

# Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test CRASH COURSE



April 2022

# Today's Learning Goals

We're going to help you get ready and feel confident for the upcoming OSSLT



1

## REVIEW TEST FORMAT

...so you know what to expect and how to navigate through the online test.

2

## REVIEW STUDENT SAMPLES

...discuss common mistakes and review some tips on how to avoid them

3

## PRACTICE

...I'll model how to answer some questions & give you some time to practice

# Why Is The OSSLT Important?



## GRADUATION REQUIREMENT

In order to get your high school diploma you need to pass the literacy test or course.



## PASS OR FAIL ASSESSMENT

The OSSLT is a pass or fail type of test. If you fail, you need to rewrite the test or take the course.



## IT WILL NOT IMPACT YOUR GRADES

Your results on the OSSLT will not affect the grades you receive in any of your classes.



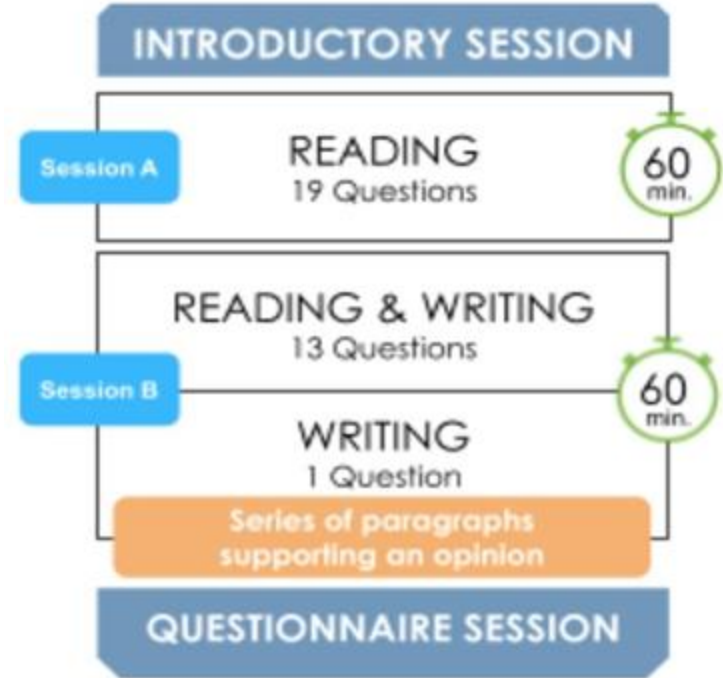
## COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

These schools won't see the score you receive on the test. Just that you've passed the test.

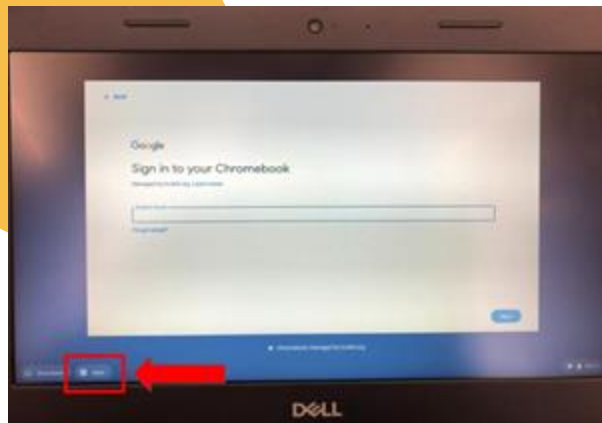
# About the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test

The OSSLT will be a **COMPUTER-BASED** test comprised of two sessions:

- Session A & Session B = **33 QUESTIONS IN TOTAL**
- **31** multiple-choice questions including enhanced multiple-select questions:
  - drag and drops
  - drop-down menus
  - checklists
- **2** constructed open-response questions
  - Short Answer
  - Long Answer
    - **SERIES OF SUPPORTED OPINION PARAGRAPHS**

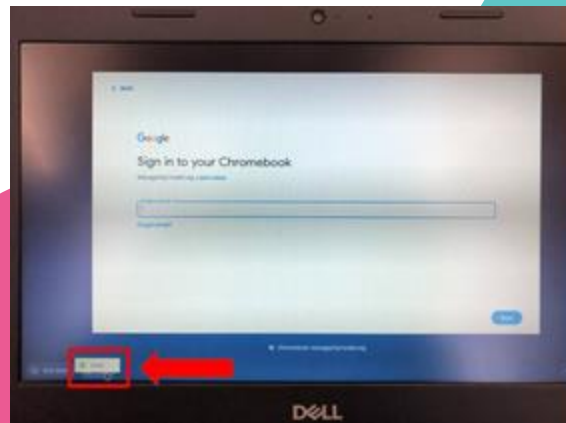


# Day-Of Test Instruction



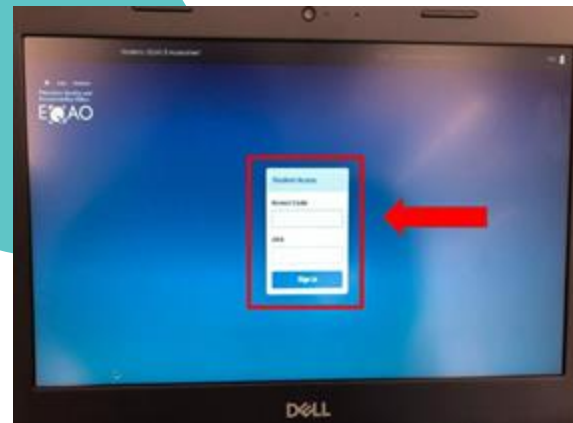
## STEP 1

Students will NOT sign in to their Chromebooks like they normally would. Instead they will click on the "Apps" button on the bottom left corner of the screen.



## STEP 2

Students will select the Kiosk button that appears.



## STEP 3

Students will login using their OEN and teacher provided Access Code.

# What Can I Have Access To During The Test?

## Let's Explore!

- **HEADPHONES** for listening to questions and reading selections
- A supply of **PENS**, **PENCILS**, and **PAPER** for rough work
- A set of accessibility tools is located in the **STUDENT TOOLBAR**:
  - **HELP** menu
  - **TEXT-TO-SPEECH** function
  - **ZOOM IN** and **ZOOM OUT** capabilities
  - **LINE READER** that helps students focus on one line of text at a time
  - a **HIGH-CONTRAST** view
  - **ANNOTATION** tools (highlighter, line and eraser)
  - a tool for **ROUGH NOTES**



# READING

## 1. EXPLICITLY STATED INFORMATION

- This is **DIRECTLY STATED INFORMATION** meaning the **ANSWER** is in the **READING**
  - **QUESTION:** Where did the event take place?
  - **ANSWER:** Burlington, Ontario

## 2. IMPLICITLY STATED INFORMATION

- You need to use the **CLUES** in the reading to get to **READ BETWEEN THE LINES**
  - **QUESTION:** How was Angela feeling?
  - **ANSWER:** Since I know she was *clenching her fists* and *stomping her feet*, I know she must have been angry.

## 3. MAKING CONNECTIONS

- You make a connection between **WHAT YOU READ** and your own **PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE** and **EXPERIENCE**
  - **QUESTION:** What can you do to help the environment?
  - **ANSWER:** Just like Jake, I can walk to school to reduce the number of cars on the road. I can also bring a reusable water bottle to school to minimize plastic waste.

# Potential Reading Selections

Reading selections on the OSSLT include any combination of the following passages:

## REAL-LIFE NARRATIVE

...a reading passage &  
**SEVEN** multiple choice  
questions

1

## INFORMATIONAL PARAGRAPH

...a passage and **SIX**  
multiple choice reading  
questions

2

## NEWS REPORT

...a passage **ONE** short  
answer questions & **FIVE**  
multiple choice questions

3

## DIALOGUE

...a conversation to read &  
**FIVE** multiple choice  
questions

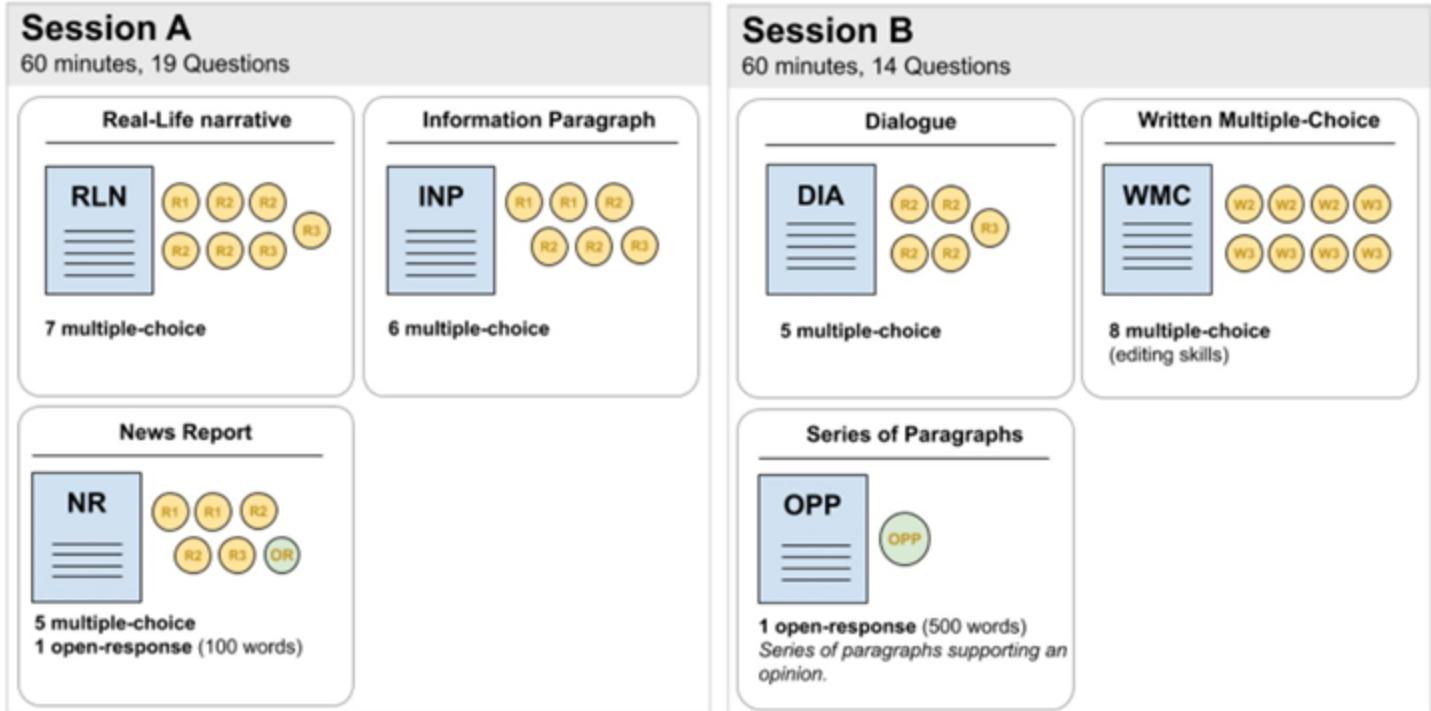
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# SAMPLE OSSLT COMBINATION

...everyone's version will be different





**What are some strategies you currently use when answering multiple choice questions?**

# Multiple Choice Strategies

- 1** **READ the question CAREFULLY** → Make sure you understand what the question is asking. As you read, underline words like **“NOT”** and **“ALWAYS”** since they change the meaning of the question.
- 2** **Think of the RIGHT ANSWER** → Coming up with the answer yourself will help you identify what the correct option should say. Compare your answer to the options. Look for the same **IDEAS** and key **TERMS**.
- 3** **ELIMINATE incorrect options** → Read each of the options and **ELIMINATE** the ones that are wrong. They may be unrelated to the question or completely off. Reread the questions and answers as needed.
- 4** **ANSWER all questions** → **SKIP** and **FLAG** questions you don't know and come back to them later. Give your brain more time to think about that question. **NEVER** leave a question unanswered.
- 5** **REFER BACK to the reading passage** → Some answers to the multiple choice questions may be stated directly in the reading. Use the **SPLIT-SCREEN** feature to **REFER BACK** to the reading as needed.

# READING PASSAGE SAMPLE

## PRACTICE TEST

Name and Surname

Education Quality and  
Accountability Office



Section 3 of 6

Reading Selection

Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Question 4

Question 5

Question 6

Review and Submit

[Back to Map](#)

Why did Montreal establish a relationship with graffiti artists?

Click your answer choice.

to deal with vandalism

to help politicians gain votes

to honour famous entertainers

to introduce citizens to local art

[Open/Close Reading Selection](#)

Next Question

Flag this question

### A Huge Mural Marks a Graffiti Philosophy in Montreal

They are graffiti artists. They spray-paint buildings. And they are paid by taxpayers.

Their latest work, *Our Lady of Grace*, unveiled in November 2011, transformed a dingy, beige brick wall in Montreal's west end into a six-storey canvas that hundreds now stop to admire.

While Montreal can be tough on illegal graffiti and tagging, the city has developed a relationship with graffiti artists, who are adamant that their genre is legitimate. "It's the same as a paintbrush, and we are showing our talent," said the artist who only gave his name as Flake.

Beginning in 2006, Montreal budgeted \$1.2 million to attack the problem of graffiti. That includes about \$150 000 for murals. The *Our Lady of Grace* fresco cost the city \$26 000 and took 400 cans of spray paint to complete. The mural shows the lady in a flowing robe, surrounded by scenes of the urban landscape and reminders—such as Caribbean birds—of the multicultural character of the area.

- 1 New murals are going up regularly in Montreal. In August and September 2011, walls honouring singer, songwriter and actor Raymond Levesque and jazz artist Oscar Peterson went up.
- 2 "We turn an energy that might be negative into one that's positive," said an executive from the mayor's office.
- 3 Still, Flake worries about his art form. Old factories are turning into condos. Politicians crack down looking for votes. "Graffiti as a subculture is growing dramatically, but we have less space to do it. [Murals] like this allow our voice to be heard," he said.
- 4



Photo: Toronto Star. © (2011) Toronto Star Newspapers Limited  
www.thestar.com. All rights reserved. Used under license.  
Image credit: Catherine Dulberger.

Close

Split Screen

Full Screen

# WRITING ON THE OSSLT

1



## ONE SHORT ANSWER QUESTION

1 paragraph or 100 words  
answering a question about a  
reading passage

## ONE LONG FORMAT OPINION PIECE

3 to 5 paragraphs or 500 words  
supporting an opinion

2



3



## MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS ABOUT WRITING

8 multiple choice questions about  
writing conventions: spelling,  
grammar, sentence structure

# WRITING

## 1. MAIN IDEA & SUPPORTING DETAILS

- The **MAIN IDEA** is the author's **MESSAGE** or **POINT** they are trying to make.
- The **SUPPORTING DETAILS** are the **FACTS, STATISTICS, IDEAS, STORIES** etc. that help to **PROVE** the **MAIN IDEA**

## 2. ORGANIZING INFORMATION

- You need to use your knowledge of **STRUCTURE** to **ORGANIZE** information in a way that **MAKES SENSE**
- You need to organize your long writing into **INTRODUCTION, BODY PARAGRAPHS, CONCLUSION**
- You need to organize your short writing into **TOPIC SENTENCE, SUPPORTING DETAILS, CONCLUDING SENTENCE**
- You may be asked to find the sentence that **DOESN'T BELONG** within a given **PARAGRAPH** or which sentence should be **ADDED** to a **PARAGRAPH** to complete the **STRUCTURE**

## 3. WRITING CONVENTIONS

- The OSSLT includes some writing questions disguised as multiple choice questions.
- These questions focus on **WRITING CONVENTIONS**, like **PROPER PUNCTUATION** and basic **GRAMMAR RULES**
  - Capitalization, Quotation Marks, Commas, Periods, Sentence Combining, Topic Sentences, Concluding Sentences, Organization/Structure etc.

# Tips for Answering Open Response Strategies

## Let's Review How To Answer the Open Response Question

- **READ** and **REREAD** the question carefully
- Aim to write as close to the **100 WORD LIMIT** as possible
- Answer the question using **SPECIFIC** and **RELEVANT DETAILS** and **INFORMATION** from the **READING SELECTION**
- **MAKE CONNECTIONS** between the ideas and **INFORMATION** in the reading selection and your own **EXPERIENCE**
- **PROOFREAD** your response and correct any **ERRORS** your notice



# Open Response Rubric

The open-response item is scored by a **TRAINED EDUCATOR**.  
The following rubrics form the basis of open-response scoring:



## Generic Rubric for Open-Response Reading Items

Code	Descriptor
<b>Off topic/ Incorrect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• response is off topic, irrelevant or incorrect</li></ul>
<b>10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• response indicates minimal reading comprehension</li><li>• response provides minimal or irrelevant ideas and information from the reading selection</li></ul>
<b>20</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• response indicates some reading comprehension</li><li>• response provides vague ideas and information from the reading selection</li></ul>
<b>30</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• response indicates considerable reading comprehension</li><li>• response provides accurate, specific and relevant ideas and information from the reading selection</li></ul>



Here's what an answer given  
a score of 10 looks like:

**Q6:** Explain why Montreal's approach to graffiti is beneficial. Use specific details from the selection to support your answer.

Montreal's approach to graffiti is beneficial. It is beneficial because graffiti artists help politicians get votes. Also, Montreal's graffiti artists turn "negative energy into positive energy". Finally, old factories are turning into condos which are being put back into use. That is why Montreal's approach to graffiti is beneficial.

**Annotation:** The response shows minimal reading comprehension. It includes one correct reason or benefit ("negative energy into positive energy") with no supporting details. It also includes an incorrect detail (graffiti artists help politicians get votes) and an irrelevant detail (old factories are turning into condos which are being put back into use).

The student did meet the length requirement

Here's what an answer given a score of 10 looks like:

Q6: Explain why Montreal's approach to graffiti is beneficial. Use specific details from the selection to support your answer.

Montreal's approach to graffiti is beneficial. It is beneficial because graffiti artists help politicians get votes. Also, Montreal's graffiti artists turn "negative energy into positive energy". Finally, old factories are turning into condos which are being put back into use. That is why Montreal's approach to graffiti is beneficial.

This is an incorrect detail

The student only used one correct detail

This detail is irrelevant

**Annotation:** The response shows minimal reading comprehension. It includes one correct reason or benefit ("negative energy into positive energy") with no supporting details. It also includes an incorrect detail (graffiti artists help politicians get votes) and an irrelevant detail (old factories are turning into condos which are being put back into use).

Here's what an answer given  
a score of 30 looks like:

**Q6:** Explain why Montreal's approach to graffiti is beneficial. Use specific details from the selection to support your answer.

Montreal's approach to graffiti is beneficial because it turns an energy that might be negative into one that's positive. Graffiti art gives artists the chance to show off their talents, and give the area a multicultural character that people can admire. For example, graffiti artists "transformed a dingy, beige brick wall in Montreal's west end into a six-storey canvas that hundreds now stop to admire." Overall, it is beneficial as it allows voices to be heard.

**Annotation:** The response indicates considerable reading comprehension. It provides reasons why Montreal's approach to graffiti is beneficial (*turns an energy that might be negative into one that's positive; Allows voices to be heard*) supported by specific and relevant details ("*...transformed a dingy, beige brick wall...into a six-storey canvas that hundreds stop to admire*").

The student meets the length requirement

Here's what an answer given a score of 30 looks like:

Q6: Explain why Montreal's approach to graffiti is beneficial. Use specific details from the selection to support your answer.

Montreal's approach to graffiti is beneficial because it turns an energy that might be negative into one that's positive. Graffiti art gives artists the chance to show off their talents, and give the area a multicultural character that people can admire. For example, graffiti artists transformed a dingy, beige brick wall in Montreal's west end into a six-storey canvas that hundreds now stop to admire." Overall, it is beneficial as it allows voices to be heard.

The student provides a clear reason why the approach is beneficial

The student provides RELEVANT & SPECIFIC SUPPORTING DETAILS directly from the READING

**Annotation:** The response indicates considerable reading comprehension. It provides reasons why Montreal's approach to graffiti is beneficial (*turns an energy that might be negative into one that's positive; Allows voices to be heard*) supported by specific and relevant details ("*...transformed a dingy, beige brick wall...into a six-storey canvas that hundreds stop to admire*").

# WRITING ON THE OSSLT

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## ONE SHORT ANSWER QUESTION

1 paragraph or 100 words  
answering a question about a  
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## ONE LONG FORMAT OPINION PIECE

3 to 5 paragraphs or 500 words  
supporting an opinion

2



3



## MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS ABOUT WRITING

8 multiple choice questions about  
writing conventions: spelling,  
grammar, sentence structure

# Tips for Answering Supported Opinion Paragraph Piece

## Let's Review How To Answer the Supported Opinion Paragraphs

- Read the **TOPIC QUESTION** and decide what **POSITION** you will take in your response
- **CLEARLY STATE YOUR OPINION** at the **BEGINNING** and **END** of your response
- Include in your response an **INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH**, three **BODY PARAGRAPHS**, and a **CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH** for a total of **FIVE PARAGRAPHS**
- **SUPPORT** your opinion with reasons and relevant **EXAMPLES** or **FACTS**
- Make sure the **DIVISIONS** between paragraphs are clear by clearly **INDENTING** your **PARAGRAPHS**
- Be sure to meet and not exceed the **500 WORD** limit





## Topic Development: Generic Rubric for Writing a Series of Paragraphs Expressing an Opinion

Code	Descriptor
Off topic	The response is off topic.
10	The response is related to the prompt but does not express an opinion. <b>OR</b> The response expresses an opinion with no supporting details or provides details unrelated to the opinion. There is no evidence of organization.
20	The response is related to the prompt, but only part of the response expresses and supports an opinion. <b>OR</b> The response is related to the prompt, and expresses and supports an opinion, but the opinion is unclear or inconsistent. There are insufficient supporting details: too few or repetitious. There is limited evidence of organization.
30	The response is related to the prompt and expresses a clear or vague supporting details or the connection of the details to the evidence of organization, but lapses distract from the overall communication.
40	The response is related to the prompt. A clear and consistent opinion is supported by some specific supporting details; however only some are specific. The organization does not distract from the overall communication.
50	The response is related to the prompt. A clear and consistent opinion is supported by specific supporting details. The organization is logical.
60	The response is related to the assigned prompt. A clear and consistent opinion is developed with sufficient specific supporting details that are thoughtfully chosen. The organization is coherent, demonstrating a thoughtful progression of ideas.

# Opinion Piece Writing Rubrics

The opinion piece is scored by a **TRAINED EDUCATOR**. The following rubrics form the basis of opinion piece scoring:

## Conventions: Generic Rubric for Long-Writing Task

Code	Descriptor
10	There is insufficient evidence to assess the use of conventions. <b>OR</b> Errors in conventions interfere with communication.
20	Errors in conventions distract from communication.
30	Errors in conventions do not distract from communication.
40	Control of conventions is evident in written work.

Here's what an answer given  
a score of **10** looks like:

Do students benefit from the two-month summer break?

Students benefit from the two month summer break.

Firstly, I believe students benefit from the two month summer break.

Secondly, summer begins and the students have two months off school.

Also, you get to have a break off school and school doesn't open for another month.

Therefore, I think students benefit from the two month summer break.



The entire response is  
nowhere close to 500 words

Here's what an answer given  
a score of **10** looks like:

Do students benefit from the two-month summer break?

Students benefit from the two month  
summer break.

The student expresses  
an opinion

Firstly, I believe students benefit  
from the two month summer break.

This is the opinion  
repeated again

Secondly, summer begins and the students  
have two months off school.

This portion just  
describes what  
"summer break" is

Also, you get to have a break off school  
and school doesn't open for another month.

Therefore, I think students benefit from  
the two month summer break.

The paragraph does  
not outline any  
benefits to summer  
break...

Here's what an answer given a score of **60** looks like:

Notice how this student has written approximately 500 words

Do students benefit from the two-month summer break?

Summer truly is a great season. It is sunny, warm, and enjoyable. Summer also brings happiness to students, because school is over and they get a two-month break. The summer break gives students the chance to get a job and save money for their future, see relatives that live far away from them, and lose the stress that school brings. These three great reasons show how important the two-month summer break is to students. Therefore, a two-month summer break is very beneficial to students.

In order to have a successful future, students will need money to pay for postsecondary schooling. The two-month summer break gives students a chance to do that. Since 1980, college and university tuition fees have increased by 24%, leaving students desperate for money. With the two-month break, students can get a job, and even if they only get paid minimum wage, will have over \$4,200 by the end of the break, which can pay for a big portion of tuition fees. Since the two-month break plays such a large role in students' futures, it is beneficial.

Throughout the school year, students are given huge tests and plenty of projects, which add a great deal of stress to a student's life. As the two-month summer break relieves a lot of stress from the students, the break is beneficial. In a Manitoba

Continue writing your series of paragraphs on the next page.

study, 80% of students that suffer from depression state it was caused by a huge school workload. The two-month summer break gives students a chance to rest and relax, which would make their lives less stressful. The two-month summer break helps students relax, which is why it benefits them.

Finally, with the huge workload and busy schedule that comes with school, students do not have a lot of time to spend with family. The break allows students to see relatives that they normally wouldn't have time for. If an uncle lives out of the country, then a student could not be able to see him, because the student would miss too much school. The two-month break gives students time to spend with relatives without the stress of missing something important. The two-month break gives students a chance to connect and spend time with family, which is why it benefits students.

To conclude, the two-month break does benefit students. It gives them the opportunity to prepare for their future, which they will need to move on in life. Furthermore, the break allows students to live happy and healthy, and steer the students away from depression. The two-month break also lets students connect and spend time with family. In the end, the two-month break has many positive effects.

Do students benefit from the two-month summer break?

Summer truly is a great season. It is sunny, warm, and enjoyable. Summer also brings happiness to students, because school is over and they get a two-month break.

The summer break gives students the chance to get a job and save money for their future, see relatives that live far away from them, and lose the stress that school brings. These three great reasons show how important the two-month summer break is to students. Therefore, a two-month summer break is very beneficial to students.

In order to have a successful future, students will need money to pay for post-secondary schooling. The two-month summer break gives students a chance to do that. Since 1980, college and university tuition fees have increased by 34%, leaving students desperate for money. With the two-month break, students can get a job, and even if they only get paid minimum wage, will have over \$4,200 by the end of the break, which can pay for a big portion of tuition fees. Since the two-month break plays such a large role in students' futures, it is beneficial.

Throughout the school year, students are given huge tests and plenty of projects, which add a great deal of stress to a student's life. As the two-month summer break relieves a lot of stress from the students, the break is beneficial. In a Manitoba

Continue writing your series of paragraphs on the next page.

The student includes three distinct benefits to summer break  
**JOBS/MONEY, SEE RELATIVES, REDUCE STRESS**

Student expresses a clear and consistent opinion throughout  
Therefore, a two-month summer break is very beneficial to students.

This paragraph begins with a topic sentence that outlines the specific benefit the student will address: **SUMMER JOB**

Student includes **SPECIFIC DETAILS** (facts/statistics) outlining how exactly the job will help students:  
**TUITION FEES HAVE INCREASED BY 34%**  
**SAVE \$4200 for TUITION**

This paragraph begins with a topic sentence that outlines the specific benefit the student will address: **DESTRESS**

study, 80% of students that suffer from depression state it was caused by a huge school workload. The two-month summer break gives students a chance to rest and relax, which would make their lives less stressful. The two-month summer break helps students relax, which is why **it benefits them.**

Student includes **SPECIFIC DETAILS (facts/statistics)** outlining how exactly the job will help students:  
80% OF STUDENT THAT SUFFER FROM DEPRESSION CLAIM IT'S DUE TO SCHOOL REST & RELAX TO RELIEVE STRESS

**Finally,** with the huge workload and busy schedule that comes with school, students do not have a lot of time to spend with family. The break allows students to see relatives that they normally wouldn't have time for. If an uncle lives out of the country, then a student would not be able to see him, because the student would miss too much school. The two-month break gives students time to spend with relatives without the stress of missing something important. The two-month break gives students a chance to connect and spend time with family, which is **why it benefits students.**

This paragraph begins with a **TOPIC SENTENCE** that outlines the specific benefit the student will address: **SEE FAMILY**

Student includes **AN EXAMPLE (facts/statistics)** outlining how exactly the job will help students:  
**AN UNCLE WHO LIVES FAR AWAY**

**To conclude,** the two-month break **does benefit students.** It gives them the opportunity to prepare for their future, which they will need to move on in life. Furthermore, the break allows students to live happy and healthy, and steer the students away from depression. The two-month break also lets students connect and spend time with family. **In the end, the two-month break has many positive effects.**

Student **REPEATS** the clear opinion that's been supported throughout

Student **REPEATS** the **THREE DISTINCT (different) POINTS** outlined throughout the opinion piece  
**OPPORTUNITY TO PREPARE FOR FUTURE  
LIVE HAPPY AND HEALTHY STRESS FREE  
SPEND TIME WITH FAMILY**



# How To Write A Support Opinion Piece

## OUTLINE

Outline your thinking by developing your examples, facts, and statistics.



## WRITE

Use your outline to guide your writing. Write it out in full sentences and proper paragraphs (intro, body x3, conclusion).



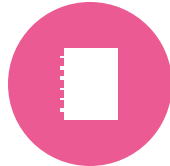
## PICK YOUR 3 STRONGEST POINTS

Choose the points you have the most to write about. Be sure that they are distinct from one another.



## BRAINSTORM

Generate ideas on both sides of the issue.



## PROOFREAD

Remember your score also reflects your use of conventions (spelling, grammar, punctuation).



## REVIEW CHECKLIST

Review your mental checklist. Have I stated my opinion in the intro and conclusion? Do I have 5 paragraphs?



# WRITING ON THE OSSLT

1



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1 paragraph or 100 words  
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3 to 5 paragraphs or 500 words  
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2



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## MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS ABOUT WRITING

8 multiple choice questions about  
writing conventions: spelling,  
grammar, sentence structure

# Tips for Multiple Choice Questions About Writing

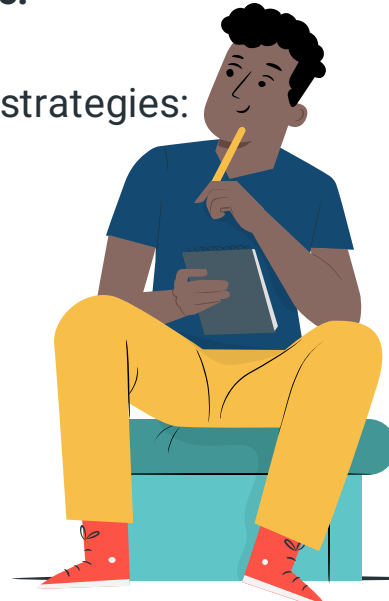
## Let's Review How To The Multiple Choice Questions About Writing

The OSSLT includes some writing questions disguised as multiple choice questions.

- These questions generally focus on **WRITING CONVENTIONS**, like **PROPER PUNCTUATION** and basic **GRAMMAR RULES**
  - **Capitalization, Quotation Marks, Commas, Periods, Sentence Combining, Topic Sentences, Concluding Sentences, Organization/Structure etc.**

To answer these questions successfully, you'll want to use typical multiple choice strategies:

- Always **READ ALL OF THE CHOICES**, even when the first or second choice looks correct
- If the question has one or more correct answers, use the **PROCESS OF ELIMINATION**
- If you're really stuck, making an **EDUCATED GUESS** is acceptable
- Pay **CLOSE ATTENTION TO DETAIL** by read and re-read very slowly





**Let's Practice Some of Those Multiple  
Choice Questions About Writing!**



# Let's Practice!

The **THREE OPTIONS** below provide you with additional practice for the OSSLT.

## ONLINE PRACTICE TEST

Go to EQAO.com and select OSSLT from the ASSESSMENT tab. Click on "Practice Test" to practice some questions and test features and functions.



## GOOGLE PRACTICE

A simple Google Search will yield several old OSSLT test for you to practice with. Include the GSuite digital version.



## D2L PRACTICE

A D2L shell with lessons and practice activities has been created for you. You are already enrolled in the course.

