

The Ontario Secondary School
Literacy Test
(OSSLT)

Thursday, March 26th, 2015

What is it?

- a province-wide test developed by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO).
- EQAO's web site: www.eqao.com
- The purpose of the test is to determine whether students have the required reading and writing skills.

- Students' transcripts will indicate whether or not they have passed the test.
- The test is considered part of the program for the day; an unexplained absence for the day of the test will be considered a truancy and will be dealt with by the vice-principals.
- In a few months, you will receive an Individual Student Report indicating whether or not you have passed the test.

- It is NOT an English test. Rather, it measures the reading and writing skills that are the foundation for success in all high school courses and in the workplace.
- It must be written by all Ontario students.
- Note: Students who wrote the test last year and were unsuccessful will write the test again this year.
- It will be written on Thursday, March 26th. (8:10 a.m. – 11:25 p.m.)

Does this test count?

- YES!!!
- All students must pass the entire test in order to earn an Ontario Secondary School Diploma.
- The test integrates reading and writing tasks. Some tasks are writing only, some are reading only, and some are a combination of the two.

Do students have to study?

- No, but you should practise, practise, practise.
- The test is based on the expectations for reading and writing throughout the Ontario curriculum up to and including grade nine -- whether at the Essential, Applied, or Academic levels.

- The reading and writing skills students have developed since kindergarten will determine, for the most part, whether they are successful.
- Two useful strategies:
 - become familiar with what the test will probably look like;
 - practise answering the types of questions students will probably get.
- Get a good night's sleep!

What is on the test?

- A combination of reading and writing tasks.

Reading tasks:

- Students will be asked to read a number of different selections and answer questions on each.
- Students will be asked to answer a series of multiple choice questions, as well as short written responses.

- DO NOT LEAVE ANY QUESTIONS BLANK. You will not be penalized for trying (and may earn part marks).
- All of your answers must relate to the information and ideas in the reading selection.
- Be able to identify facts stated in the selections.
- Be able to make inferences (draw conclusions or make judgments) about information and ideas in the selection.

- Be able to use your knowledge and personal experience to interpret or expand on ideas and information in the selection.
- Some questions ask how graphic features, meanings of words and phrases, sentence construction or the organization of information help you understand what you have read.

Two types of questions for Reading Component:

- multiple choice
- written answers

■ Multiple Choice Questions:

- read the question and the four options carefully
- underline or highlight key words
- if you can't find the correct answer easily, start by eliminating the wrong or least correct answers

- since more than one option may have a degree of correctness, choose the one that is most correct
- do NOT bubble more than one answer
- if you want to change your answer, put an X through your first choice and bubble your final choice

Written Answers:

- read each question carefully
- underline or highlight key words
- most questions will ask you to "Answer in full and correctly written sentences."
- use the space provided to guide the length of your answers (write enough information to demonstrate your understanding of the reading selection)

Different Types of Reading Selections:

a) graphic text

- examples: pamphlet, bus schedule, set of instructions
- look at the titles, pictures, charts and/or graphs to consider how they make this reading selection more interesting or make the information more clear

b) informational text

- example: article on career choices
- ask yourself: "What is the main point the writer is trying to make?"
- look at the title to help identify the main point

c) narrative text

- example: short story, dialogue
- think about the characters, setting, conflict, plot and main idea

Writing tasks:

- You MUST write in complete sentences and paragraphs.
- Students will be asked to produce two different types of writing:

1. a series of paragraphs expressing/ explaining an opinion (essay)

- students must express an opinion on a given topic
- must complete TWO written pages
- must include an introduction, a body and a conclusion (minimum 3 paragraphs)
- clearly indent your paragraphs
- must provide supporting details (proof, facts, examples)

2. a news report

- an objective, factual report about an event based on a picture
- should not include personal opinions
- should answer the questions *Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?*
- be sure to include a headline
- will be expected to write a page

Some Tips:

- read all instructions carefully and answer specifically what is being asked (writing that is off topic will not be marked)
- understand purpose and audience
- purpose: what you're trying to accomplish with that piece of writing
- audience: who your reader is (always an adult); make sure your language and ideas are appropriate for adults

- Let the space provided guide the length of your answers.
- Use the sections entitled "Rough Notes" to organize your thoughts, jot down ideas and form a plan.
- Use correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Make sure your handwriting is as clear as possible. (If the markers can't read it, they can't mark it.)

- PROOFREAD in the time remaining.
- On the inside of the front cover of each of your test booklets, you will find a page of instructions. Follow the instructions carefully.

The Day of the Test:

- Assigned rooms will be posted in the main foyer. CHECK your name and room carefully. If you don't find your name, see Mr. Fulcher in the main office.
- Each of you will be assigned a unique 22-digit bar code which is your ID (and which ensures confidentiality during the marking process).

- On the day of the test, you will receive a plastic bag containing the two test booklets and bubble answer sheet. Check and double check that both booklets and bubble sheet have the same bar code. (Look at the last four digits of the bar code to check that all of your material has the same number.)
- Wait for instructions from your teacher before opening the test booklets from the plastic bag.

- Bring several blue or black ink pens.
- A highlighter may be useful (to highlight key words in questions).
- NO ONE MAY LEAVE EARLY. Bring a book to read in case you finish early. Better yet, read over your answers and proofread!!
- NO ipods/mp3 players OR cell phones are allowed
- NO dictionaries are allowed

- Teachers are NOT permitted to explain questions or reading selections.
- Students who are late must report to the office. If they are less than 30 minutes late, they will be admitted to write the Test but will NOT be given extra time. Students more than 30 minutes late before or after the break will not be permitted to write that particular booklet.
- At the end of Session 1, your first booklet will be collected.

- There will be a 15-minute break in between the two parts of the test.
- (Other washroom breaks must be supervised.)
- When you return to the classroom, ensure that you are sitting in the same seat.

Schedule:

■ Thursday, March 26th, 2015

Regular Schedule

Location: Assigned Classrooms

Instructions

10 minutes

8:20 - 8:30

Booklet 1

75 minutes

8:30 - 9:45

Break

15 minutes

9:45 - 10:00

Booklet 2

75 minutes

10:00 - 11:15

Survey

10 minutes

11:15 - 11:25

Lunch

60 minutes

11:25 - 12:25

Tutorial / Remediation

Session 1

60 minutes

12:25 - 1:25

Session 2

59 minutes

1:25 - 2:24

To prepare you:

- Sample Test Booklet handed out in homeroom classes.
- "Understanding the Literacy Test" was handed out in homeroom.
- The EQAO website (www.eqao.com) includes many documents that will help you prepare for the test.

- A sample question from a previous year's test
- Writing a Series of Paragraphs
- Task: Write a minimum of three paragraphs expressing an opinion on the topic below. Develop your main idea with supporting details (proof, facts, examples, etc.).
- Topic: Is it a good idea for high school students to have a part-time job?

Is it a good idea for high school students to have a part-time job?

I think It is good for high school students to have a part-time job because It teaches us responsibility's at a young age, and to have self goals.

On the other hand a job in high-school may not work out as good because it would be hard to balance say if you have alot of school work, and play a sport 4-5 times a week, you may not have time would be the problem there.

■ Annotation:

- The response is related to the prompt, and expresses and supports an opinion, but the opinion is inconsistent (yes in the first paragraph and no in the second paragraph).
- There are insufficient supporting details: too few.

Is it a good idea for high school students to have a part-time job?

Students having a part-time job is a very interesting topic. In my opinion, I believe that it is a great idea for students to have part-time jobs for three main reasons. Firstly, it provides them with work experience that can be developed and further explored in future occupations. Secondly, it teaches students important personal skills and how to work socially with other co-workers. Lastly, I believe that it gives the students a chance to give back to their community.

First of all, working part-time jobs at an early age allows us students to develop mature skills and work experience. Going to work only when you are an adult is a disadvantage because you have to learn everything right from scratch. When you have the ability to explore different jobs as a student, I think that you can learn life-time experiences that you will need in future occupations. It is much easier to develop and explore new ideas as an employee when you are young so you can learn from your mistakes and use them to your advantage to build on these experiences. Altogether, I believe that working a part-time job as a student provides you with learning experiences everyday.

Secondly, along with experience, part-time jobs teach you important personal skills. Working as a student teaches

you skills such as responsibility, respect for co-workers, and most importantly, social skills. You can develop these skills everyday on a part-time job but what is key is that you can improve on these skills and use them as an adult. What better way is there to learn how to treat others and take care of yourself than to develop them at an early age. Also, working as a student allows you to learn how to manage your time efficiently. As a whole, it allows you to develop many skills needed for future jobs.

Finally, I think that working at a young age gives students a chance to give back to their community. People are always stressing on how us teenagers do not do enough for society and part-time jobs allows us to do this. It also allows us to provide everyday services to people. Altogether, students can get involved in their communities and give back good service to everyone.

In conclusion, I believe that giving students part-time jobs is a great idea. It gets students off the streets and into great learning experiences. It not only provides us with great skills but teaches us discipline and responsibility. It gives teenagers a chance to become personable and develop for future endeavors.

- Annotation:

- A clear and consistent opinion is developed with sufficient specific supporting details (each paragraph is developed with specific details and this is explained in the first paragraph).
- The organization is logical (*First all...Secondly, along with experience...Finally...In conclusion*).

Some final tips:

- **READ YOUR INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.** Follow each instruction exactly. For example, if you are asked to write a paragraph, then write ONE paragraph—no more.
- **DON'T GET OFF TOPIC.** Answer what is being asked.

- Use proper English. Offensive words will be reported to administration and may result in a failing mark.
- Don't doodle. Print/write legibly. (If they can't read it, they can't mark it.)
- Don't leave any blanks. Answer every question. Try to fill the space provided for each question.

Why Students Fail...

- not following instructions
- moving too quickly through the instructions (start reading instructions, then guess at the rest)
- leaving answers blank
- illegible writing
- non-compliant
 - off task (off topic)
 - too long

- adding "filler" which is unrelated to task or off topic
- errors (spelling, punctuation, grammar) distracting the reader (the issue is whether or not the errors interfere with communication)
- not providing supporting detail for answers
- not making specific reference to details of reading passage
- not proofreading during time remaining

- sharing personal opinion when it's not asked for
- using space provided incorrectly (ex. using space entitled "Rough Notes" for actual response, then leaving blank the lines provided for the actual answer)
- weak test-taking skills (can't pace him/herself or gets nervous under pressure)

Any Questions??
Please contact Vice-Principal,
Mr. Fulcher

Good Luck!!