
GENERAL COMMENTS

Grade 12 English Language Arts (January 2020)

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/.

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)

Responding to Text (provincial mean: 67.2%)

Students should be instructed to read the question before reading the texts so that they read with purpose. Most questions offer students a choice regarding which text they want to use in their response. For example, in the second question, 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. For questions such as this, students may be encouraged to read just the first few paragraphs of each text, and then make their choice. It would be helpful for students to develop reading strategies and have exposure to longer texts in preparation for the test. When preparing students for visual and poetry questions, make sure they have a good understanding of the tools and techniques that writers and artists use when creating texts.

Process Booklet (provincial mean: 70.2%)

In an attempt to get students to think about their writing variables more authentically, the original Writing Variables question was replaced with a new question: Reflecting on your Writing Variables. In the past, students had some difficulty with explaining how their chosen writing variables fit together and the task was seen as inauthentic. Several prompts were provided to help students think about how their choices were reflected in their draft. We encourage students to answer this response *after* they have completed their first draft. There have been suggestions to give students specific instructions about how many prompts they should answer. Like the previous question, we expect teachers will help students understand that it is more effective to explain a few prompts in depth rather than answer them all superficially.

We have provided teacher resources in the *Grade 12 English Language Arts Standards Test: Information Bulletin*.

Teacher feedback indicates that most students were able to complete the writing task on time with some students taking advantage of the 30 minutes extra time. The writing task mirrors process writing as practiced and experienced in and outside of the classroom. Students can 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.

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/.

These reports compare 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 5.7% higher than departmental marking. Test score agreement was within 6 percentage points for 39% of test booklets, while 50.9% of booklets received a score of more than 6 percentage points higher locally than they did at the departmental marking. This is 10% higher than it was on the May 2019 test.

Survey Results

Teachers who supervised the Grade 12 English Language Arts Standards Test in January 2020 were invited to provide comments regarding the test and its administration. A total of 280 teachers responded to the survey. A summary of their comments is provided below. After adjusting for non-responses:

- 86% agreed that the test provided students with a fair opportunity to demonstrate their proficiencies in English language arts.
- 95% agreed that the reading level of the texts in the *Process Booklet* was appropriate for Grade 12 students.
- 91% agreed that the level of questions in the *Responding to Text* booklet was appropriate for Grade 12 students.
- For the different marking models, 21% used classroom-based, 29% used school-based, and 39% (a majority) used a centralized marking model. Classroom-based marking is trending up and centralized marking is trending down.
- Teachers noted that over half of the students writing used the extra time provided (53%).
- When asked for their opinion on the new Reflecting on Your Writing Variables question, 55.7% of teachers were in favour of the new format, while 11.1% viewed it negatively. 2% of teachers requested reverting to the old Writing Variables question. Some recommendations were suggested to improve the question, which Test Development Committee members will consider.