

INFORMATION DOCUMENT

COMPULSORY EXAMINATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

End of Elementary Cycle Three

514-600

June 2007

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INTRODUCTION

This document conveys information concerning the compulsory Learning and Evaluation Situation (LES) for English Language Arts at the end of Elementary Cycle Three. The LES is scheduled for administration between April and June 2007. The primary aim of this document is to provide, in advance, general information about the assessment tool. **It contains essential information regarding the nature, scheduling and scoring of the examination. It should be photocopied and distributed without delay to all Elementary Cycle Three English Language Arts teachers and consultants, as well as to personnel responsible for examination scheduling.**

The 2007 LES offers core activities that target key language abilities. It is useful to recall at this time that features incorporated into this LES have been determined through direct and ongoing consultation with English Language Arts teachers and consultants throughout the province. Feedback that was received following the April 2006 LES has also been given consideration.

Please be advised that during the summer of 2007 there will be a provincial study of student performance in English Language Arts at the end of Cycle Three using student work obtained from the 2007 LES. The purpose of this study is not to compare schools or students, nor to evaluate teachers, but rather to examine the efficacy of the program over time, as both teachers and students become more familiar with the goals for performance in English Language Arts, as described in the Québec Education Program (QEP). The Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport will randomly select students to participate in this study. The work of these randomly selected students will be scored during the summer marking session; however, the initial scoring of the exam continues to be the responsibility of schools and school boards. Schools will be notified at a later date if they are to forward students' work for the purposes of the study.

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1. Overview of the Learning and Evaluation Situation (LES)

In cooperation with teachers and consultants in the province, the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) designs quality instruments for language assessment. These instruments provide insights into assessment approaches that are of proven validity as well as opportunities for staff development in scoring student work according to specified criteria. The goal is to analyze and describe the competency levels attained by students in Québec English schools at the end of Elementary Cycle Three. Teachers may include the evidence from this assessment in conjunction with students' yearlong performances to form judgments about the levels of competency attained by the end of the cycle for the end-of-cycle report.

2. General Nature of the LES

The 2007 LES offers a number of core activities that target key language abilities as described in the Québec Education Program (QEP). For students with special needs, all activities can be adapted or modified and incorporated into the students' existing evaluation procedures as described in her or his current and up-dated Individual Education Plan (IEP). Modifications and/or adaptations must follow those that are already in place and that are applied for instruction during the current school year.

The activities are designed in such a way as to yield information on the following:

- Reading / viewing and listening to literary, popular and information-based texts, followed by response to literature
- Writing self-expressive, narrative or information-based texts for a specific purpose and audience
- Using language conventions
- Using talk to communicate and to learn
- Using cross-curricular competencies

The LES reflects practices consistent with the following documents: *Québec Education Program; Evaluation of Learning at the Preschool and Elementary Levels; Evaluation Framework; and Competency Levels by Cycle, Elementary School*. As well, the LES offers guidance to teachers who seek to inform themselves about the effectiveness of their classroom practices. All activities are authentic in that they give students opportunity to purposefully use language in real situations.

3. Learning Principles Incorporated Into the LES

These principles include the following:

- Integrated use of all the language processes (listening, responding, communicating)
- Time for students to work through a task in more than one session
- Peer interaction to explore ideas and to seek feedback

4. Evaluation Principles Incorporated Into the LES

These principles include the following:

- **Providing students with precise information about what is expected of them**
- **Defining precisely what is valued or expected of the students in their work (performance criteria)**
- **Providing calibrated descriptive ranges of performance**
- **Providing students with scoring criteria in advance, along with examples of student work (exemplars for practice in applying the criteria)***
- **Ensuring that what is defined is measurable, and that what is measurable is consistent with the curriculum**
- **Using multiple examples of student work when evaluating performance**
- **Establishing an evaluation centre where teachers examine and score student work by applying the performance criteria following procedures that ensure reliability of the scores.** Sufficient time should be allocated for evaluating students' work.

* To support teachers in helping their students to better understand the performance criteria, a document containing annotated exemplars gathered from the 2006 English Language Arts examination will be distributed via the MELS Web site.

5. Rubrics

Based on recommendations made to the production committee in June 2006, the rubrics will be modified to describe five levels of performance. The purpose of this change is to keep a format similar to the high school rubrics, which will facilitate communication with high school teachers regarding Cycle Three students as they move on to the high school setting. Since the performance criteria are elaborated in professional language, teachers may find that examining the exemplars with their students will provide an ideal opportunity to work with them to rephrase the criteria in a language that is more familiar to them.

6. Assessment Materials

The assessment includes the following materials that will be provided by the MELS:

- *A video in DVD format*
- *Magazine for students*
- *Student Booklets(s)*
- *Teacher's Guide*
- *Administration Guide*
- *Bibliography and other resources, such as Web sites and CDs*

N.B.: The booklet *Resources for Teachers*, previously distributed with the exam materials, will be available on-line on the MELS Web site.

7. The Components of the Learning and Evaluation Situation

7.1 Overview

The assessment will focus on the following language abilities: strategic reading and response to literature; writing for a particular purpose and audience; use of language conventions; representing media literacy by exploring, reading and producing media texts; using language to communicate and to learn; activating cross-curricular competencies. Five-point rubrics will be provided for scoring the tasks.

7.2 Content

As students are exposed to an increasingly wide range of information via media messages, they need to develop literacy skills to help them critically think about how their media experiences influence and impact their lives. The 2007 LES will focus on an essential question that addresses an issue related to popular culture and the media. It is important that students have experience with the various strategies in constructing meaning from media texts (see **Competency 3** on p. 91 in the QEP).

To help support teachers in media literacy education and to build on student competency, the Center for Media Literacy (CML) has a valuable resource entitled **Medialit Kit**, which can be accessed from their Web site free of charge at: <www.medialit.org>.

It is highly recommended that teachers access this site to download the kit. It will prove to be a useful resource to support the development of the media competency with students.

7.3 Strategic Reading and Response to Literature

Reading performance will be assessed through strategic reading and response to literature, as well as by other tasks requiring comprehension of texts. The strategic reading tasks will call for students to compare and contrast two similar texts, and to synthesize the ideas and issues presented in the texts. The response to literature task will require students to read a selected text more than once, to participate in large and small group discussions, and to write their thoughts and reactions to the issues and themes elaborated in the text. Performance criteria for both strategic reading and response to literature will describe the levels of competency attained by the student.

7.4 Writing for Purpose and Audience

Based on reading and research provided with the LES, students will select a text-type with which to write for a purpose and a familiar audience. Students must be given sufficient time during the examination to draft and revise their writing. Performance criteria for writing will describe the level of competency attained by the student, and will include criteria for the evaluation of use of conventions.

7.5 Representing Literacy in Different Media

Students will be called upon to use strategies to construct meaning from media text, to use information obtained from a variety of media texts, to exercise critical judgment with regard to constructed media, as well as to produce a media text.

7.6 Use of Language to Communicate and to Learn

Talk for communication and learning will be integrated throughout the LES. Students will not be required to give an oral presentation; however, they will participate in activities that will require them to share and discuss issues within small and large group settings. Talk for learning will be emphasized throughout the activities and students will be asked to reflect on their participation in the group activities.

7.7 Use of the Cross-Curricular Competencies and Global Judgment

The use of cross-curricular competencies will be integrated into the tasks. A rubric will serve for a global judgment of student performance.

8. Administering the Learning and Evaluation Situation

Schools are responsible for administering the LES, following the guidelines stated in the *Teacher's Guide*. Please note that students are to read the assigned texts independently unless otherwise indicated in the *Teacher's Guide*. All tasks are to be completed on school premises, preferably in the regular classroom setting, unless otherwise indicated.

In the case of combined classes, that is, classes made up of Cycle Three students from both Year 1 and Year 2 (grades 5 and 6), teachers may want to have all their students undertake the LES. In January 2007, the Direction de la sanction des études will request school boards and independent schools to complete a form so that they may order the required copies of the LES.

This LES is scheduled to be administered between April 16 and June 15, 2007. Generally, all the tasks should take between 10 to 15 hours in total. Teachers will need to determine a block of time within these dates in which they will administer the LES in a sustained, continuous procedure.

It should be noted that **sustained time** on tasks is required to allow students to engage in activities that call for critical thinking and problem solving—components characteristic of competency-based learning. As students require sustained time to contextualize and to become familiar with the tasks, as well as to undertake both group and independent activities, the required time to complete some individual tasks may take longer than others. Some classes may require more or less time to complete some tasks. Adjustments may be made according to the differing needs of groups; however, sufficient time must be allowed for students to sustain and complete tasks as described in the *Teacher's Guide*. As some tasks may take more than one hour to complete, such as composing and revising a narrative text, schools are asked to adjust schedules accordingly. Materials will be sent out to schools prior to the beginning date in April, to allow teachers to become familiar with the texts and procedures.

9. Scoring the Assessment and Follow-Up Study

For June 2007, evaluation of student work is done locally in a marking centre, using the scoring criteria found in the *Teacher's Guide*. Anchor papers (representative samplings) of student work in each mark range will be selected and agreed upon by teachers. These, in turn, will serve as benchmarks for the subsequent marking of student work. These anchor papers should be drawn directly from the students' own work.

Approximately three days are required to complete the scoring.

Procedures:

- **After students have finished the LES, teachers should meet to establish anchor papers.**
- **These anchor papers will serve as standards of performance.**
- **Sufficient time should be provided for teachers to complete the evaluation of student work in a centre organized for this purpose to ensure reliability of the scoring.**
- **School boards are responsible for providing time for teachers to complete the marking.**

For the provincial study of students' work at the end of Cycle Three, the MELS will randomly select student work, following standard statistical research procedures. If selected for the study, school boards will forward the complete, scored work of these selected students and their classmates to the Ministère by June 30, 2007. Teachers are asked to include their reflections on the administration of the LES, as indicated in the *Teacher's Guide*. More detailed information pertaining to the provincial study will be available at a later date.

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