This document was written primarily for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>✓ of English Language Arts 30–1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Public</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Diploma Examinations: Multiple Forms**

As part of Alberta Education’s commitment to fairness to students and flexibility in the writing of diploma examinations, there are two distinct forms (versions) of diploma examinations in some subjects during major administrations (January and June). The two forms are equated to baseline examinations to ensure that the same standard applies to both forms. Both forms adhere to the established blueprint specifications and are thoroughly reviewed by a technical review committee.

To facilitate the analysis of school-level results, each school receives only one examination form per subject. In subjects offering a translated French-language examination, both forms are administered in English and in French.

For more information, contact

Deanna Shostak  
Director, Diploma Programs  
780-422-5160 or Deanna.Shostak@gov.ab.ca

or

Pascal Couture  
Director, Exam Administration  
780-492-1462 or Pascal.Couture@gov.ab.ca

**Special-format Practice Tests**

To provide students an opportunity to practise diploma examination-style questions and content in Braille, audio, large print, or coloured print versions, Alberta Education is making special-format practice tests available. Tests are offered in all subjects with a corresponding diploma examination. Alberta schools with registered Alberta K–12 students may place orders for these tests. Braille tests are available in English, and by request in French. All tests are provided free of charge, but limits may be placed on order volumes to ensure access for everyone.

For more information or to place an order, contact

Laura LaFramboise  
Distribution Coordinator, Examination Administration  
780-492-1644 or Laura.LaFramboise@gov.ab.ca
**Introduction**

The English Language Arts 30–1 Diploma Examination is designed to reflect the *Program of Studies for Senior High School English Language Arts*, which outlines a variety of specific learning outcomes organized under five general outcomes in six language arts: listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and representing. Because of the interconnected nature of the five general outcomes, both Part A and Part B of the diploma examination will assess, at least indirectly, all the general outcomes. The specific outcomes that will be assessed are indicated on the blueprints and scoring guides.

*NEW* **Suggested Word Count Range**

Beginning in the 2018–2019 school year, all Part A Humanities written-response assignments will contain a suggested word count range. Students can use the suggested word count range, along with the suggested time limit, as a guideline when responding to the assignment. The range is not a cap, and students who handwrite will not be expected to hand-count their words.

The suggested word count ranges below are based on various sources, including the student exemplars chosen for the *Examples of the Standards for Students’ Writing* (available at [https://education.alberta.ca/english-language-arts-10-12/diploma-exam-exemplars/](https://education.alberta.ca/english-language-arts-10-12/diploma-exam-exemplars/)), and on discussions with psychometricians and curriculum staff. They also reflect discussions with teachers during exam development regarding the expectations for each written-response assignment.

**Written-response Assignment Suggested Word Count Range**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Word Count Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>600–1200 words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>800–1600 words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* There are approximately 300 words per page, depending on the font size used and other factors. The expectations for student responses, including written responses, are unchanged.

**Release of Examination Materials**

Providing examples of readings and multiple-choice questions is the best way to demonstrate how the ELA 30–1 examinations have been designed to support the *Program of Studies for Senior High School English Language Arts*. The *Released Items 2016* contains readings and 40 questions from various administrations. An answer key, item descriptions, blueprint classifications, and performance data are also included to offer insights regarding the knowledge and understanding as well as skills and processes students are expected to demonstrate when writing the English Language Arts 30-1 *Part B: Multiple Choice* component.
Part A: Written Response of both the January 2019 and June 2019 English Language Arts 30–1 Diploma Examinations will be released following administration; however, Part B: Reading will be fully secured for both the January and June 2019 administrations.

Classroom Assessment
Because many types of assessment are suited to classroom situations only, teachers should ensure that their assessment of student progress reflects the full Program of Studies for Senior High School English Language Arts.

Other Support Documents
A Guide for Students Preparing to Write the English Language Arts 30–1 Diploma Examination and Examples of the Standards for Students’ Writing from various administrations of the English Language Arts 30–1 Diploma Examination are posted on the Alberta Education website. Please note that the texts presented in the Sample Personal Response to Texts Assignment on pages 16 to 18 of this document do not necessarily reflect the length or number of texts that will be presented to students in the 2019 Part A: Written Response, Personal Response to Texts Assignments.

Blueprints
The blueprints for Part A and Part B of the English Language Arts 30–1 Diploma Examination are on pages 14 and 32, respectively.
Field Testing

Field testing is an absolutely essential stage in the development of fair, valid, and reliable provincial examinations. Field testing is basically a process of “testing a test” and “testing questions” before they become part of a diploma examination. Potential diploma examination questions are administered to students in diploma courses throughout the province to determine their difficulty level and appropriateness. Ideally, each field test requires a large student sample to provide the examination developers with reliable information (statistical data and written validation comments from teachers and students).

How are field test data used?

The data received from field tests show the reliability of each question. Sometimes, after one field test round, it is clear that certain questions work very well in terms of fairness, validity, and appropriateness to course content. These questions then move into the diploma examination bank to be used at a future date.

Other questions or sets of questions may not perform as well as we require. These questions are subject to revision and review, and are retested in a second or third field test with the aim of generating questions that meet our standards. These changes are influenced by the written comments of students and teachers, who provide valuable advice about the appropriateness of the questions, adequacy of writing-time limits, test length, text readability, artwork/graphics clarity and suitability, and question difficulty.

How do field tests help teachers and students?

Teachers receive each student’s score promptly, gaining useful, immediate information about their students’ levels of expertise and knowledge. Students also benefit from writing a test that duplicates some of the experience of writing a diploma examination. Field tests provide students and teachers with good examples of the style and content of questions that may appear on diploma examinations. Finally, because of field testing, students, teachers, and parents can be reassured that the questions on diploma examinations have undergone a rigorous process of development, improvement, and validation.

Online Field Testing

While most field tests in humanities subjects will be in conventional paper form, a small number will be partially online (“hybrids”). Hybrid field tests will combine a paper copy of sources or readings with questions read and answered online using Alberta Education’s Quest A+ system.
Teachers have a 24-hour window to peruse the online field test and are provided with data on how their students performed. These data include the proportion of students who chose each alternative. Test items are blueprinted to program of studies outcomes. This allows teachers to use field test results to learn more about their students’ strengths and weaknesses.

Once logged into the online field test, teachers have the same length of time to peruse the test as their students did to write it. Teachers might choose to log into the field test, submit the confidentiality form, and then log out of the test, so that they can finish perusing the test after receiving their students’ data.

In addition, teachers have greater flexibility in selecting the time and date when students write, rather than being bound to a pre-determined date.

Finally, online administration enables every school, large or small, to participate. Historically, it was impractical to send field-test administrators to remotely located schools or schools with small classes. Now, all Alberta schools can participate in field tests.

It is important to note that the security of field test items remains vital to the administration of diploma examinations. Participating teachers must commit to maintaining the security of field test items. All hybrid field-test booklets that are mailed to schools must be kept secure by the school principal until the test is written. After the hybrid field test is written, teachers must mail all paper copies back to Alberta Education.

Further Information

Teachers requesting field tests must have a Public Authentication System (PAS) account. All requests are made through the Field Test Request System. Further information, including the closing dates to request a field test, may be obtained by contacting Field.Test@gov.ab.ca, or from the General Information Bulletin. Practice tests are available online.

For more information, contact

Deanna Shostak
Director, Diploma Programs
780-422-5160 or Deanna.Shostak@gov.ab.ca

or

Pascal Couture
Director, Exam Administration
780-492-1462 or Pascal.Couture@gov.ab.ca
## Assessment Standards and Practices for English Language Arts 30–1

**Weightings**

On September 1, 2015, the diploma examination weighting shifted from a 50/50 weighting to a 70/30 weighting, where the school-awarded grades are worth 70 percent. For further information, please refer to *Marks, Results, and Appeals*.

**Examination Format and Weightings**

The English Language Arts 30–1 Diploma Examination is made up of two parts: **Part A: Written Response (50%)** and **Part B: Reading (50%)**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Part A: Written Response Assignments, Scoring Categories, and Weightings</strong></th>
<th><strong>Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment (30%)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Response to Texts Assignment (20%)</strong></td>
<td>• Thought and Understanding 7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ideas and Impressions 10%</td>
<td>• Supporting Evidence 7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Presentation 10%</td>
<td>• Form and Structure 5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment (30%)</td>
<td>• Matters of Choice 5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Form and Structure 5.0%</td>
<td>• Matters of Correctness 5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Thought and Understanding 7.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supporting Evidence 7.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Matters of Correctness 5.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part B: Reading**

The **Part B: Reading** component is an assessment of students’ abilities to read a variety of literary texts closely. Critical reading and thinking skills; understanding of vocabulary; appreciation of tone, figurative language, and rhetorical devices; understanding of the purposes and effects of writers’ choices; and appreciation of human experience and values reflected in literature will be assessed. Text types include excerpts from *extended texts*—novel, book-length nonfiction, modern and/or contemporary drama, and Shakespearean drama—and *shorter texts*—poetry; short story; visual texts; persuasive, personal, expository, biographical, and autobiographical essays; and popular nonfiction. Some questions will be linked to more than one reading selection; that is, they will ask students to consider two or more readings connected by technique, context, and/or theme.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Limits on Diploma Examinations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students may now use extra time to write diploma exams. This means that all students now have up to 6 hours to complete each part of the ELA30–1 Diploma Examination, if they need it. <strong>The examination is still designed so that the majority of students can comfortably complete it within 3 hours.</strong> The examination instructions state both the original time and the total time now available. Extra time is available for diploma examinations in all subjects, but the total time allowed is not the same in all subjects. For more information about universal supports, please refer to the <a href="#">General Information Bulletin</a>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Part A: Written Response**

**Description**  
*Part A: Written Response*, worth 50% of the total diploma examination mark, consists of two assignments:  
- Personal Response to Texts Assignment  
- Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment

**Lined Pages**  
Lined pages for handwritten student responses are not included in Part A diploma examination booklets. A template lined page (Written-Response Bilingual Lined Page) can be downloaded for printing from the Alberta Education website at [http://www.education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/forms.aspx](http://www.education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/forms.aspx).

**Authorized References**  
Students writing *Part A: Written Response* are allowed to use the following print references:  
- an English and/or bilingual dictionary  
- a thesaurus  
- an authorized writing handbook  

Seven writing handbooks are authorized by the Provincial Assessment Sector at this time for use during the administration of Part A:  
- *A Canadian Writer’s Guide* (J. Finnbogason and A. Valleau), second edition only  
- *A Canadian Writer’s Reference* (D. Hacker)  
- *Checkmate: A Writing Reference for Canadians* (J. Buckley)  
- *English Language Arts Handbook for Secondary Students* (Alberta Education)  
- *Fit to Print: The Canadian Student’s Guide to Essay Writing* (J. Buckley)  
- *The St. Martin’s Handbook for Canadians* (A. Lunsford et al.)  
- *The Writing Process* (Q. Gehle et al.)

With the exception of *A Canadian Writer’s Guide*, any edition of these texts is acceptable for use. *The St. Martin’s Handbook for Canadians* and *The Writing Process* are out of print, but copies of these texts may be available for student use in some high schools.

Students and supervising examiners must remove any extraneous material from print references.
The Personal Response to Texts Assignment requires students to explore a given thematic topic in response to given texts that will include visual text(s) and any combination of fiction, nonfiction, and/or poetry.

This assignment is designed to

- be completed in approximately 45 to 60 minutes
- provide students with the opportunity to use a prose form of their choice to create personal responses that convey their ideas about the topic as prompted by their reading of a text or texts
- encourage the expression of student voice with an awareness of the contexts and intended audiences of the prose forms that the students have chosen
- introduce students to the thematic context of the Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment

Students are expected to write developed responses that reflect the quality of logical thought and effective presentation expected of students graduating from English Language Arts 30–1.

Value: 20% of the total examination mark (Parts A and B combined)

Scoring: Scores contribute to the total examination mark in the following proportions:

- Ideas and Impressions 10%
- Presentation 10%
**Insufficient**  
Compositions that provide no evidence of an attempt to fulfill the task presented in the assignment are assessed as Insufficient.

A response assigned an Insufficient receives a score of zero in both scoring categories.

Insufficient is a special category. It is not an indicator of quality. Compositions are assigned Insufficient when

- the student has responded using a form other than prose **OR**
- the student has written so little that it is not possible to assess Ideas and Impressions **OR**
- there is no evidence that the topic presented in the assignment has been addressed **OR**
- there is no connection between the text(s) provided in the assignment and the student’s response **OR**
- there is no evidence of an attempt to fulfill the task presented in the assignment.
The Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment requires students to relate literature that they have studied in English Language Arts 30–1 to an assigned topic based on the thematic context introduced in the Personal Response to Texts Assignment.

The Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment sets a specific writing task that requires students to choose relevant literary text(s) and appropriate support (e.g., details, examples, illustrations) from their chosen text(s), and to select an effective method of development. The assignment requires students to demonstrate their understanding of the chosen literature studied in English Language Arts 30–1 to a topic that is related to the thematic context introduced in the Personal Response to Texts Assignment.

The specific topic prompt for the Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment will not be identical to that of the Personal Response to Texts Assignment. It will in some manner provide a reframing of the thematic context already introduced (e.g., adding a thematic context, qualifying a theme, specifying a human attribute).

Students should choose from literary texts that they have studied in depth in English Language Arts 30–1. Texts which have literary merit and complexity of theme and style provide students with the best opportunity to produce a response that demonstrates insight and skillful analysis. When planning their response, the Personal Reflection on Choice of Literary Text(s) section allows students to explore their reasons for choosing a particular text in order to clarify their ideas prior to beginning the Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment.

In better responses, it is evident that students have deliberately chosen the text and support that reinforces their ideas in relation to the assigned topic.

Students are encouraged to write about literary texts that they understand and that they enjoy. The best way for students to prepare for the diploma examination is to learn strategies that assist them with the development of strong reading and writing skills.
This assignment is designed to

• be completed in approximately 1½ to 2 hours
• assess students’ responses to the thematic topic
• assess the quality of students’ knowledge and understanding of literary text(s) and the ability to employ, develop, and synthesize evidence to support their ideas
• assess students’ ability to use an appropriate form and structure to focus, arrange, and shape their discussions using effective and correct language choices

When responding to the Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment, students have the opportunity to reveal their understanding of a writer’s craft and their interpretations of the texts they have chosen to discuss and to demonstrate how well they can express their ideas in first-draft writing. Markers are interested in learning what students actually think and believe. Formulaic approaches to writing often impede students’ ability to express ideas clearly or to create an authentic voice.

Value:  
30% of the total examination mark (parts A and B combined)

Scoring:  
Scores contribute to the total examination mark in the following proportions:

- Thought and Understanding: 7.5%
- Supporting Evidence: 7.5%
- Form and Structure: 5.0%
- Matters of Choice: 5.0%
- Matters of Correctness: 5.0%

**Insufficient**

Compositions that refer only to the reading selections provided in the examination or that demonstrate no evidence of an attempt to fulfill the task presented in the assignment are assessed as Insufficient.

A response assigned an Insufficient receives the score of zero in all scoring categories.

Insufficient is a special category. It is not an indicator of quality. Compositions are assigned Insufficient when

• the student has written so little that it is not possible to assess Thought and Understanding and/or Supporting Evidence **OR**

• no reference has been made to literature studied **OR**

• the only literary reference present is to the text(s) provided in the first assignment **OR**

• there is no evidence of an attempt to fulfill the task presented in the assignment.
Illustrative Examples

The *Examples of the Standards for Students’ Writing* documents available on the Alberta Education website at education.alberta.ca are from previous examinations and are a valuable teaching resource. They demonstrate the standards for first-draft writing expected of students by the end of their English Language Arts 30–1 course in the context of a timed test. Note that the sample responses in these documents have been provided for *illustrative purposes only*. If students use sections from these responses when writing Part A of the diploma examination, they are guilty of plagiarism and will be in breach of examination regulations.

Blueprint

The English Language Arts 30–1 Diploma Examinations are designed to reflect the *Program of Studies for Senior High School English Language Arts*. The blueprint on the following page outlines the design of Part A. It presents the relationship between the requirements of the writing assignment and scoring of assignments as well as the headings and subheadings used to organize the specific learning outcomes in the Program of Studies.

As well, the blueprint delineates the categories used to report summary data to school authorities and high schools, and the percentage that each section of the examination contributes to the total examination mark.
# English Language Arts 30–1 Diploma Examination
## Part A: Written Response Blueprint

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Writing Assignment</th>
<th>Reporting Category (Scoring Category)</th>
<th>Cross-Reference to Program of Studies</th>
<th>Proportion of Total Examination Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **The Personal Response to Texts Assignment** requires the student to respond personally, creatively, and/or analytically to the content and contexts of a variety of texts while exploring ideas and impressions that the student may also consider in the Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment. | Ideas and Impressions | 2.1  
2.2  
2.3  
4.1 | 10% |
| **Presentation** | | 3.1  
3.2  
4.1  
4.2 | 20% |
| | The student is required to select an appropriate and effective prose form to convey impressions, to explore ideas, and to create a unifying and/or aesthetic effect and effective voice. The student is required to communicate clearly. | | 10% |
| **The Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment** sets a specific writing topic but allows the student to choose relevant literary text(s) and a method of development, and to select supporting details from the chosen literary text(s). The Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment requires the student to understand literal and implied meanings in the chosen text(s) and to synthesize thoughts clearly and express ideas effectively and correctly in writing. | Thought and Understanding | 2.1  
2.2  
4.1  
4.2 | 7.5% |
| | The student is required to address the topic by demonstrating an understanding of the ideas developed by the text creator(s), and by analyzing and explaining the personality traits, roles, relationships, motivations, attitudes, and values of characters developed and presented in literary text(s). | | 7.5% |
| **Supporting Evidence** | | 2.3  
3.2  
4.1  
4.2 | 30% |
| | The student is required to present relevant support and evidence from a literary text (or texts) to support ideas. Significant appropriate evidence skillfully used is required to create an effective and convincing response. | | |
| **Form and Structure** | | 2.2  
3.1  
4.1  
4.2 | 5% |
| | The student is required to develop a coherent, unified composition by choosing an appropriate method to create a unified effect. A controlling idea may be implicit or explicit within the composition. | | |
| **Matters of Choice** | | 4.2 | 5% |
| | The student is required to demonstrate a repertoire of stylistic choices and vocabulary in a deliberate, precise, and controlled manner. | | |
| **Matters of Correctness** | | 4.2 | 5.0 |
| | The student is required to write clearly and correctly, while appropriately applying the conventions for written language. | | |

### Proportion of Total Examination Mark

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting Category</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50% 50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part A: Written Response Sample Assignments, Scoring Categories, and Scoring Criteria
January 2018
English Language Arts 30–1
Part A: Written Response

Grade 12 Diploma Examination

Description

Time: 3 hours. This examination was developed to be completed in 3 hours; however, you may take up to 6 hours to complete the examination, should you need it.

Part A: Written Response consists of two assignments worth 50% of the total English Language Arts 30–1 diploma examination mark.

Assignment I:
Personal Response to Texts
Value 20% of total examination mark

Assignment II:
Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts
Value 30% of total examination mark

Recommendation: Plan your time carefully. Use the initial planning pages. Time spent in planning will result in better writing.

Instructions

• Complete Assignment I first. The Personal Response to Texts Assignment is designed to allow you time to think and reflect upon the ideas that you may also explore in Assignment II: Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts. The two assignments are thematically linked, but are not identical. Complete both assignments.

• It is your responsibility to print out (or handwrite) and staple all of your final written work to the designated pages in this booklet. You must also verify that this has been done correctly. Page 9 illustrates how to attach your final work to the booklet.

Additional Instructions for Students Using Word Processors

• Format your work using an easy-to-read 12-point font, double space, and use headers and footers as illustrated on page 9.

Additional Instructions for Students Who are Handwriting

• Use the paper provided by your school for handwritten work. Note that there is no paper provided in this booklet for final written work.

• Use blue or black ink for handwritten work.

Do not write your name anywhere in this booklet or on your response. Feel free to make handwritten revisions directly on your final response.
Sample ASSIGNMENT I: PERSONAL RESPONSE TO TEXTS ASSIGNMENT
Suggested time: approximately 45 to 60 minutes
Suggested word count range: 600 to 1200 words

Carefully read and consider the texts on pages 1 to 4, and then complete the assignment that follows.

**Perpetual Motion**

In a little while I’ll be drifting up an on-ramp, sipping coffee from a styrofoam container, checking my gas gauge with one eye and twisting the dial of the radio with the fingers of my third hand, looking for a station I can steer to Saturn on.

It seems I have the travelling disease again, an outbreak of that virus celebrated by the cracked lips of a thousand blues musicians—song about a rooster and a traintrack, a sunrise and a jug of cherry cherry wine.

It’s the kind of perceptual confusion that makes your loved ones into strangers, that makes a highway look like a woman with air conditioned arms. With a bottomless cup of coffee for a mouth and jewelry shaped like pay phone booths dripping from her ears.

In a little while the radio will almost have me convinced that I am doing something romantic, something to do with “freedom” and “becoming” instead of fright and flight into an anonymity so deep it has no bottom, only signs to tell you what direction you are falling in: CHEYENNE, SEATTLE, WICHITA, DETROIT—Do you hear me, do you feel me moving through? With my foot upon the gas, between the future and the past, I am here—here where the desire to vanish is stronger than the desire to appear.

Tony Hoagland

Hoagland, Tony. SWEET RUIN. © 1992 by the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System. Reprinted by permission of The University of Wisconsin Press.
In this excerpt from a novel, the narrator, Yolandi, is 11 years old. She and her parents are taking her sister, Elfrieda, a 17-year-old concert pianist, to the airport. Elfrieda, known as Elf, is on her way to Norway to perform in a recital and to study.

from ALL MY PUNY SORROWS

This excerpt is unavailable for electronic posting.

ASSIGNMENT I: PERSONAL RESPONSE TO TEXTS
Suggested time: approximately 45 to 60 minutes
Suggested word count range: 600 to 1200 words

You have been provided with three texts on pages 1 to 4. The speaker in Tony Hoagland’s poem “Perpetual Motion” reflects on the emotions one experiences while travelling. In the excerpt from Miriam Toews’ novel All My Puny Sorrows, the narrator’s sister is about to leave home. Fan Ho’s photograph of his cousin, entitled Approaching Shadow, was taken in Hong Kong in 1954.

The Assignment

What do these texts suggest to you about the impact of separation in an individual’s life? Support your idea(s) with reference to one or more of the prompting texts presented and to your previous knowledge and/or experience.

In your writing, you must

• use a prose form

• connect one or more of the prompting texts provided in this examination to the topic and to your own ideas and impressions

The texts presented in the Sample Personal Response to Texts Assignment on pages 16 to 18 do not necessarily indicate the length or number of texts that will be presented to students in the 2018–2019 Part A: Written Response, Personal Response to Texts Assignment.
Initial Planning

To which of the provided texts are you responding? What is the connection between the text(s) and your response?

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

What idea about the prompting text(s) do you intend to explore and how does it address the topic?

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

State your choice of prose form. Choose from prose forms that you have practiced in English Language Arts 30–1. You may respond using a personal, creative, or analytical perspective. Do NOT use a poetic form.

____________________________________________________________________________________________________
Scoring Categories and Scoring Criteria for 2018–2019
Personal Response to Texts Assignment

Because students’ responses to the Personal Response to Texts Assignment vary widely—from philosophical discussions to personal narratives to creative approaches—assessment of the Personal Response to Texts Assignment on the diploma examination will be in the context of Louise Rosenblatt’s suggestion:

…the evaluation of the answers would be in terms of the amount of evidence that the youngster has actually read something and thought about it, not a question of whether, necessarily, he has thought about it the way an adult would, or given an adult’s “correct” answer.


Markers will also consider Grant P. Wiggins’ suggestion that we should assess students’ writing “with the tact of Socrates: tact to respect the student’s ideas enough to enter them fully—even more fully than the thinker sometimes—and thus the tact to accept apt but unanticipated or unique responses.”


Ideas and Impressions (10% of total examination mark)
Cross-Reference to the Program of Studies for Senior High School English Language Arts 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 4.1

When marking Ideas and Impressions, the marker should consider
• the student’s exploration of the topic in relation to the prompting text(s)
• the student’s ideas and reflection
• support in relation to the student’s ideas and impressions

Excellent

The student’s exploration of the topic is insightful. Perceptions and/or ideas are confident and discerning. Support is precise and aptly reinforces the student’s ideas and impressions.

E

Proficient

The student’s exploration of the topic is purposeful. Perceptions and/or ideas are thoughtful and considered. Support is specific and strengthens the student’s ideas and impressions.

PF

Satisfactory

The student’s exploration of the topic is generalized. Perceptions and/or ideas are straightforward and relevant. Support is adequate and clarifies the student’s ideas and impressions.

S

Limited

The student’s exploration of the topic is vague. Perceptions and/or ideas are superficial and/or ambiguous. Support is imprecise and/or ineffectively related to the student’s ideas and impressions.

L

Poor

The student’s exploration of the topic is minimal. Perceptions and/or ideas are undeveloped and/or irrelevant. Support is lacking and/or unrelated to the student’s ideas and impressions.

P

Insufficient

Insufficient is a special category. It is not an indicator of quality. Assign Insufficient when
• the student has responded using a form other than prose OR
• the student has written so little that it is not possible to assess Ideas and Impressions OR
• there is no evidence that the topic presented in the assignment has been addressed OR
• there is no connection between the text(s) provided in the assignment and the student’s response OR
• there is no evidence of an attempt to fulfill the task presented in the assignment.
**Presentation** (10% of total examination mark)

Cross-Reference to the *Program of Studies for Senior High School English Language Arts* 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2

When marking **Presentation**, the marker should consider the effectiveness of

- **voice** in relation to the context created by the student in the chosen prose form
- **stylistic choices** (including quality and correctness of language and expression) and the student’s creation of **tone**
- the student’s development of a **unifying and/or aesthetic effect**

Consider the complexity of the response in terms of its context and length.

### Excellent (E)

The voice created by the student is convincing. Stylistic choices are precise and the student’s creation of tone is adept. The unifying and/or aesthetic effect is skillfully developed.

### Proficient (PF)

The voice created by the student is distinct. Stylistic choices are specific and the student’s creation of tone is competent. The unifying and/or aesthetic effect is capably developed.

### Satisfactory (S)

The voice created by the student is apparent. Stylistic choices are adequate and the student’s creation of tone is conventional. The unifying and/or aesthetic effect is appropriately developed.

### Limited (L)

The voice created by the student is undiscerning and/or unsuitable. Stylistic choices are imprecise and the student’s creation of tone is inconsistent. The unifying and/or aesthetic effect is inadequately developed.

### Poor (P)

The voice created by the student is confused. Stylistic choices impede communication and the student’s creation of tone is ineffective. A unifying and/or aesthetic effect is haphazard or obscure.
Sample ASSIGNMENT II: CRITICAL/ANALYTICAL RESPONSE TO LITERARY TEXTS ASSIGNMENT
Suggested time: approximately 1½ to 2 hours
Suggested word count range: 800 to 1600 words

Do not use the texts provided in this booklet for the Critical/Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment. Choose from short stories, novels, plays, screenplays, poetry, films, or other literary texts that you have studied in English Language Arts 30–1. When considering the works that you have studied, choose a literary text (or texts) that is meaningful to you and relevant to the following assignment.

The Assignment

Discuss the idea(s) developed by the text creator in your chosen text about the role emotional courage plays when an individual experiences separation.

In your planning and writing, consider the following instructions.

• Carefully consider your controlling idea and how you will create a strong unifying effect in your response.

• As you develop your ideas, support them with appropriate, relevant, and meaningful examples from your choice of literary text(s).
Initial Planning

You may use this space for your initial planning. This information assists markers in identifying the text you have chosen to support your ideas. The markers who read your composition will be very familiar with the literary text you have chosen.

Literary Text and Text Creator

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Note: Write the title of your chosen literary text on the back cover of this examination booklet.

Personal Reflection on Choice of Literary Text

Suggested time: 10 to 15 minutes

Briefly explore your reasons for selecting the literary text as support for your response. Markers will consider the information you provide here when considering the effectiveness of your supporting evidence.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

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________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
**Scoring Categories and Scoring Criteria for 2018–2019**

**Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment**

Because students’ responses to the Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment vary widely—from philosophical discussions to personal narratives to creative approaches—assessment of the Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment on the diploma examination will be in the context of Louise Rosenblatt’s suggestion: “…the evaluation of the answers would be in terms of the amount of evidence that the youngster has actually read something and thought about it, not a question of whether, necessarily, he has thought about it the way an adult would, or given an adult’s “correct” answer.


Markers will also consider Grant P. Wiggins’ suggestion that we should assess students’ writing “with the tact of Socrates: tact to respect the student’s ideas enough to enter them fully—even more fully than the thinker sometimes—and thus the tact to accept apt but unanticipatable or unique responses.”


**Thought and Understanding** (7.5% of total examination mark)

Cross-Reference to the *Program of Studies for Senior High School English Language Arts* 2.1, 2.2, 4.1, 4.2

When marking **Thought and Understanding**, the marker should consider

- how effectively the student’s ideas relate to the assignment
- the quality of the literary interpretations to show understanding of the text relative to the topic

| Excellent | **E** | Ideas are insightful and carefully considered, demonstrating a comprehension of subtle distinctions in the literary text(s) and the topic. Literary interpretations are perceptive and illuminating. |
| Proficient | **PF** | Ideas are thoughtful and considered, demonstrating a competent comprehension of the literary text(s) and the topic. Literary interpretations are revealing and sensible. |
| Satisfactory | **S** | Ideas are relevant and straightforward, demonstrating a generalized comprehension of the literary text(s) and the topic. Literary interpretations are general but plausible. |
| Limited | **L** | Ideas are superficial or oversimplified, demonstrating a weak comprehension of the literary text(s) and the topic. Literary interpretations are incomplete and/or literal. |
| Poor | **P** | Ideas are largely absent or irrelevant, and/or do not develop the topic. Little comprehension of the literary text(s) is demonstrated. |
| Insufficient | **INS** | Insufficient is a special category. It is not an indicator of quality. Assign Insufficient when |
  - the student has written so little that it is not possible to assess Thought and Understanding and/or Supporting Evidence OR
  - no reference has been made to literature studied OR
  - the only literary reference present is to the text(s) provided in the first assignment OR
  - there is no evidence of an attempt to fulfill the task presented in the assignment. |
Supporting Evidence (7.5% of total examination mark)

Cross-Reference to the Program of Studies for Senior High School English Language Arts 2.3, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2

When marking Supporting Evidence, the marker should consider:

- the selection and quality of evidence
- how well the supporting evidence is employed, developed, and synthesized to support the student’s ideas

Consider ideas presented in the Personal Reflection on Choice of Literary Text(s).

Excellent (E) Support is precise and astutely chosen to reinforce the student’s ideas in a convincing way. A valid connection to the student’s ideas is efficiently maintained.

Proficient (PF) Support is specific and well chosen to reinforce the student’s ideas in a persuasive way. A sound connection to the student’s ideas is capably maintained.

Satisfactory (S) Support is general, adequate, and appropriately chosen to reinforce the student’s ideas in an acceptable way but occasionally may lack persuasiveness. A reasonable connection to the student’s ideas is suitably maintained.

Limited (L) Support is inadequate, inaccurate, largely a restatement of what was read, and/or inappropriately chosen in relation to the student’s ideas and thus lacks persuasiveness. A weak connection to the student’s ideas is maintained.

Poor (P) Support is irrelevant, overgeneralized, lacks validity, and/or is absent. Little or no connection to the student’s ideas is evident.
### Scoring Categories and Scoring Criteria for 2018–2019

**Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment**

**Form and Structure** (5% of total examination mark)

Cross-Reference to the *Program of Studies for Senior High School English Language Arts* 2.2, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2

> When marking **Form and Structure**, the marker should consider

- the manner in which the student **focuses**, **arranges**, and **shapes** the discussion in response to the assignment
- how well a **unifying effect** or a **controlling idea** is developed and maintained

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>PF</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Limited</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>PF</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Excellent (E)**

A judicious arrangement of ideas and details contributes to a fluent discussion that is developed skillfully. The unifying effect or controlling idea is effectively presented and integrated.

**Proficient (PF)**

A purposeful arrangement of ideas and details contributes to a controlled discussion that is developed capably. The unifying effect or controlling idea is coherently presented and sustained.

**Satisfactory (S)**

A straightforward arrangement of ideas and details provides direction for the discussion that is developed appropriately. The unifying effect or controlling idea is generally presented and maintained; however, coherence may falter.

**Limited (L)**

A discernible but ineffectual arrangement of ideas and details provides some direction for the discussion that is underdeveloped. A unifying effect or controlling idea is inconsistently maintained.

**Poor (P)**

A haphazard arrangement of ideas and details provides little or no direction for the discussion, and development is lacking or obscure. A unifying effect or controlling idea is absent.
**Scoring Categories and Scoring Criteria for 2018–2019**  
**Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment**

**Matters of Choice** (5% of total examination mark)

Cross-Reference to the *Program of Studies for Senior High School English Language Arts* 4.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matters of Choice</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excellent</strong> E</td>
<td>Diction is precise. Syntactic structures are effective and sometimes polished. Stylistic choices contribute to the creation of a skillful composition with a convincing voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proficient</strong> PF</td>
<td>Diction is specific. Syntactic structures are generally effective. Stylistic choices contribute to the creation of a considered composition with a capable voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Satisfactory</strong> S</td>
<td>Diction is adequate. Syntactic structures are straightforward, but attempts at complex structures may be awkward. Stylistic choices contribute to the creation of a conventional composition with an appropriate voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Limited</strong> L</td>
<td>Diction is imprecise and/or inappropriate. Syntactic structures are frequently awkward and/or ambiguous. Inadequate language choices contribute to the creation of a vague composition with an undiscerning voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poor</strong> P</td>
<td>Diction is overgeneralized and/or inaccurate. Syntactic structures are uncontrolled and/or unintelligible. A lack of language choices contributes to the creation of a confused composition with an obscure voice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When marking **Matters of Choice**, the marker should consider how effectively the student’s choices enhance communication. The marker should consider

- **diction**
- choices of **syntactic structures** (such as parallelism, balance, inversion)
- the extent to which **stylistic choices** contribute to the creation of **voice**
Scoring Categories and Scoring Criteria for 2018–2019
Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment

Matters of Correctness (5% of total examination mark)

Cross-Reference to the Program of Studies for Senior High School English Language Arts 4.2

When marking Matters of Correctness, the marker should consider the correctness of

- **sentence construction** (completeness, consistency, subordination, coordination, predication)
- **usage** (accurate use of words according to convention and meaning)
- **grammar** (subject-verb/pronoun-antecedent agreement, pronoun reference, consistency of tense)
- **mechanics** (punctuation, spelling, capitalization)

Consider the proportion of error in terms of the complexity and length of the response.

**Excellent**

This writing demonstrates confident control of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics. The relative insignificance of error is impressive considering the complexity of the response and the circumstances.

**Proficient**

This writing demonstrates competent control of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics. Minor errors in complex language structures are understandable considering the circumstances.

**Satisfactory**

This writing demonstrates control of the basics of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics. There may be occasional lapses in control and minor errors; however, the communication remains clear.

**Limited**

This writing demonstrates faltering control of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics. The range of errors blurs the clarity of communication.

**Poor**

This writing demonstrates lack of control of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics. Jarring errors impair communication.
**Part B: Reading**

**Description**

*Part B: Reading* is worth 50% of the total diploma examination mark and consists of 70 machine-scored questions based on readings from shorter texts and excerpts from extended texts.

*Part B: Reading* is an assessment of students’ ability to read a variety of literary texts closely. Critical reading and thinking skills, understanding of vocabulary, appreciation of tone and literary and rhetorical devices, understanding of the purpose and effect of writers’ choices, and appreciation of human experience and values reflected in literature will be assessed at the level of challenge appropriate for graduating English Language Arts 30–1 students.

**Readings**

Texts **will** include:

- Shakespearean drama
- Modern and/or contemporary drama—may include television or radio scripts or screenplays
- Poetry
- Fiction and nonfiction readings representing a broad selection of literary texts, which includes persuasive, personal, expository, biographical, and autobiographical texts
- Photographs and other visual texts—may include cartoons, advertisements, or works of art

Students may be required to make comparisons between thematically connected texts and/or to explore the context within which a text was created and/or presented in the readings.

Reading selections will reflect the minimum one-third Canadian texts requirement in the *Program of Studies for Senior High School English Language Arts*. Readings will also reflect a variety of cultural perspectives.

**Questions**

The questions on *Part B: Reading* progress through each selection in a manner intended to assist students with their reading. For this reason, and with the inclusion of linked readings and items, students should read the passages and answer the questions in the order in which they appear in the booklets.
Linked Passages and Questions

When presented with texts in combination or in sequence, students are expected to maintain a critical awareness across multiple texts. Texts may be linked to reading selections that offer interpretations, background information, or parallel thematic presentations. Students may be asked to identify similar or contradictory ideas, identify biases evident in a passage, or assess the appropriateness of a conclusion drawn from the context in which the text was created or the context created by the passages collectively.

Sample Readings and Questions

The *Released Items 2016* contains readings and 40 questions from various administrations. An answer key, item descriptions, blueprint classifications, and performance data are also included to offer insights regarding the knowledge and understanding as well as skills and processes students are expected to demonstrate when writing the English Language Arts 30-1 *Part B: Multiple Choice* component.

Blueprint

*Part B: Reading* is designed to reflect the *Program of Studies for Senior High School English Language Arts*. The blueprint for Part B is on the following page.
### English Language Arts 30–1 Diploma Examination Part B: Reading Blueprint

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting Category*</th>
<th>A. Form Literal Understandings</th>
<th>B. Infer, Apply, and Analyze</th>
<th>C. Assess and Form Generalizations</th>
<th>Total Items ***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Construct meaning from content and context, and engage contextual knowledge (2.1)**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30–40 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Relate textual forms, elements, and techniques to content, purpose, and effect (2.2, 2.3.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15–25 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Connect self, culture, and milieu to text and text creators (2.3.1, 2.3.2)</td>
<td>5–15 items</td>
<td>30–40 items</td>
<td>15–25 items</td>
<td>70 items (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Items</strong></td>
<td>5–15 items</td>
<td>30–40 items</td>
<td>15–25 items</td>
<td>70 items (50%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Texts used to assess learner outcomes are chosen for their literary merit and represent the reading standard expected of English Language Arts 30–1 graduates. Text selections will reflect the minimum one-third Canadian texts requirement in the *Program of Studies for Senior High School English Language Arts*. **Text types** include excerpts from *extended texts*—novel, book-length nonfiction, modern and/or contemporary drama (including television or radio scripts or screenplays), and Shakespearean drama—and *shorter texts*—poetry; short stories; visual texts (including photographs, cartoons, works of art, advertisements, posters, and photographic compositions); persuasive, personal, expository, biographical, and autobiographical essays; and popular nonfiction (including news stories, feature articles, reviews, interviews, and technical writing). Some questions will be linked to more than one reading selection; that is, they will ask students to consider two or more readings connected by context and/or theme. **Numbers in parentheses refer to headings and subheadings from the *Program of Studies for Senior High School English Language Arts* to which the reporting categories are cross-referenced. ***Numbers of items and percentages are approximate and will vary depending on the readings chosen. Part B is worth 50% of the total English Language Arts 30–1 Diploma Examination mark.
Student Achievement on the January and June 2018 English Language Arts 30–1 Diploma Examinations

These comments are intended to provide classroom teachers with impressions concerning strengths and weaknesses as demonstrated on the English Language Arts 30–1 diploma examinations written in January and June 2018. Information provided here is best used in conjunction with school and/or school authority reports for January and June 2018, and with information gleaned by the classroom teacher concerning student strengths and weaknesses displayed during the 2017–2018 school year. By reviewing results on past diploma examinations, classroom teachers may be able to strengthen their instructional programs and enhance student success.

To view examples of student responses to the writing assignments, Examples of the Standards for Students’ Writing, refer to the Alberta Education website at http://education.alberta.ca.

Part A: Written Response

In January and June 2018, the topics for the two assignments in the Part A: Written Response portion of the exam remained thematically linked, but the specific topics for each assignment were different. For both administrations, the Personal Response to Texts Assignment topic established a general thematic context in relation to the given prompting texts. The Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment then built upon that established thematic context and asked students to consider and discuss a more narrowly focused topic in relation to a text they had studied during their ELA 30–1 course.

The 2017–2018 school year was the first year where the extra-time provision was available to all students. This change did not affect the standard that was expected and that markers utilized in scoring the written-response assignments. Anecdotally, markers reported that they did read some student-work that seemed longer than in previous years, particularly for students taking a creative approach to the Personal Response to Texts Assignment; however, many of the responses were similar in length to previous years’. Markers also noted that the overall length of student responses to the Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment did not seem to be appreciably greater than in the previous year. One commonly related observation for both assignments was that the planning exhibited by students seemed to be more extensive than in previous years.

Assignment I: Personal Response to Texts Assignment

In both January and June, markers noted that students took a variety of approaches to the assignment and topics. As has been the case for a number of administrations now, the most common form of response was the “hybrid” approach, whereby students provide some form of personal anecdote along with either analytical or philosophical discussion of one or more of the prompting texts. There were more students in June who utilized a solely analytical approach than in January. In terms of creative approaches used by
students, narratives were by far the most common. The number of students using other creative forms (e.g. letter, diary/journal, script, etc.) was consistent with the previous year. There continued to be a small number of students responding to the assignment by making reference to or analyzing literature other than the provided prompting texts. As in previous administrations, these responses often proved challenging for markers to assess in terms of the exploration of the topic in relation to the provided prompting text(s). In some of these cases, there was no reference to any of the prompting texts, which resulted in them being assessed as Insufficient. Regardless of the prose form chosen by the student, there must be clear reference to at least one of the prompting texts in the response. Figure 1 shows a comparison between January and June 2018 of all prose form types.

Figure 1

Personal Response to Texts Assignment: Frequency of Prose Form Types, January and June 2018

For the 2018 administrations, markers were asked to identify the manner in which students referenced the prompting texts, and whether the reference(s) was/were implicit, explicit but brief, or explicit and extended. While the prose form response to each prompting text may differ, overall more students made explicit and extended references to the prompting texts. This situation was especially true for the prose excerpt in both January and June. In cases where the reference to the prompting text was explicit but brief, markers noted differing levels of effectiveness. In situations where references
of this sort seemed to lack a consideration of the prompting text as a whole and were simply “tacked on,” they often did little to support or develop the exploration of the topic. Additionally, because of a lack of connection and integration of the textual reference(s) to the student’s own ideas and support, the unifying and/or aesthetic effect was often negatively impacted. More-effective responses that utilized explicit but brief reference(s) to the prompting text(s) did so in a way that recognized the significance of the detail chosen and its relation to the response as a whole. Implicit references to the prompting texts tended to be found more in personal / anecdotal or creative responses.

As in previous administrations, the more successful “hybrid” responses continued to exhibit clear and genuine connections between the personal anecdote and the prompting text(s) provided on the exam. Markers noted that increasingly the more successful of these responses balanced or, in some cases, interwove analysis of one or more of the prompting texts and personal experience. This consideration of the prompting text went beyond just a simple comparison or “parallel” experience and allowed students the opportunity to consider the significance of their ideas and demonstrate an insightful exploration of the assigned topic. In the less successful hybrid responses, however, there was often little, if any, connection noted between the student’s personal experience or anecdote and the prompting text(s).

Although the hybrid personal/analytical response was still the single most popular prose form, the number of students who wrote from a personal perspective with only brief or implicit reference(s) to the prompting text(s) was also very high. In the most successful responses of this nature, students generated ideas clearly in response to the prompting text(s) but focused their discussion on a meaningful anecdote, experience, or philosophical perspective and reflected on it purposefully in relation to the assigned topic. In weaker responses of this type, students tended simply to recount a narrative or anecdote that either paralleled the prompting text(s) or provided an illustration of the assigned topic. Responses of this type did little to explore ideas or offer meaningful reflection on either the prompting text(s) or personal experience.

For students who chose a more analytic form of response—whether that included a personal aspect or not—markers noted that the more successful responses demonstrated a judicious selection of support from the prompting text(s) to develop the ideas and impressions. In these responses, students were clearly exploring the assigned topic and developing their own interpretations. In less successful analytic responses, often the exploration of the student’s ideas about the topic was lacking, and the development of support did not move beyond simply providing examples from the prompting text(s) that reflected the topic. Lengthy summaries of the provided prompting text(s) alone did not constitute analysis and exploration of the topic.

In terms of those students choosing to utilize a creative form for their response, markers noted that successful responses of this type often demonstrated awareness and use of the expected conventions associated with the chosen creative prose form as part of the unifying effect. Additionally, the notes on the Initial Planning page typically identified and/or outlined the overall understanding, purpose, and/or intended development of the response, which allowed for a focused and concise approach. In these instances, markers were readily able to recognize how students’ creative responses to the topic were prompted by the careful reading and consideration of the prompting text(s).
As in previous administrations, markers continued to note that some responses were problematic in that they offered little or no evidence that the students had actually read, thought about, and developed a response to the prompting text(s). Although a response may be on topic, if a student fails to provide a connection between the prompting text(s) and the actual response, it will be assessed as Insufficient.

In January, students approached the topic of “the impact of separation in an individual’s life” from a variety of perspectives. The concept of “separation” was often considered in physical terms, but some students also grappled with forms of psychological separation. For many students who wrote from a personal perspective, they tended to refer to an experience where separation occurred in their life or one that they anticipated occurring. Weaker responses, regardless of the prose form chosen, tended simply to recount an experience and did not address or consider the “impact” of separation. Straightforward responses often suggested or implied a clear cause-and-effect relationship between the separation and the resulting impact. Stronger responses tended to explore the type and circumstances of the separation and also addressed the significance of the impact, often connecting it to elements such as future actions or changes in perspective. Overall, students seemed to find this topic quite accessible and relatable to all the prompting texts. Although not referenced as frequently as the other prompting texts, the poem “Perpetual Motion” by Tony Hoagland offered students a variety of entry points for both creative and analytic responses. Many students identified with the speaker’s apparent movement and the concept of travelling as a form of separation. The excerpt from Miriam Toews’ *All My Puny Sorrows* was the most commonly referred to prompting text and provided a literal example of separation between siblings. Many students used this excerpt as a prompt for parallel experiences in their own life. The photograph Approaching Shadow by Fan Ho invited students to consider a metaphoric reading and to address the composition of the image.

The topic in June “about the interplay between optimism and truth in an individual’s life” allowed students to address it in a number of ways. Weaker responses often tended to focus on only one concept or the other—either optimism or truth—and did not really consider the aspect of interplay at all. In more-straightforward responses, the interplay was often regarded as one of conflict. Typically in these instances, the resolution was one where individuals recognized the need to balance these apparently oppositional elements. Stronger responses explored the nuances of the interplay. They considered the circumstances that brought optimism and truth together. Additionally, they did not see the relationship between the two as static or unchanging; rather, they addressed how and why there was tension or harmony at a particular moment. In many cases, students’ approach to the topic seemed to be informed somewhat by the text(s) they chose as a prompt.

Henry Taylor’s poem “After a Movie” was the least-referred-to prompting text, but those students that did so often noted the possibilities presented to the speaker through imagination and through the medium of film. The excerpt from Jane Urquhart’s novel *Sanctuary Line* presented two primary characters with markedly different viewpoints and approaches to a situation. Many students utilized this excerpt as the basis for an analytical response. The black and white photograph of a man standing in an unfinished boat by Carl De Keyzer was a popular choice for students who took a creative approach to the assignment. Weaker responses tended to base a narrative solely on the literal situation presented, while more successful responses not only incorporated the details evident
in the image but also considered their significance and how they suggested additional concepts related to the assignment.

**Assignment II: Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment**

Overall performance on the Critical / Analytical Response to Literary Texts Assignment remained relatively consistent with previous administrations. In January, students were asked to write about “the role emotional courage plays when an individual experiences separation.” As with the first assignment, many students found the topic as a whole accessible and were generally able to discuss how characters responded to separation. The concept of emotional courage was dealt with by students in a number of ways. In many cases, the literary text chosen by the student was a determining factor in how it was defined. In weaker responses, the aspect of courage was often oversimplified or students wrote simply about emotions. Straightforward responses tended to regard emotional courage in generalized terms as either present or absent, without giving much explanation of how it manifested itself or operated. Stronger responses typically provided a framework for emotional courage and defined it in relation to other aspects of character such as perseverance, resilience, morals, etc. and how they contributed to a character’s response when experiencing separation.

In June, students were asked about “the role of honesty when an individual experiences tension between optimism and reality.” As in January, students found the topic accessible and applicable to a wide range of texts. In weaker responses, students often did little to address optimism or honesty as human traits or mindsets; rather, they typically focused primarily on relaying what constituted a character’s external reality. In stronger responses, students recognized optimism as a particular worldview that manifested itself in a variety of ways. Similarly, honesty could be regarded in a number of ways—honesty with self, honesty with others, honesty of others, etc.—and consequently as playing a pivotal role in determining a character’s actions. In some cases, students noted the absence of honesty as a crucial element contributing either to a false sense of optimism or to a skewed perspective on reality.

On the whole, in both January and June, markers indicated how important it was for students to recognize that the more narrowed and focused topics of the Critical / Analytical assignment require a confident and accurate understanding of the key words and phrases of the topic in order to determine subtleties and connotations. From this understanding of the topic, students are then better able to make a deliberate choice of a studied literary text as a starting point. Such careful selection can then lead to an arrangement of ideas and evidence that will allow the student to address the topic in its entirety. In some cases, markers noted that students seemed to have chosen a text for reasons of personal comfort and familiarity rather than for reasons of a good fit with the topic. Granted, students should not write on a text that they do not know well (no matter how tidily it fits the topic), but the awkwardness of some student choices speaks to the necessity of students entering the exam having mastered a number of different texts that they can write about with confidence. Better responses clearly demonstrated a purposeful choice of literature, and the ensuing response reflected a more thorough and complete understanding of the relationship between topic, text, and analysis.

Markers also noted that the manner in which students analyzed their chosen text and developed their ideas relative to the topic had a bearing on overall performance. Students
who approached this assignment by simply identifying and describing examples or situations in their chosen text that illustrated the assigned topic typically did little to address significance, human complexity, or causal relationships. Without thoughtful consideration of such aspects, students do not afford themselves the opportunity to provide perceptive ideas, in-depth analysis, or competent literary interpretations on the assigned topic. Markers also noted that weaker responses often exhibited large textual gaps or did not account for critical moments in the text. While it is not possible (or even desirable) for students to write on the “entire” text of an extended work, when the lack of discussion of key events leads to uncertainty about how well a student understands the text, it becomes problematic. In better responses, the supporting evidence and textual details were clearly selected and arranged in such a way that a cohesive structure was demonstrated. This arrangement resulted in the establishment of a unified controlling idea and contributed to the thoughtful development of interpretations and ideas in relation to the topic.

Anecdotally, markers have long suggested that more purposeful responses typically contain some thoughtful and detailed initial planning regarding the selection of support and the arrangement of ideas about the topic. This planning can then provide the student with direction and structure. As part of ongoing efforts to study student performance, the focus on student planning begun in 2017 was continued. In the 2018 administrations, markers were once again asked to identify and record the amount and type of planning students had put down in their booklets as part of the writing process. Data analysis continues to support the position that student planning has a positive effect on performance.

To pursue this line of inquiry, an independent predictor of performance, the Part B: Reading score, allows us to consider the impact of the planning for students with different abilities. Not surprisingly, students who scored higher on the Part B: Reading tended to do better on the Critical / Analytical assignment. Figure 2 presents a scatterplot of all student scores on Assignment 2 and Part B: Reading (one dot may represent many students). To simplify these scores, a statistical regression curve can be used to illustrate the relationship (i.e., the correlation) between how students performed on the Part B examination and how they performed on Assignment 2. For any score on the Part B: Reading part of the examination, the curve allows you to find the most likely score achieved by the students on the second assignment of the Part A: Writing part. For example, a student with an equated score of 45 on Part B would be expected to have, on average, a score of 18.1 on Assignment 2.
Analysis of regression charts gives us further insight into the relationship between planning and student performance. Figure 3 indicates the relationship between the amount of student planning and student performance. When considering Figure 3, keep in mind that the dashed black line represents the statistical relationship between student performance on Part B: Reading and Assignment 2. By exploring the position of the coloured regression lines (each colour represents a different amount of planning exhibited by students) relative to the black line (which represents the statistical relationship across all students and all form choices), we can observe the effect that planning has on performance.
Figure 4 indicates the relationship between the type of student planning (if any) and student performance. Markers were asked to identify the primary type of planning exhibited in the student response. “Personal Connection” was defined as the student providing a note or explanation regarding text selection. “Initial Draft” was defined as the student including a first draft of the response. “Point Form” was defined as a list of points, quotations, or other notes. “Spatial / Visual” was defined as a non-linear grouping or clustering of points or ideas. “Graphic Organizer” was defined as a recognizable and structured organizing principle (e.g., Venn diagram, concept map, Brace map, etc.).
Figure 4

Correlation between student performance on Part B: Reading and Part A: Writing, Assignment 2, June 2018

Regression Analysis of Planning Type, June 2018
Part B: Reading

In the 2018 examinations, students demonstrated that they could apply ELA 30–1 subject-specific knowledge such as the use of figurative language and rhetorical devices. As well, the students demonstrated the ability to comprehend and interpret print texts from various genres that have multiple levels of meaning and considerable sophistication. Consistent with results from previous administrations, results within the Blueprint Reporting Categories 1 and 2 indicate that students who meet the acceptable standard are able to draw inferences from the personality traits, roles, relationships, motivations, attitudes, and values of characters presented in both straightforward and complex texts. As in previous administrations, the most difficult questions required students to recognize the tone and the effect created by the use of various literary devices and text features in order to draw inferences or to make generalizations regarding a character’s values and/or a text creator’s attitude toward context, subject, or characters. The better students were able to identify the text creator’s intended main idea, especially when such themes were implied rather than stated explicitly.
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