

Literacy Test Tips

Important Points to Remember

- Don't rush - Take your time! Read all instructions carefully.
- Come prepared with a black or blue pen and a highlighter.
- If you are unsure of how to spell a word, change it to a word you can spell.
- Brainstorm – the more time you spend here, the easier it will be to write the final copy.
- Use capitals at the beginning of sentences and for formal names, places, titles etc.
- Use periods or other punctuation at the end of every sentence.
- Re-read all of your answers to check for spelling errors or words that you may have left out.
- Use the space provided as a guideline for how long it should be. Try to fill all of the lines without going over.

How to Read Instructions

- Highlight the important terms & anything that is bolded.
- Pay close attention to:
 1. Length (i.e. 3 paragraphs)
 2. Format (i.e. news report, opinion piece)
 3. Target Audience (i.e. adults, children)

Multiple Choice Questions

- Read the questions before you read the passage/story.
- Read the passage/story.
- Answer each question referring back to the passage as necessary.
- It may seem like there is more than 1 correct answer so choose the best or most correct one.

Grammar Sections

- Highlight key words in the instructions.
- If unsure of the answer, make your best guess based on what sounds the most correct when you are reading it to yourself. Remember to pause at commas.

Short Answer Sections

- Highlight the important terms/words.
- A short answer is roughly 4 sentences long.

Example Question:

If you could visit any place where would it be and why?

1st Sentence/Topic Sentence: Should include part of the question. Example: *If I could visit any place I would visit Montreal.*

Support #1 Example: *In Montreal there are many restaurants and stores to visit like the Museum Quarter.*

Support #2 Example: *I would also like to visit Montreal to see beautiful historical buildings such as the National Monument.*

Conclusion: Rephrase your topic sentence:

Example: *These are the reasons why I would like to visit Montreal.*

Final Response:

If I could visit any place I would visit Montreal. In Montreal there are many restaurants and stores to visit like the Museum Quarter. I would also like to visit Montreal to see beautiful historical buildings such as the National Monument. These are the reasons why I would like to visit Montreal.

How to Score 30/30 on the Short Writing Tasks:

Response must clearly answer the question using specific and relevant details as supports.

News Report

- Highlight the important terms in the instructions.
 - Remember that a news report is a series of small paragraphs.
 - Look at the picture and the headline and decide on a story to write about (make sure your report relates to both).
 - Under “rough notes”, answer the **5 W’s**: *who, where, what, why, when* as well as *how*.
 - Paragraph 1 - Take the answers to the; *who, what, where, when* and put them into a sentence or two.
 - Paragraph 2 - elaborate a little (2-3 sentences) on the topic (the *why*).
 - Paragraph 3 - give a quote from someone (make up names).
 - Paragraph 4 - elaborate a little (2-3 sentences) on the *How*.
 - Paragraph 5 - give another quote from someone different (make up a name).
 - Paragraph 6 - finish off the news report with a general sentence or two.
- * Do not use “I, we, us ...” unless you are quoting what someone is saying.
- * A news report is not the place to give your own opinion on the topic.
- * Stay on topic, make it simple, and avoid giving meaningless information.
- * Focus on reporting about the picture and the headline.
- * Make sure you use details such as dates, grades, names...


How to Score 60/60 on the News Report:

The response must be a news report related to the headline and photo with a clear and consistent focus on an event. There must be sufficient specific supporting details, which are thoughtfully chosen to develop the news report. The organization must be coherent demonstrating a thoughtful progression of ideas.

Sample News Report that Scored 60/60

Sample Student Response

Motivational Speaker [speaker's name] delivered a speech yesterday at [school's name] High School in Newmarket on the benefits of positive thinking. [speaker's name] was invited by the school's 'I Can' club, which is promoting positive thinking as well. The students of [school's name] walked away with smiles on their faces, determined to look at the world a little more positively.



"I can is all about positive thinking," [student's name] a member of I Can says. "It's not just thinking positive about yourself. It's about thinking positively about others as well."

[speaker's name] gave each of the 500 students invited to his lecture a simple bracelet. The bracelet is meant to be worn on the left wrist, and the wearer is to have 21 days of positive thinking, 21 days being the average time to break a habit. If one negative thought crosses their mind, the wearer is to switch the bracelet to the other wrist and start from scratch.

All 500 students have taken the 'I can' vow to think positively.

"By thinking positively, by being optimistic, nothing will stop you from reaching your goals," [speaker's name] said, closing his speech. "You can, so reach for the stars."

Opinion Piece/Series of Paragraphs

- Highlight the important terms in the instructions.
- A long answer generally asks for your opinion.
- An opinion is what you think about a topic.
- Read the question carefully and take a stance.
Example: I agree/disagree that students should be made to stay in school until they are 18.
- Using your rough notes, brainstorm and make a list of all the points to support your stance.
- The instructions may ask for a minimum of 3 paragraphs but we recommend you do 5 paragraphs total in order to fill the lined space provided
- The key to a good response is using detailed examples and supports.

Paragraph 1- Introduction – starts with a general statement about the topic, then states your opinion about the topic, then briefly states your 3 supports

Paragraph 2 – expands on support #1 and gives specific examples, facts and proof

Paragraph 3 – expands on support #2 and gives specific examples, facts and proof

Paragraph 4 – expands on support #3 and gives specific examples, facts and proof

Paragraph 5 – conclusion – rephrases your opinion on the topic making reference to your 3 supports. Finish with a concluding statement.

How to Score 60/60 on the Opinion Piece:

The response is related to the assigned question. A clear and consistent opinion is developed with sufficient specific supporting details that are thoughtfully chosen. The organization is coherent showing a thoughtful progression of ideas.

Sample Opinion Piece that scored 60/60:

Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test

Opinion
Topic Development
Code 60

Is participation in extracurricular activities an important part of secondary school life?

Students who participate in extracurricular activities in high school have greater advantages than those who do not, which is why participation in these activities is significant. Extracurricular activities such as sports, photography groups or book clubs are few of the many groups that can enhance a student's academic performance. It is important that a high school student joins an extracurricular activity to develop co-operation skills, organizational skills and to increase chances of receiving academic rewards.

Students who take part in book clubs or sports develop skills that allow them to work well with others. They learn skills that may not be taught at home or in the classroom. For instance a person who plays volleyball is able to negotiate, co-operate, compromise, share and socialize more confidently than one who is not used to stepping outside of their comfort zone. Extracurricular activities provide a way for young teens to get to know each other and improve their socializing skills to ultimately enhance their secondary school experience.

Not only do teens develop skills in interaction but they also improve their organizational skills. A student who is able to finish their homework and make practice on time is a student who can prioritize, set goals and manage their time. These qualities are highly beneficial to the student's future when it comes to finding their career path which is why mastering these attributes in high school is important. Extracurricular activities teach a student how to excel in that particular activity and how to

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use those skills in the classroom. If these tasks are practised well they will become good habits that can increase their chances of acceptance into a college or University of their choice.

Students who have experience in extracurricular activities have more options when it comes down to applying for college, University and for Scholarships. For example a student who gets good grades and is able to juggle a sport or club is more likely to possess the qualities needed in obtaining a scholarship that specializes in that sport or club in comparison to a student who did not have the same experience. Ultimately Universities want to see that you put effort into maintaining good grades but also that you went the extra mile to do your best.

As a result students who enhance their skills in communication and organization are more likely to receive a greater benefit such as getting accepted into an elite University or saving money by receiving a scholarship. Even after University and College the skills achieved from joining these activities will benefit in the long run because after all the more effort and hard work you put into something, the greater the award.

Example Transition Words to use within and between paragraphs

"Another reason..."

"The biggest reason is..."

"A second reason is..."

"Thirdly..."

"For example..."

"For instance..."

"For one thing..."

"At first..."

"First of all..."

"To begin with..."

"In the first place..."

"At the same time..."

"Meanwhile..."

"Next, then..."

"In conclusion..."

