Appendix A
For more information, see the Table of Specifications.

Grade 12 Prototype Examination

English Language Arts A 30
Course Code 8017

Barcode Number

_________  _________
Month       Day

Date of Birth

October 2009
(Revised 2011)
TIME: Two and One-Half Hours

Do not spend too much time on any question. Read the questions carefully.

You are allowed to use a print dictionary. No electronic dictionaries, translation dictionaries, or any other notes or reference materials are allowed.

MACHINE-SCORED SECTION: The first section of this examination will be multiple-choice questions. Record your answers on the Student Examination Form which is provided. Each question has four suggested answers, one of which is better than the others. Select the best answer and record it on the Student Examination Form as shown in the example below:

Example:

1. Which of the following cities is the capital of Canada?
   A. Toronto
   B. Ottawa
   C. Hamilton
   D. Montreal

Student Examination Form:

1. A B C D

Use an ordinary HB pencil to mark your answers on the Student Examination Form. If you change your mind about an answer, be sure to erase the first mark completely. There should be only one answer marked for each question. Be sure there are no stray pencil marks on your answer sheet.

Do not fold either the Student Examination Form or the examination booklet. Check that all information at the bottom of the Student Examination Form is correct and complete. Make any necessary changes, and fill in any missing information. Be sure to complete the Month and Day of Your Birth section.

MARKER-SCORED SECTION: Read carefully.

1. The remainder of the examination will be marker scored. Space is provided to answer in the examination booklet. If additional space is needed, answer paper will be provided.
2. Do not write your name or place any mark that would disclose your identity on the examination booklet or answer paper.
3. Leave a margin of one inch on the left side of all answer paper used.
4. Write all answers and solutions in ink. You may use pencil only for rough work.
5. Use clear, correct, and effective English and write neatly.
6. Plan the examination so that too much time is not spent on any one question. No more than 55 minutes should be spent on the Multiple-Choice Section.
7. Space is provided in this booklet for planning as well as for your finished work. Evidence of planning will be considered by markers on the 25-mark essay.

Upon completion of the examination, place your Student Examination Form and answer paper behind the examination booklet and insert both in the same envelope. Be sure to seal the envelope and complete the Student Identification Slip and the information requested on the face of the envelope.
(1) The single greatest influence on our regional identity as dwellers on the prairie is the extremity of our weather. In his poem, “Canadian January Night,” Alden Nowlan expresses our awareness of this extremity:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{this is a country} \\
\text{where a man can die} \\
\text{simply from being} \\
\text{caught outside.}
\end{align*}
\]

Paradoxically, our environment engenders both pride and humility. Our ability to survive harsh meteorological conditions is a source of pride, our experiences with nature’s wrath have taught us to be humble, which is perhaps our most defining characteristic.

(2) Wind can present a very real hazard, especially on the open prairie. Canoeists paddling down the South Saskatchewan on a calm and beautiful summer evening might set up camp on a sandbar. In the dark moonless night, they may awaken to not only the sound of tent walls flapping furiously, but the sensation of being pushed along the sand by a powerful gale also. When shouts from nearby tents confirm that the sleepless campers are in danger of being blown away or buried, they will spend the rest of the night huddled under canoes, to which they tie themselves and all of their gear. A sobering experience such as this engenders in the survivors a great sense of camaraderie, pride, and relief.

(3) The daily commute in rural Saskatchewan in January can be life altering. With no advance warning, 40 centimetres of snow may fall as winds gust to 100 kilometres per hour and temperatures plunge to below minus 40 degrees. By the time highways are officially closed, commuters may be en route in their cars, in complete whiteout conditions, unable to move and slowly being buried under drifting snow. Leaving a vehicle in these conditions can prove fatal, so travellers have no choice but to wait, helplessly trapped, in their cars. It is hard to be so completely at the mercy of the elements. With luck, soon an otherworldly glow of headlights may appear through the white wall as a convoy of snow machines approaches dimly. Volunteer Fire Departments spend entire days and nights rescuing trapped travellers and delivering them to the nearest shelter, where they can safely wait out the blizzard that will change the way they look at life. This kind of extreme weather teaches everyone an unforgettable lesson in humility.

(4) The most serious and immediately threatening wind condition, is the dreaded tornado. Here on the prairie, a man can often see a storm coming a hundred miles away, can feel it in the atmosphere and observe heightened anxiety in the animals, but when a tornado hits, all he can do is hold on. Wind speeds of two hundred miles per hour can lift a granary 40 feet into the air. Surviving a tornado will drastically alter a person’s attitude toward nature, as complacent pride is forever replaced by humble respect.

(5) It is humility that defines our regional identity most of all. While surviving extreme weather conditions produces in us a mixture of pride and humility, any prairie dweller will tell you that, in a land where a person can die “simply from being caught outside,” it is prudent to remember our frailty when facing the power of Nature.
Questions 1–10 are based on the passage labelled “DRAFT” which has been inserted with this examination.

1. Which of the following sentences could replace the first sentence in paragraph one to state the point concisely?

   A. The extremity of our weather is the single greatest influence on our regional identity as dwellers on the prairie.
   B. The single greatest thing that influences our regional identity here as prairie dwellers is our extreme weather.
   C. In this region of the prairie, the single greatest influence on our identity is our extreme weather.
   D. Extreme weather is the single greatest influence on regional identity.
2. Which of the following sentences would you recommend to the writer to avoid the run-on sentence in paragraph one?

A. Our ability to survive harsh meteorological conditions is: a source of pride and our experiences with nature’s wrath have taught us: to be humble which is perhaps our most defining characteristic.

B. While our ability to survive harsh meteorological conditions is a source of pride, our experiences with nature’s wrath have taught us to be humble, which is perhaps our most defining characteristic.

C. We are proud of our ability to survive harsh meteorological conditions, our experiences with nature’s wrath have taught us to be humble; which is perhaps our most defining characteristic.

D. While we are proud, our ability to survive, harsh meteorological conditions, our experiences with nature’s wrath, have taught us to be humble, which is perhaps our most defining characteristic.

3. Which of the following sentences in paragraph two would help the writer achieve balance?

A. In the dark, moonless night, they may awaken to not only the sound of tent walls flapping furiously, but also the sensation of being pushed along the sand by a powerful gale.

B. In the dark moonless night, they may awaken to the sound of not only tent walls flapping furiously, but the sensation of being pushed along the sand by a powerful gale also.

C. In the dark moonless night, they may awaken not only to the sound of tent walls flapping furiously, but the sensation also of being pushed along the sand by a powerful gale.

D. In the dark moonless night, they may not only awaken to the sound of tent walls flapping furiously, but also to the sensation of being pushed along the sand by a powerful gale.
4. Which of the following sentences, as an introduction to paragraph three, also provides an effective transition from paragraph two?

A. They feel the satisfaction of having faced fears and working cooperatively, using individual resources and survival skills for the benefit of the group.
B. Those who experience these conditions certainly learn an important life lesson and will probably never camp on a sandbar on the South Saskatchewan River again.
C. Surviving extreme weather can be a harrowing experience in any season.
D. One could hardly believe that they had survived the night.

5. Which of the following words in paragraph three enhances the emotional impact the writer is trying to make?

A. It is really quite difficult to be so completely at the mercy of the elements.
B. It is uncomfortable to be so completely at the mercy of the elements.
C. It is disconcerting to be so completely at the mercy of the elements.
D. It is terrifying to be so completely at the mercy of the elements.

6. Which of the following sentences in paragraph three contains qualifiers that are placed next to the words they qualify?

A. With luck, soon an otherworldly dimly glow of headlights may appear through the white wall as a convoy of snow machines approaches.
B. With luck, soon an otherworldly glow of headlights may appear dimly through the white wall as a convoy of snow machines approaches.
C. With luck, dimly, soon an otherworldly glow of headlights may appear through the white wall as a convoy of snow machines approaches.
D. With luck, soon an otherworldly glow of headlights may appear through the white wall as a convoy of snow machines dimly approaches.
7. Which of the following sentences in paragraph four ensures that the writer employs correct punctuation?

A. The most serious and immediately threatening wind condition is the dreaded tornado.
B. The most serious, and immediately threatening wind condition is the dreaded tornado.
C. The most serious—and immediately threatening wind condition—is the dreaded tornado.
D. The most serious and immediately threatening wind condition is: the dreaded tornado.

8. Which of the following sentences in paragraph four ensures inclusive language?

A. Here on the prairie, a man can often see a storm coming a hundred miles away, can feel it in the atmosphere and observe heightened anxiety in animals, but when a tornado hits, all anyone can do is hold on.
B. Here on the prairie, a person can often see a storm coming a hundred miles away, can feel it in the atmosphere and observe heightened anxiety in animals, but when a tornado hits, all he can do is hold on.
C. Here on the prairie, one can often see a storm coming a hundred miles away, can feel it in the atmosphere and observe heightened anxiety in animals, but when a tornado hits, all anyone can do is hold on.
D. Here on the prairie, men can often see a storm coming a hundred miles away, can feel it in the atmosphere and observe heightened anxiety in animals, but when a tornado hits, all they can do is hold on.
9. Which of the following sentences could be added before the last sentence in paragraph four and still ensure unity in the paragraph?

A. Tornadoes come in many sizes but are typically in the form of visible condensation funnels, the narrow ends of which may touch the earth.
B. While I did not personally experience the Edmonton tornado of July 31, 1987, that day shook me to the core.
C. People cannot help but feel humbled by a juggernaut that could crush them like bugs.
D. Much literature has been written about the experience of surviving a tornado.

10. Which of the following sentences would be the best title for this essay?

A. How Our Land Shapes Our Identity
B. Why We Love Saskatchewan
C. Proud Survivors
D. Prairie Wind
Read the excerpt from Moral Disorder, by Margaret Atwood, and choose the best answer for each question. Questions 11–20 are worth one mark each. Questions 21–25 are worth two marks each.

Moral Disorder

Nell and Tig are learning to appreciate the land and how to manage all that farm life entails.

There’s never been such a lovely spring, Nell thought. Frogs—or were they toads?—trilled from the pond, and there were pussy willows and catkins—what was the difference?—and then the hawthorn bushes and the wild plums and the neglected apple trees came into bloom, and an uneven row of daffodils planted by some long vanished farmer’s wife thrust up through the weeds and dead grasses beside the drive. Birds sang. Mud dried.

In the evenings, Nell and Tig sat outside their rented farmhouse on two aluminium-framed lawn chairs they’d found in the back shed, holding hands, slapping away the occasional mosquito, and watching a barred owl teach her two young to hunt. For practise they were using the twelve ducklings Tig had bought and installed on the pond. He’d made a shelter for the ducklings—like a little house without walls, set on a floating raft. They could have gone in under the roof and been safe, but they didn’t seem to know enough to do that.

The owl swooped down in silence down over the surface of the pond where the ducklings ignorantly paddled, snatching a duckling a night, carrying each one up to the cavity in the dead tree where she had her nest, then rending the duckling apart and sharing it out to the young to be gobbled down, until all twelve ducklings were gone.

“Look at that,” said Tig. “Such grace.”

Nell threw her energies into a kitchen garden. There were groundhogs in the fields, so she began with a fence; Tig helped with it. They set the bottom edge of the chicken wire a foot into the earth so the groundhogs couldn’t tunnel under. Then Nell dug in a lot of the well-rotted cow manure from the heap she’d found in the barn. There was enough of it to last for years. Beside the front door there was a knobbly, straggly rose; she pruned it back. She pruned some of the apple trees too. She’d taken a new interest in sharp implements—shears and clippers, picks and shovels, pruning saws and pitchforks. Not axes; she didn’t think she could handle an axe.

By this time she’d read up on the local pioneers. Many of these people had never used an axe before they’d come. Some of them had chopped off their legs; others had stood in buckets while using their axes in order to avoid that fate.

The soil of the garden was good enough, though there were a lot of stones. Also shards from broken crockery, and medicine bottles of pressed glass, white and blue and brown. A doll’s arm. A tarnished silver spoon. Animal bones. A marble. Layer upon layer of lives lived
out. For someone, once, this farm had been new. There must have been struggles, misgivings, failures, and despair. And deaths, naturally. Deaths of various kinds.

While Nell worked in the garden, Tig went out and about. He drove up and down the side roads, exploring. He went into Garrett and tried out the hardware store, and set up an account at the bank. The in-town grocery store—not to be confused with the boxy new supermarket on the outskirts—had a sign in the window for eggs: BONELESS HEN FRUIT. On his return from these excursions, he’d tell Nell about such discoveries, and bring her gifts: a trowel, a ball of twine, a roll of plastic mulch.

There was a combination gas station and general store at the nearest crossroads; Tig began to drink coffee there with the local farmers, the older ones. They viewed him as an oddity, he said. They hadn’t tossed him into the bin of contempt to which they consigned most people from the city. He drove a rusty car and didn’t wear a tie and knew what a ratchet set was: all to the good. But he wasn’t a farmer either. Nonetheless, they let him sit in on the coffee sessions, where he picked up farming hints and gossip. They even began teasing him a bit, a development he reported to Nell with some glee.

Nell didn’t go along on these jaunts; she wasn’t invited. The rule for the farmer’s coffee group was men only. This was not stated, it was a given.

After several days, Tig said that if they were going to live on a farm, they ought not to let the land go to waste, and that would mean having some animals. Also it would be added value for the boys to learn where food really came from. They could start with chickens: chickens were easy, said the farmers.

Nell wondered who was going to kill the elderly chickens when the time came. She did not think it would be her.

Nell made the chickens’ eggs into pound cake, which she froze in the freezer they’d found themselves buying, because where were they going to keep all the stuff that would be produced by the kitchen garden once it really got going?

Then Tig got some ducks—not ducklings, this time—which were allowed to fend for themselves in the pond, and then two geese, which were supposed to lay eggs and produce goslings; but one of the geese injured its leg, so it had to be taken up the road to Mrs. Roblin.

Nell had hoped Mrs. Roblin would set the goose’s leg and put a splint on it, but that wasn’t what happened. The goose came back in oven-ready form, which, said Tig, was the way things were done in the country. The remaining goose, or was it a gander, wandered around for a while, looking sad, thought Nell, and then flew away.

— Margaret Atwood

Excerpt from Moral Disorder by Margaret Atwood. Copyright 2006 by O. W. Toad Ltd. Used with permission of the author.
11. The opening paragraph introduces Nell as a person who  
   A. seeks a new environment.  
   B. finds farm life boring.  
   C. appreciates nature.  
   D. complains a lot.  

12. Tig’s admiration for the owl’s grace (line 21) is in stark contrast to the ducklings’  
   A. downy feathers.  
   B. violent death.  
   C. clumsiness.  
   D. ignorance.  

13. Nell’s approach to improving the farm’s kitchen garden (lines 22–31) indicates that she is  
   A. resourceful.  
   B. exhausted.  
   C. unskilled.  
   D. angry.  

14. Nell hesitates to use an axe because she  
   A. thinks it is a man’s tool.  
   B. fears injuring herself.  
   C. is not strong enough.  
   D. cannot find one.  

15. The objects Nell discovers in her garden indicate that this soil  
   A. has recently been tilled.  
   B. has not been plowed before.  
   C. has been worked previously.  
   D. will never yield much of a harvest.
16. The gifts that Tig brings home for Nell (lines 49–50) are
   A. unnecessary but appreciated.
   B. thoughtful and generous.
   C. romantic and frivolous.
   D. cheap but useful.

17. The local farmers do not toss Tig “into the bin of contempt” (line 54) because
   A. he might turn out to be a source of entertainment for them.
   B. they are friendly people who readily accept newcomers.
   C. his knowledge of tools is impressive.
   D. he is practical and not materialistic.

18. Tig enjoys spending time with the local farmers because their teasing
   A. indicates their dislike of city folk.
   B. shows that they accept him.
   C. never goes too far.
   D. is all in good fun.

19. The most likely reason for Tig’s choice of chickens is that
   A. the farmers recommended them.
   B. they would improve the land.
   C. they are hardier than ducks.
   D. Nell would care for them.

20. When considering keeping chickens, Nell worries that
   A. the birds may not adjust well to their new surroundings.
   B. no one will want to help her care for the birds.
   C. she may be expected to butcher them.
   D. the birds will die.
The following questions are worth two marks each.

21. The irony of the butchered goose is that Nell

A. should have known what to do with the goose herself.
B. had expected the goose’s injury to be treated.
C. thought Mrs. Roblin liked geese.
D. does not want to cook it.

22. The fact that she thinks the lone goose looks sad confirms that Nell

A. is a sensitive, empathetic person.
B. has a special talent with animals.
C. will never forgive Mrs. Roblin.
D. is very unhappy on the farm.

23. Compared with Tig’s understanding of farm life, Nell’s is more

A. open-minded.
B. idealistic.
C. realistic.
D. limited.

24. Throughout this excerpt, Nell repeatedly notices that living on a farm means

A. enjoying the beauty of nature.
B. having unforeseen expenses.
C. experiencing less stress.
D. living close to death.

25. Nell finds her sense of purpose in

A. spending evenings with Tig.
B. bringing order to the farm.
C. learning from Mrs. Roblin.
D. storing prepared food.
Read the following poem entitled “Evening Launch,” by Gary Hyland, and choose the best answer for each question. Questions 26–30 are worth two marks each.

Evening Launch

The landscape and the speaker work in concert to execute a task.

Alone, just him and the shadowing lake and the sun spreading the day’s last benediction on the hills. No thought of her, he crouches on the stone-thick shore, his boat lifting to scrape a jagged spur by his knee and falling back again and lifting like a patient grief. Between his hands he holds the last of what he has to load, pages that had burned under his eyes in lantern light and then burned again inside him. Turning to dust. He wedges them in among the other things that failed and sits a long time on his heels, silent, waiting to learn what is next, surprised he feels no urgency to know.

Then come the words, slow, mumbled in the same low key as the grinding hull, stumbling out of him like old men who sleep too long and wake in pain. It seems that they are something like a prayer though to whom and for what is unclear. He has never heard his voice so gruff and hushed, so unyoked and unconcerned with what it might achieve. Wrapping the tether rope around his hand each loop neater and larger, he places the mane of long white threads to his lips, the nuzzle in his words. He slips his hands free and holds a tapered nest of coils. As the light subsides he whispers his last words into this dark bowl, his lips brushing rough braid, then he tosses it onto the load, reaches down, cups the prow and thrusts the boat out into the lake. He stands and watches it glide, catch a current and swerve as if it has a sense of where it has to go.

– Gary Hyland

26. The predominant mood in lines 1–5 is one of
   A. controlled exuberance.
   B. cruel thoughtlessness.
   C. quiet resignation.
   D. searing sorrow.

27. The pages that are now being placed in the boat have, in the past, prompted
   A. thoughts of loss.
   B. intense emotions.
   C. debilitating apathy.
   D. feelings of inadequacy.

28. The “slow, mumbled” (line 12) words said over the boat are the speaker’s attempt to
   A. cast a spell on the vessel.
   B. honour his pain and sorrow.
   C. express his fear and disappointment.
   D. bid farewell to experiences and emotions.

29. The extended image of the tether (lines 19–26) highlights the speaker’s
   A. nervousness.
   B. resignation.
   C. tenderness.
   D. sincerity.

30. The concluding lines of the poem suggest that the speaker is feeling
   A. indifference.
   B. acceptance.
   C. triumph.
   D. pride.
Answer the remaining questions in the spaces provided. Neat, legible handwriting is essential. Do not use pencil.

1. Canadian writers clearly appreciate our vast and varied land and its influence in shaping our identity.

Respond to ONE of the following questions in only ONE paragraph.

a. Former prime minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau once said “You have not seen Canada until you have seen the north.” Explain why a part of Canada important to YOU defines this country.

OR

b. Show what YOU have learned from a Canadian landscape new to you.

PLANNING
You may wish to use this space to explore and organize your ideas before you write your response.
In the remaining questions, use only English Language Arts A 30 material. Avoid plot summaries. Do not refer to any selection found elsewhere on this test.

Question 2 must be answered in formal essay format. A formal essay consists of at least five paragraphs.

2. Answer question a. or b. Refer to ONLY Canadian short stories, essays, poems, and/or one-act plays.

a. With reference to THREE selections, discuss the challenges characters face and the knowledge they gain from those experiences.

OR

b. “It is the people that make any country truly great. Merely to be ‘spacious in the possession of dirt’ is no sure title to fame.”
   
   – Watson Kirkconnell

With reference to THREE selections, show how characters’ actions and responses to events reveal the greatness of Canada.

PLANNING
You may wish to use this space to explore and organize your ideas before you write your response.
Question 3 must be answered in formal essay format. A formal essay consists of at least five paragraphs.

3. Do either a. or b. Refer to ONLY ONE of the following: a Canadian full-length play, or a Canadian novel, or a Canadian full-length non-fiction work.

   a. “And do you wonder about your place under the huge invisible starry sky . . . as I do mine?”
      – Margaret Avison

      Show how characters succeed or fail in finding their place.

      OR

   b. “Everyone who lives here carries in their psyche a personal attachment to an actual place.”
      – Jane Urquhart

      Show how characters carry a personal attachment to an actual place.

Essay Marking Criteria:

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<th>Content: Thought and Detail</th>
<th>10 marks</th>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
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<td>Style</td>
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<td>Mechanics</td>
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PLANNING

“Content: Thought and Detail” and “Organization” form a large part of the mark for this question. Space is provided here for your initial planning. You may wish to use this space to explore and organize your ideas before you write your essay.
Answer (Question 3, part _____)
Multiple-Choice Section Answer Key:

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## Holistic Scoring Guide
### for a 10-mark question (#1)

In scoring written sections of the examination, markers will consider whether the writing is appropriate to the purpose (i.e., does it address the prompt?). In addition, markers will consider:
- how well the candidate demonstrates an understanding of the topic (i.e., How sophisticated is the thought?);
- how well the candidate conveys those thoughts to the reader (i.e., How competent and effective are the writing skills?).

(adapted from ELA Curriculum Guide, page 131)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Marks</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Level 5:</strong> The writing conveys an insightful and sophisticated perspective and demonstrates an effective and confident command of the elements of writing.</td>
<td>9–10 marks</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Level 4:</strong> The writing conveys a thoughtful perspective and demonstrates an effective control of the elements of writing.</td>
<td>7–8 marks</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Level 3:</strong> The writing conveys a recognizable perspective and demonstrates an adequate control of the elements of writing.</td>
<td>5–6 marks</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Level 2:</strong> The writing conveys a simple or uneven understanding of the topic and/or demonstrates an uneven or uncertain control of the elements of writing.</td>
<td>3–4 marks</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Level 1:</strong> The writing conveys a limited or uncertain understanding of the topic and/or demonstrates an elementary grasp of the elements of writing.</td>
<td>1–2 marks</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>Insufficient—There is no evidence of an attempt to respond to the topic OR the response is too short to warrant a mark.</td>
<td>0 marks</td>
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- If more than one paragraph is used when only one is requested, the maximum score is Level 4.
- Please note the question asks for a personal response. If not a personal response, the maximum score is Level 3.
Holistic Scoring Guide  
for a 15-mark question (#2)

In scoring written sections of the examination, markers will consider whether the writing is appropriate to the purpose (i.e., does it address the prompt?). In addition, markers will consider:

- how well the candidate demonstrates an understanding of the topic (i.e., How sophisticated is the thought?);
- how well the candidate conveys those thoughts to the reader (i.e., How competent and effective are the writing skills?).

(adapted from ELA Curriculum Guide, page 131)

Level 5: The writing conveys an insightful and sophisticated perspective and demonstrates an effective and confident command of the elements of writing.

Ideas are insightful and well considered. This piece of writing has a strong central focus and is well organized. The organizational pattern is interesting, perhaps original, and provides the piece with an introduction which hooks the reader and carries the piece through to a satisfying conclusion. The writer has chosen appropriate details and established a definite point of view. Sentences are clear and varied. Word choices are vivid. The writer’s voice and tone consistently sustain the reader’s interest. If there are errors in mechanics, they are the result of the student taking a risk with more complex or original aspects of writing.

Level 4: The writing conveys a thoughtful perspective and demonstrates an effective control of the elements of writing.

Ideas are thoughtful and clear. This piece of writing has a clear and recognizable focus. A standard organizational pattern is used, with clear introduction, transitions, and conclusion. A point of view is established and a sense of audience is clear. The writer has used appropriate details, clear and correct sentence structures, and specific word choices. The writer’s voice and tone maintain the reader’s interest. The few errors in mechanics do not impede communication or annoy the reader unduly.

Level 3: The writing conveys a recognizable perspective and demonstrates an adequate control of the elements of writing.

Ideas are straightforward and clear. This piece of writing has a recognizable focus, though there may be superfluous information provided. The organizational pattern used is clear and includes a basic introduction and conclusion though it may be formulaic or repetitive. The point of view is clear and consistent. The word choices and sentence structures are clear but not imaginative. The writer’s voice and tone establish, but may not maintain, the reader’s interest. The mechanics show less effort and attention to proofreading than needed.

Level 2: The writing conveys a simple or uneven understanding of the topic and/or demonstrates an uneven or uncertain control of the elements of writing.

Ideas are limited and overgeneralized but discernible. This piece of writing has an inconsistent or meandering focus. It is underdeveloped and lacks clear organization. Incorrect or missing transitions make it difficult to follow. There may be an introduction without a conclusion, or the reverse, a conclusion with no introduction. The point of view is unclear and there are frequent shifts in tense and person. The writer exhibits superficial and/or minimal awareness of the reader. Mechanical errors interfere with the reader’s understanding and pleasure.

Level 1: The writing conveys a limited or uncertain understanding of the topic and/or demonstrates an elementary grasp of the elements of writing.

Ideas are elementary and may not be clear. This piece of writing lacks focus and coherence. The organizational pattern and development of the topic are confusing. Point of view may shift in a confusing way. Mechanical errors are abundant and interfere with understanding. The piece must be read several times to make sense of it. Awareness of the reader is not apparent.

Insufficient—There is no evidence of an attempt to respond to the topic OR the response is too short to warrant a mark

- If fewer than the required number of paragraphs is used, the maximum score is Level 4.
- If only two acceptable* works are cited, the maximum score is Level 3.
- If only one acceptable* work is cited, the maximum score is Level 2.
- If no acceptable* works are cited, the score is 0.

* acceptable = correct genre, nationality, and grade level

(English Language Arts A 30, Prototype Exam)  
(October 2009, Revised 2011)
An analytic scoring guide will be used to measure specific aspects of the multi-paragraph composition. Students’ responses will be scored using the following criteria:

- content: thought and detail (10)
- organization (5)
- style (including wording choice and phrasing) (5)
- mechanics (sentence structure, usage, punctuation, capitalization, spelling) (5)

Content: Thought and Detail (10/25)

When marking the quality and development of ideas the marker should consider how thoughtfully and effectively, within the context of the writing situation, the writer:

- shows a grasp of subject matter
- communicates and integrates ideas (information, events, emotions, opinions, perspective, etc.)
- includes details (evidence, anecdotes, examples, descriptions, characteristics, etc.) to support, develop, and/or illustrate ideas.

**Level 5**

| Marks | Ideas are insightful and well considered. This piece of writing has a strong central focus and exhibits unique comprehension and insight that is supported by carefully chosen evidence. Sophisticated reasoning and literary appreciation are evident. |

**Level 4**

| Marks | Ideas are thoughtful and clear. This piece of writing has a clear and recognizable focus and exhibits a comprehensive and intimate knowledge of the subject matter. Literary interpretation is more logical/sensible than insightful. |

**Level 3**

| Marks | Ideas are straightforward and clear. This piece of writing has a recognizable focus and exhibits adequate development of content, although interpretation is more commonplace and predictable. |

**Level 2**

| Marks | Ideas are limited and overgeneralized but discernible. This piece of writing has an inconsistent or wandering focus and, although it exhibits some development of topic, ideas are often superficial and supporting evidence is vague or weak. |

**Level 1**

| Marks | Ideas are elementary and may not be clear. This piece of writing lacks focus and coherence and shows little or no development of topic. What is there is generalized and unsupported, so that there is little evidence of understanding. |

| Marks | Insufficient—There is no evidence of an attempt to respond to the topic OR the response is too short to warrant a mark. |

**Content:**

- If no acceptable* work is cited, the score is 0.
- If only the planning box is used, the maximum score is Level 2.
- If more than one acceptable* work is cited, the maximum score is Level 2.

*acceptable = correct genre, nationality, and grade level
Organization (5/25)
When marking organization the marker should consider how effectively, within the context of the writing situation, the writer:

- exhibits evidence of planning
- creates an introduction
- establishes and maintains focus
- orders and arranges events, ideas, and/or details
- establishes relationships between events, ideas, and/or details
- provides closure.

5 The writing exhibits evidence of careful and considered planning. The introduction clearly states the direction the essay will take and invites further reading. Ideas are clearly and coherently developed and show evidence of critical thinking. The conclusion logically and thoughtfully completes the essay.

4 The writing exhibits evidence of clear planning. The introduction provides direction for the reader and the ideas generally focus and sustain the topic. Ideas are developed clearly and the conclusion effectively completes the essay.

3 The writing exhibits evidence of some planning but would benefit from additional planning. The introduction provides some direction for the reader and the ideas are usually focussed but show little imagination. Ideas are clear but may lack coherence. The conclusion offers little insight.

2 The writing exhibits some evidence of order but little planning is evident. The introduction is weak and relates only marginally to the body of the essay. There is no focus and the ideas are not clearly developed. The conclusion provides no real purpose.

1 Evidence of planning before or during the writing phase is not apparent. The introduction, if there is one, does not contribute to a discernible controlling idea. Development of the topic is meagre or superficial. The conclusion, where present, is unclear or unrelated to the development provided.

0 Insufficient—There is no evidence of an attempt to respond to the topic OR the response is too short to warrant a mark.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- If fewer than the required number of paragraphs is used, the maximum score is Level 4.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- If only the planning box is used, the maximum score is Level 2.</td>
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</tbody>
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Style (5/25)
When marking style, the marker should consider how clearly and effectively, within the context of the writing situation (the purpose and audience), the writer:

- makes choices that contribute to the creation of a discernible voice
- makes use of diction and syntactical structures (such as parallelism, balance, inversion, etc.) to create the particular effect

5  The writing is engaging. The writer’s voice and tone consistently sustain the reader’s interest. The writer has chosen appropriate details and established a definite point of view that enhances the writing. Diction is clear, vivid, and precise. Syntax is varied, effective, and polished.

4  The writing is interesting. The writer’s voice and tone maintain the reader’s interest. The writer has established a point of view and a sense of audience, and shows awareness of language and structure. Diction is effective. Syntax is generally effective.

3  The writing is straightforward, satisfactory, pedestrian. The writer’s voice and tone establish, but may not maintain, the reader’s interest. The writer’s point of view is clear and consistent and shows a basic understanding. Diction is adequate but somewhat generalized. Syntax is straightforward.

2  The writing is laborious. The writing exhibits superficial and/or minimal awareness of the reader. The writer’s point of view is unclear and the choice of diction is imprecise and/or inappropriate. Control of syntax is limited and results in lack of clarity.

1  The writing is confusing, inappropriate. Awareness of the reader is not apparent. The writer’s point of view may shift in a confusing way. Diction is inappropriate and unclear. Syntax is confusing and results in unclear writing.

0  Insufficient—There is no evidence of an attempt to respond to the topic OR the response is too short to warrant a mark.
**Mechanics (5/25)**
When marking mechanics the marker should consider how clearly and effectively, within the context of the writing situation, the writer communicates by applying the conventions of:

- sentence structure
- vocabulary
- standard usage, including subject-verb agreement, pronoun-antecedent agreement, correct and consistent verb tenses
- spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

5  The writing demonstrates a **strong command** of the conventions of language. Sentences are correct. Any mechanical errors are the result of taking a risk with more complex or original aspects of writing.

4  The writing demonstrates a **solid control** of the conventions of language. Sentences are substantially correct, with errors only in attempts at more complicated constructions. The few mechanical errors do not impede communication.

3  The writing demonstrates a **general control** of the conventions of language. Common and simple constructions and patterns are correct. Errors in more complex or unusual constructions do not unduly impede understanding. Information is clear despite a faltering in mechanics.

2  The writing demonstrates a **limited and/or inconsistent grasp** of the conventions of language. Sentences having uncomplicated structures are usually clear, but attempts at more difficult structures result in awkwardness and/or obscured communication.

1  The writing demonstrates **only an elementary grasp** of the conventions of language. The writing exhibits a lack of knowledge in the use of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. The profusion of structural and mechanical errors makes communication very difficult.

0  Insufficient—There is no evidence of an attempt to respond to the topic OR the response is too short to warrant a mark.
Sample Student Response

Question #1
Student #1:

Answer (Question 1, part b)

A few summers ago, I visited Niagra Falls in Ontario. So far, it’s the most beautiful landscape I’ve ever seen. During the day time, the water is so very clear and blue. The mist rises from the falls and prances about like little dancers. When the flowers around are in full bloom and the grass is lush and green, the scene is picture perfect. At night, the water becomes a dark shade of blue and the mist still dances around. Lights of many different colours shine on the falls which transform them into a magnificent work of art. Having experienced this famous attraction, I can see the beauty of creation, and I look forward to seeing other breath-taking sights like Niagra Falls.

Marker Comments  Level 4 or \( \frac{7}{10} \)

The student has employed an effective, albeit rather standard organizational pattern: a view of Niagara Falls during the day, and then the transformed nighttime view. The image of the dancing water helps maintain unity. In addition, the use of figurative language shows awareness of audience. This student’s thoughtfulness is apparent with the comment “so far, it’s the most beautiful landscape I’ve ever seen.” Clearly, the student understands that many more amazing landscapes exist and are waiting to be viewed. The sense of anticipation is palpable.
Question #1
Student #2:

Answer (Question 1, part b)

Four summers ago we went camping with the youth from a neighbouring community. We drove two hours until we reached our destination. Trees were all around us. There were no fields, only trees and a big lake. Beautiful scenery was all around us. We set up our tents and then we went exploring. Huge trees loomed over us. It was absolutely beautiful. We made friends with a squirrel. Every morning we woke up to birds we had never seen or heard before, chirping happily in the trees. We took daily walks and listened to the call of an elk bull. We went to a sight tower that was right in the woods and we had to climb up high to get to the top. But when we reached the top it was breathtaking landscape that met us. The trip solidified my understanding that Canada has amazing nature. It changes a person. It made me quiet and made me respect the land and its nature. It made me look at Canada in a new light. Right then and there I made it my home. I started loving the land and its challenges. I wouldn’t trade Canada for a million horses. It’s my home now.

Marker Comments Level 5 or 9/10

The student’s delight in the new landscape is evident throughout the response. This student clearly attended to the demand of the question: a personal response (what YOU have learned). The description of the new landscape leads effectively to the lessons learned. Many students would stop at the description of a new landscape. This student has fulfilled all of the requirements of the question, has revealed a strong focus and definite point of view, and has shown a comfort with the writing task.
Question #1
Student #3:

Answer (Question 1, part b)

Growing up on the prairies, I had not seen much of Canada. I had seen the fields upon fields of waves of golden grain that grace us in the late summer as it begins to cool and beautifully morph into autumn. I had experienced year after year of harsh winters that leave the once beautiful fields a barren land of ice and snow. However, I was given an opportunity that allowed me to travel and have a better understanding and appreciation for our wonderful, vast home. Driving east, across Manitoba and then Ontario, the land began to change from the rolling hills to rocks jutting out of the earth like a new flower struggling to free itself of the earth clinging to it. I could write for pages and still not be able to capture the beauty of the scene. The fresh, clear streams twirled through forests and the Great Lake relaxed beside the road, a dazzling oasis. Whenever I thought of travelling, I dreamed of far off lands across oceans; however, this trip showed me one of the many hidden jewels in our great country. I am positive there are many other amazing landscapes in Canada for me to discover and I hope to see as many as I can. Our landscapes are so different from sea to shining sea, that one does not need to travel to another country to experience a whole other world.

Marker Comments  Level 5 or 10/10
The response demonstrates a confident command of the elements of writing. Organization is effective. The student has employed both chronological (discussion of seasonal changes) and spatial (description of what is seen during the road trip) organizational patterns. The impact of this trip on the student is apparent in the concluding statements. The student’s obvious enjoyment of the travel experience and engagement with the writing task make the response a pleasure to read.
Question #2
Student #1:

Answer (Question 2, part a)

Life has been known to throw some challenges. Some people learn how to deal with these challenges and they also learn a lesson from them. The characters in “The Residential School Bus,” “Red Dress,” and “The Wind Our Enemy” have had some challenges thrown their way. They have learned to cope and also a lesson along the way.

In “The Residential School Bus,” aboriginal people learned what it was like to live in a residential school system. They learned what it was like to live without their culture, parent, and in harsh conditions. They learned how to cope and make it through hard times.

In “Red Dress,” the main character found out what being a girl in high school is all about. The challenge she faced was trying to fit in. It took a few mistakes and some time, but she finally realized that being popular isn’t everything. That wearing home-sewn clothes is okay. What the character learned from her experience is that being herself is the best person she can be.

In “The Wind Our Enemy,” an entire nation went through challenges. The 1930’s on the prairies was challenging. They were going through a depression and a drought. They learned to cope with not having money, crops, or nice things. What they learned is that one can’t take life too seriously. They learned to cope by listening to the radio because somewhere, someone has it worse.

Many people face challenges. The best thing to do with a challenge is to learn from the experience. In “The Residential School Bus,” “Red Dress,” and “The Wind Our Enemy,” characters learned how to cope with a challenge and learned a lesson along the way.

Marker Comments  Level 4 or 10/15

The student has read the question carefully and has responded appropriately. There are two parts to the question:

a) challenges faced

b) knowledge gained.

This student has attended to both parts for each of the texts selected, unlike a lot of respondents who zero in on only one part of the question. The introductory paragraph is rather repetitive, but the organizational pattern is established and then followed through in the body of the response. The discussion of the “The Residential School Bus” is somewhat weak. More details regarding the “harsh conditions” and exactly how the students “learned to cope” would be welcome. The student seems to gain increasing comfort with the writing task as “The Red Dress” and “The Wind Our Enemy” are considered. The reader has a clear sense of this writer’s point of view and is interested to read what challenges are faced and what lessons are learned; this student has a clear sense of audience and maintains the audience’s interest.
Question #2
Student #2:

Answer (Question 2, part a)

People are often confronted with challenges and gain knowledge from their experiences. In “The Reluctant Blackhawk” by Brenda Zeman, “David Goes to the Reserve” by Sheila Stevenson, and “The Residential School Bus” by Louise Halfe, Aboriginal people have challenges to face. In each of these stories the characters face challenges which they must overcome. They end up gaining more understanding of their culture by facing these challenges.

In the short story, “The Reluctant Blackhawk,” the main character, Freddie, faces many challenges. He has to go to a residential school, he gets drafted into the NHL but ends up not lasting very long there. For him, being in the NHL was a challenge because moving off the reserve and being without his family was very difficult for him. By facing these challenges and accepting the fact that he missed home and the people he cared about, he learned he was happiest on the reserve with his family.

In “David Goes to the Reserve,” the girl in the story faces the challenge of being judged because of her Aboriginal background. When she brings a friend to the reserve, an incident happens and her friend gets scared and defensive and ends up leaving. By this experience she learns she must be who she is, and that all people aren’t accepting of one’s culture.

In the poem, “The Residential School Bus,” the children face the challenges of being taken away from their homes and parents. In these schools, the children are not allowed to carry out the norms of the culture, or allowed to speak their language. The children learn it is important to have their culture, and that it must be cared for and maintained.

Through these selections of Aboriginal literature, all the characters encounter challenges they must face and overcome. They learn from these challenges. They learn their culture is important and that it must be preserved; the reserves and being with family are important. Their challenges help shape their identity and lead them to understand the value of family and culture.

Marker Comments Level 4 or 12/15
The focus is clear; the student will discuss challenges faced by First Nations characters in three different selections. The student follows through on the organizational pattern established in paragraph one. The challenges faced and the lessons learned by characters are clearly presented. This student successfully sums up the main ideas presented in the body of the essay. Concluding paragraphs often seem to pose a challenge for students; this response effectively shows the movement from the specific texts to some general, overarching statements.
Question #3
Student #1:

Answer (Question 3, part a)

Finally Home

Throughout Lois Simmie’s The Secret Lives of Sergeant John Wilson, there are many characters who are struggling to find their place in life. Some are content to let life pass them by while others are always on the lookout for greener pastures. Whether or not the characters succeed in finding their place plays a large role in what they get out of life.

Jack never seemed to be content where he was. In Scotland, he appeared to have everything he could want: a family who loved him and a growing business. However, when the going got tough he ran away instead of facing his problems head on. He fled to Canada, looking for the elusive pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. When he arrived in Canada, he wasn’t content with having a new home and a new job, he had to have a new wife as well. Who cares if he already had a wife and family, he was settling into a new way of life and was going to make the best of it. Polly would never know because she was in Scotland and he was in Canada. They were worlds apart!

Polly was content with her life in Scotland but as the years passed, she needed to know once and for all what happened to Jack. She couldn’t wait for him forever, she had to go on with her life. When Polly finally reconnected with Jack in Canada, it didn’t take her long to figure out that there was another woman in his life. Instead of getting a divorce and confronting Jack, she played the role of a submissive wife, all the while hoping that he would someday change. She never once took the proverbial bull by the horns and demanded to be treated like she should. Instead, she went along with Jack’s whims and took whatever cards life dealt her.

Jessie was smitten at first sight of Jack. Who wouldn’t be? He was tall, dark, and handsome. However, as she got to know what he was like on the inside, she began to find loopholes in his character. The stories he concocted about his previous wife never seemed to line up. But, did she ever confront him? She wanted so badly for him to be her knight in shining armour that she was unwilling to see his faults. If she had dug deeper, she would have discovered that he was already married and she would have saved both herself and Polly much heartache.

In life, many of us are on the lookout for the easiest way to success. However, getting there isn’t the prize, it’s the journey that counts. Throughout this novel, there are many characters who are looking for a home, somewhere to belong. But, not all of them made the right choices on the way there. Some chose to get there no matter what the cost. Who cares if they hurt someone, as long as they got what they wanted.Others went along with whatever they were given, unsure as to what they were looking for. Very few of the characters in the novel, The Secret Lives of Sergeant John Wilson, succeeded in finding their place in life. Many simply got further and further from finding a place to belong. They were sidetracked by the many choices they had to make on the journey to find a place in life.
**Marker Comments**  Level 5 or 21/25

8/10 Content

The student has successfully avoided a rambling plot summary; the discussion of the search for place by John, Polly, and Jessie is thoughtful and coherent. The student understands the characters well and clearly articulates the challenges they face as they struggle to find their place in the world.

4/5 Organization

The introductory paragraph provides direction for the reader. Subsequent paragraphs develop ideas appropriately. The paragraph focussing on Polly is particularly effective. The conclusion moves out into some broad ideas and effectively reflects the plan as outlined in the introduction.

4/5 Style

The reader is generally interested in what this student has to say. The many clichés are rather off-putting, but overall there is an awareness of audience, language, and structure.

5/5 Mechanics

The complexity and variety of sentences demonstrates a strong command of the language conventions. The few spelling and mechanical errors do not prompt significant concern.
Question #3
Student #2:

Answer (Question 3, part a)

A Place in this World

Many people spend their lives searching for a place where they feel they belong. This place of belonging can be based on physical elements, or, more likely, the people a person surrounds himself with. Some people find it and others die looking for it. Either way, everyone does it whether they consciously realize it or not. In Lois Simmie’s novel The Secret Lives of Sergeant John Wilson, characters search for a place where they belong and can be with the people they love.

Polly thought she had found her place in this vast world. She had a home with a husband and children. However, that all changed when her husband disgraced the family and left for Canada, promising to return. Polly waited for years, not feeling at home without her husband, and then set off for Canada to find the man she loved and her place. Once in Canada she found her husband but was still out of her place without her children. She struggled to reunite the two parts of her life and finally find her place. Unfortunately, she never succeeded in the dream as she met her untimely end at the barrel of her husband’s gun.

Many young girls dream of marrying and starting a family and a home, of having a place where they know they belong. Jessie was no different. After meeting John Wilson she quickly fell in love and had hopes of marrying. After a drawn out courting, she got her wish. They were married and soon there was a baby, a start to their family, on the way. Jessie had finally found, what she thought to be, her place. This feeling of belonging was short lived. She found her husband to be what he truly is, a lying murderer, after he was arrested. Her perfect life was thrown in chaos and confusion and ultimately she lost her new found place in this world.

John has his place. He had a caring wife and children; however, after bringing disgrace to the family, he left to find his place in the new world. He moved around a lot, never truly satisfied, always missing something. Soon, after desposing of his first wife, he found his place with his second wife, Jessie. However, mistakes from his past robbed him of his place as he was arrested for the murder of his wife. Although, some may agree he found his place in the end, at the hangman’s noose.

Everyone has a place where he or she belongs. This place can be defined by many things such as the physical elements, but usually it is defined by the people one surrounds himself with. Some know their place others never find it. Some people lose their place because of their own mistakes. Some may argue people never do truly find the perfect place. Nevertheless, people are always on a perpetual quest to find a place where they belong, and, ultimately, where they are happy.
Marker Comments  Level 5 or $\frac{24}{25}$

Content

The opening paragraph shows some sophisticated thinking as the student articulates that place can be physical or psychological/emotional. The discussion about Polly and Jessie effectively shows their search for an emotional home. John’s paragraph brings together both the physical and psychological search. There is a degree of sophistication in this essay often missing in departmental examination responses.

Organization

The student has been able to present and develop fully some complex ideas. There is considerable thoughtfulness evident as the student contemplates the fate of the three main characters.

Style

This is an engaging essay. The student has established and maintained focus. There is variety in sentence structure.

Mechanics

This is a refreshingly well-done response in terms of mechanics. There is sentence variety, risks have been taken, and accuracy is evident throughout.