
GENERAL COMMENTS

Grade 12 English Language Arts (January 2017)

Student Performance—Observations

The following observations are based on local marking results and on comments made by markers during the sample marking session. These comments refer to common errors made by students at the provincial level and are not specific to school jurisdictions.

Information regarding how to interpret the provincial test and assessment results is provided in the document *Interpreting and Using Results from Provincial Tests and Assessments* available at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/assess/support/results/index.html.

Various factors impact changes in performance over time: classroom-based, school-based, and home-based contexts, and changes to demographics. In addition, Grade 12 provincial tests may vary slightly in overall difficulty although every effort is made to minimize variation throughout the test development and pilot testing processes.

When considering performance relative to specific areas of course content, the level of difficulty of the content and its representation on the provincial test vary over time according to the type of test questions and learning outcomes addressed. Information regarding learning outcomes is provided in the document *Senior 4 English Language Arts: Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes and Senior 4 Standards* (2000).

Summary of Test Results (Province)

	January 2017	June 2016	January 2016	June 2015	January 2015	June 2014
Responding to Text	66.8%	62.7%	65.6%	64.2%	63.5%	60.1%
Writing Task	72.9%	70.4%	72.6%	70.9%	71.1%	69.7%
Process Booklet	61.5%	60.4%	63.9%	60.8%	61.1%	61.6%
Total Test	68.6%	65.7%	68.4%	66.6%	66.5%	64.7%

Responding to Text (provincial mean: 66.8%)

The provincial average for *Responding to Text* was higher than in previous years. This suggests that students were more clear and concise in their responses, and more often made connections to the text and to their lives.

Teacher feedback indicates that some believe students do not have enough time to complete the work on Day 1 of the test, and that there is too much reading. In Day 1, students choose between two of the longest texts—one that is pragmatic (e.g., a magazine article), and one that is aesthetic (e.g., a short story), to form the basis of a response. Giving students choice allows them to select a text to which they relate based on prior knowledge and personal preference. Students are instructed to read the question before reading the texts so that they read with purpose. For questions such as this on the provincial test, students may be encouraged to read just the first few paragraphs of each text, and then make their choice.

Writing Task (provincial mean: 72.9%)

Teacher feedback indicates that some believe there is not enough time for the writing task (three hours). The writing task mirrors process writing as practiced and experienced in and outside of the classroom. Students may be reminded that thinking and planning for the writing task may continue between sessions of administration (outside of the classroom), allowing students more time for writing and revising during the scheduled administration time.

Process Booklet (provincial mean: 61.5%)

Students had difficulty with the Reflecting question: “Explain how the organization of your written text helps to achieve your desired effect...” Although they were able to identify organization techniques such as structure, transitions or use of dialogue, they were not always able to connect these choices to the impact on their purpose.

Marking Accuracy and Consistency

Information regarding how to interpret the marking accuracy and consistency reports is provided in the document *Interpreting and Using Results from Provincial Tests and Assessments* available at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/assess/support/results/index.html.

These reports include a chart comparing the local marking results to the results from the departmental re-marking of sample test booklets. Provincially, local marking resulted in test scores on average 5.5% higher than departmental marking. Test score agreement was within 6 percentage points for 44.2% of test booklets. 46.5% of booklets received a score of over 6 percentage points higher than departmental marking.

Survey Results

Teachers who supervised the Grade 12 English Language Arts Standards Test in January 2017 were invited to provide comments regarding the test and its administration. A total of 267 teachers responded to the survey. A summary of their comments is provided below. After adjusting for non-responses:

- 91% agreed that the test was congruent with the emphasis of the Grade 12 English language arts curriculum.
- 96% agreed that “Activating Your Thoughts Through Group Discussion” before reading is congruent with classroom practice.
- 97% agreed that distributing the *Responding to Text* booklet before reading helps students focus on the readings.
- 92% agreed that directing students to preview the writing task during group discussion ensures students focus earlier in the process.
- 97% agreed that students are given choices on selecting writing variables in regular classroom work.
- 82% agreed that the test provides students with a fair opportunity to demonstrate their proficiencies in English language arts.