in Language Arts, using work obtained from the April 2005 compulsory examination. The purpose of this study is not to compare schools or students, but rather to examine the efficacy of the program with regards to the outcome expectations of the Quebec Education Program (QEP). The Ministère de l'Éducation (MEQ) will randomly select students whose complete, scored work will be submitted for the study. The initial scoring of the exam is the responsibility of schools and school boards. Further instructions will be sent by the Direction de la sanction des études.

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1. Overview of the Assessment

In co-operation with teachers and consultants in the province, the Ministère de l'Éducation (MEQ), designs quality instruments in language assessment. These instruments provide insights into assessment approaches that are of proven validity as well as opportunities for staff development in scoring student work according to specified criteria. The goal is to provide descriptive evidence of the End of Cycle 3 performance of students in English schools in Quebec. This professional information is to be used in conjunction with students' year-long performances.

2. General Nature of the Assessment

The 2005 learning and evaluation situation offers a number of core activities that target key language abilities. For students with special needs, all activities can be modified and incorporated into the students' existing evaluation procedures as described in her/his current and up-dated Individual Education Plan (IEP). Modifications must follow those that are already in place and that are applied for instruction during the school year.

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

- **Reading/viewing and listening to literary, popular and information-based texts, followed by response to literature;**
- **Writing self-expressive, narrative or information-based texts for a specific purpose and audience;**
- **Using language conventions;**
- **Using language to communicate and learn;**
- **Using cross-curricular competencies.**

The assessment reflects practices consistent with the following documents: *Quebec Education Program; Evaluation of Learning At the Preschool and Elementary Levels; Evaluation 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 authentic in that they give students opportunity to use language in real situations.

3. Learning Principles Incorporated Into the Assessment

These principles include:

- Time for students to work through a task in more than one session;
- Integrated use of all the language processes (listening, responding, communicating); and
- Student interaction to explore ideas and to seek 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;
- Providing students with scoring criteria in advance along with examples of student work (exemplars) for practice in applying the criteria;
- 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 an evaluation centre where teachers examine and score student work by applying the performance criteria following procedures that ensure reliability of the scores. **Sufficient time should be allocated for evaluating students' work.**

To allow teachers to help students understand the performance criteria, a document containing annotated exemplars gathered from the 2004 English Language Arts examination will be distributed to all schools within the next few weeks. Included in the document are the June 2004 rubrics designed for evaluating student performances, along with the revised rubrics for the 2005 April examination. It is foreseen that the exemplars will aid teachers, as well as students, in becoming familiar with the criteria for assessing their work. **As the performance criteria are elaborated in professional language for teachers, they will find that working with their students to examine the exemplars provides an ideal opportunity to help the students restate the criteria in language more familiar to them.**

5. Assessment Materials

The assessment includes the following materials that will be provided by the MEQ:

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

6. The Components of the Assessment

6.1 Overview

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

6.2 Reading and Response to Literature

Reading is assessed through response to literature as well as by other tasks requiring comprehension of texts. After more than one reading of text(s) followed by discussion in both large and small groups, students will write their thoughts about and reactions to the issues and themes elaborated in the text(s). Performance criteria for response to literature will describe the level of competency that the student attains.

6.3 Writing for Purpose and Audience

Students will select a text-type in which to write for purpose and audience. Students must be given time during the examination to draft and revise their writing. Performance criteria for narrative writing will describe the level of competency that the student attains, and will include criteria for the evaluation of use of conventions.

6.4 Use of Language to Communicate and Learn

Following the reading/viewing of texts, the students will be asked to make use of their understanding by means of a series of tasks. A checklist or rubric will serve for a global judgment of student performance.

6.5 Use of Cross-Curricular Competencies

Tasks requiring the use of cross-curricular competencies will be included in the assesment. A rubric will serve for a global judgment of student performance.

7. Administering the Assessment

Schools are responsible for administering the assessment, following the guidelines stated in the *Teacher's Guide*. Please note that students read the assigned texts independently unless otherwise indicated in the *Teacher's Guide*. Also, unless otherwise indicated, all tasks are to be completed on school premises, preferably in the normal classroom setting.

In the case of combined classes, that is, classes made up of students from both Year 1 and Year 2 of Cycle 3, (grades 5 and 6), teachers may want to have all their students undertake the assessment. In January 2005, the Direction de la sanction des études will send to school boards and independant schools a form to complete so that they may order the required copies of the examination.

This evaluation and learning situation is officially scheduled to be administered between April 11 and April 22, 2005, either in the morning or afternoon. Sustained time is necessary for

students to engage in activities that call for critical thinking and problem solving, components characteristic of competency-based learning. Generally, tasks should take between 10 and 15 hours over the two weeks scheduled for the exam. As students require sustained time to contextualize and to become familiar with the tasks, and to undertake both group and independent activities, the required time to complete some tasks may take up to two hours. Suggested times will be indicated in the *Teacher's Guide*, but some classes may require more or less time to complete some tasks. Adjustments may be made according to the differing needs of groups; however, sufficient time must be allowed for students to sustain and complete tasks as described in the *Teacher's Guide*. 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.

8. Scoring the Assessment and Follow-Up Study

For June 2005, evaluation of student work is done locally in a marking centre, using the scoring criteria found in the *Teacher's 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.

Approximately three days are required to complete the scoring:

- After students have finished the assessment, teachers should meet to establish anchor papers.
- These anchor papers serve as standards of performance.
- Sufficient time should be provided for teachers to complete the evaluation of student work in a centre organized for this purpose to ensure reliability of the scoring.
- School Boards are responsible for providing time for teachers to complete the marking.

For the provincial study of End of Cycle 3 students' work, the MEQ, following standard statistical research procedures, will randomly select students whose work will be submitted. School Boards will forward the complete, scored work of these selected students to the Ministère by June 30, 2005. Teachers are asked to include their reflections on the administration of the exam, as indicated in the *Teacher's Guide*. For further information contact:

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