
GENERAL COMMENTS

Grade 12 English Language Arts (May 2019)

Student Performance—Observations

The following observations are based on local marking results and 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)

Responding to Text (provincial mean: 61.7%)

Teacher feedback indicates that with the removal of one Responding to Text question and the availability of optional extra time, students found the activities on Day 1 less stressful and more manageable. There was no significant change in the provincial mean despite the elimination of one question.* Students should be instructed to read the question before reading the texts so that they read with purpose. On 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 a choice allows them to select a text to which they relate based on prior knowledge and personal preference. 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. Some students had difficulty with the poetry question. Most students could identify techniques but had a difficult time articulating how these techniques helped to develop an idea about the creative process. Students could review key terms such as metaphor, diction, tone, etc.; be exposed to more poetry; and receive instruction on how language is used as a tool to create an effect or develop an idea.

* The overall average for 2017/18 was 67.0% compared to 67.3% for 2018/19.

Process Booklet (provincial mean: 67.1 %)

The Connecting Ideas and Reflecting questions were eliminated from this test. According to feedback from some teachers, the change allowed students to focus more on their writing task. Students had difficulty explaining how their chosen writing variables fit together. Writing variables should be introduced gradually throughout the senior years curriculum. Activities that interchange the variables for different results might give students a better understanding of how they might work together.

Teacher feedback indicates that most students were able to complete the writing task on time with some students taking advantage of the 30 minutes of 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/index.html.

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 3.8% higher than departmental marking. Test score agreement was within 6 percentage points for 43% of test booklets, while 43% of booklets received a score of more than 6 percentage points higher locally than they did at the departmental marking.

Survey Results

Teachers who supervised the Grade 12 English Language Arts Standards Test in May 2019 were invited to provide comments regarding the test and its administration. A total of 296 teachers responded to the survey. A summary of their comments is provided below. After adjusting for non-responses:

- 89% agreed that the test provides students with a fair opportunity to demonstrate their proficiencies in English language arts.
- 98% agreed that the reading level of the texts in the *Process Booklet* was appropriate for Grade 12 students.
- 97% agreed the level of questions in the *Responding to Text* booklet was appropriate for Grade 12 students.
- For the different marking models, 16.9% used classroom-based, 35.8% used school-based, and 37.8% (a majority) used a centralized marking model.
- 96% of respondents agreed that allowing an additional 30 minutes on Day 1 and Day 4 was helpful.
- Teachers noted that over half of the students writing used the extra time provided (63%).
- 88% of teachers agreed that removing the Connecting Ideas question from the test helped students be more successful. 92% agreed that removing the Reflecting question was helpful.
- Out of 296 responses, 17 teachers commented that Connecting Ideas should be included, 15 teachers said Reflecting should be included, and 14 said both should be included. 16 teachers felt the Writing Variables question is problematic. This question will be replaced next year with a question that asks students to reflect on specific aspects of their draft and chosen variables. Further details will be included in this fall's *Information Bulletin*.