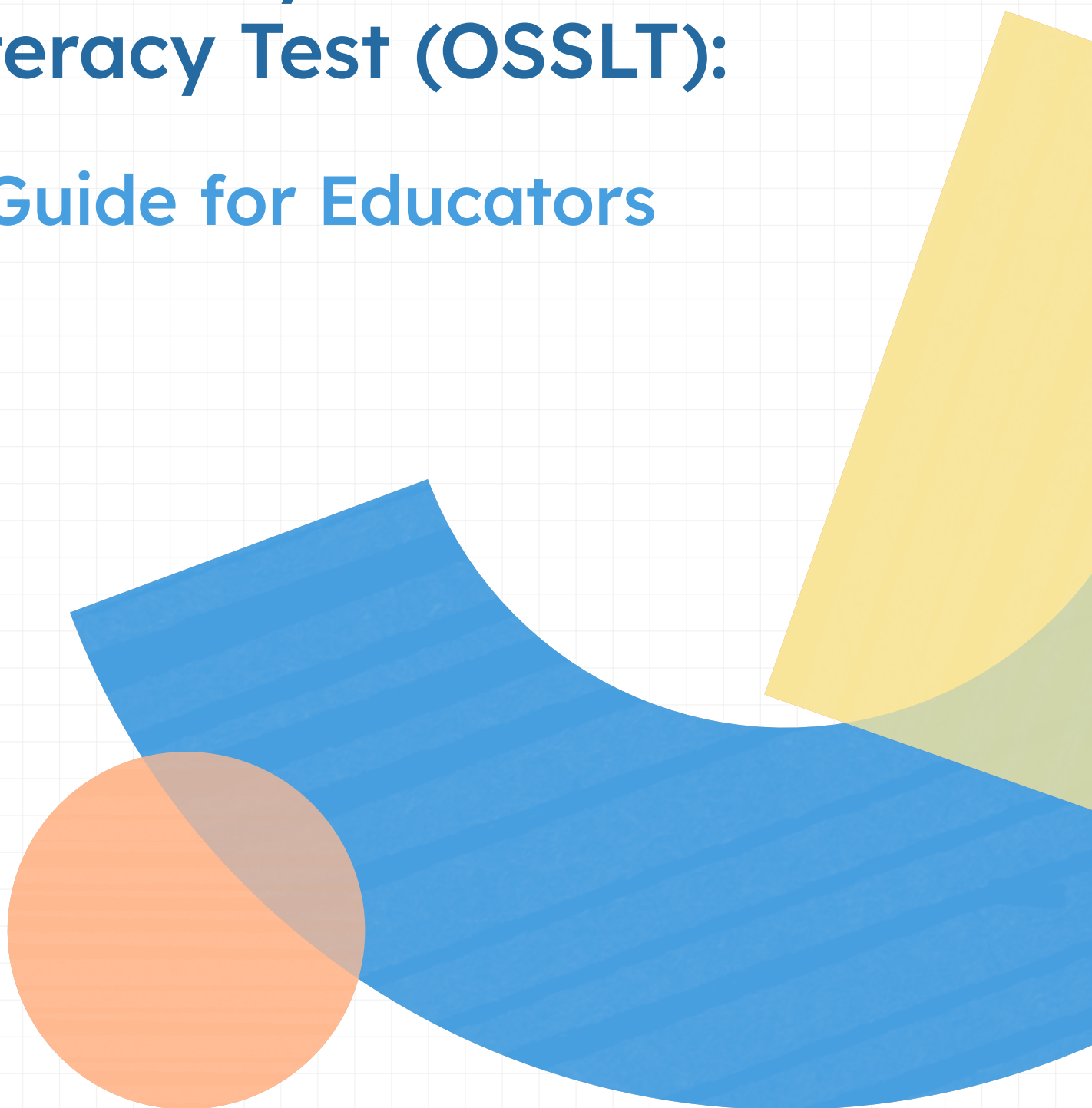


Unpacking the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT):

A Guide for Educators



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Overview of the OSSLT

All secondary school students must meet the literacy graduation requirement to earn an Ontario Secondary School Diploma. This requirement is based on the reading and writing expectations of *The Ontario Curriculum* up to and including Grade 9 and is designed to ensure students have the literacy skills needed for success in school, work and everyday life.

Students typically fulfill this requirement by successfully completing the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) in Grade 10, in accordance with [Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements \(2024\)](#).

The OSSLT measures whether students meet the minimum standard for literacy across all subjects up to the end of Grade 9. The test consists of two sessions, each containing both reading and writing tasks, and each session must be completed in one continuous supervised sitting. The OSSLT is administered twice a year, in fall and spring.

Field-test questions are included but are not used in determining student results.

For more detailed information about the OSSLT, please refer to the [OSSLT Framework](#).

Reading

In the reading components of the test, students demonstrate their understanding of a variety of reading selections by completing selected-response questions and one open-response task.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Reading Selection Types | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information paragraph: presents ideas and information on a topic• News report: presents information in the form of a news story• Dialogue: presents a conversation between two or more people• Real-life narrative: presents an account of a significant time in an individual's life |
|--------------------------------|--|

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Question Types | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Selected response: Each reading selection is followed by a number of selected-response questions. Students select the best or most correct options in a variety of question formats.• Written response: The news report is followed by one open-response question. Students construct a response using information from the reading selection. The maximum length of the student response is 100 words. |
|-----------------------|--|

To see examples, please visit the [practice test](#) on [eqao.com](#).

Reading Skills

The OSSLT's reading selections assess three key reading skills:



Comprehending explicitly stated information: understanding clearly presented facts, details and ideas in the reading selection

Explicitly stated information and ideas are directly stated in texts that students read. For example, if a question asks where a character grew up, and the reader refers to a line that reads “Sanjay was born and raised in Kapuskasing, Ontario,” this is an example of using **explicitly stated information** to answer the question.

This is also sometimes called “reading the lines.” Students may use a variety of strategies to understand meaning. These may include using vocabulary, important details, knowledge of text form and identifying the referent of a pronoun.



Interpreting implicitly stated meaning: inferring ideas, themes and relationships that are suggested but not directly stated

Understanding implicitly stated information and ideas, sometimes called “making inferences,” refers to ideas and information that are implied but not directly stated in the reading selection. These questions require students to make local and global inferences using implicit evidence to explain and to support interpretations. All the information required to make the inference can be found in the reading selection.

Local inferences are formed based on an understanding of implied information at the sentence and paragraph level. Students draw conclusions based on specific details in a reading selection.

Global inferences are based on an understanding of implied information in the whole selection. For example, a question may ask about the theme or message of a text.

Source: [Glossary. *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Language* \(2023\)](#)

This is also sometimes called “reading between the lines” or “interpreting texts.”

Students may use patterns, text features, an analysis of arguments or consideration of how paragraphs build or support a claim in order to construct an understanding of the relationship between individual sentences or paragraphs and the text as a whole. They also construct an understanding of how individual implications or details may build to a larger understanding or theme.



Connecting ideas: linking information within the reading selection and relating it to prior knowledge or broader interpretations that go beyond the literal meaning of the text

“Making connections” refers to when students interpret reading selections by integrating information and ideas with their own personal knowledge and experience. These are often broader interpretations that go beyond the literal meaning of the reading selection.

This combination of personal and critical response is sometimes called “reading beyond the lines.” Some ways students may engage with texts include personal connections to their own life experiences, previously acquired knowledge or their own values or points of view.

For more information on the scope of literacy in *The Ontario Curriculum*, see the “Literacy” section of the [Ministry of Education Cross-Curricular and Integrated Learning](#) page. For more information on reading between and beyond the lines, please see Chapter 3, “Reading Literacy Assessment Framework,” in the [PCAP 2023 Assessment Framework](#).

Writing

In the writing components of the test, students demonstrate their understanding of a variety of writing skills and conventions.

Question Types

- **Selected response:** Students select the best or most correct options in a variety of question formats.
- **Written response:** Students construct an opinion essay. The maximum length is 500 words.

Writing Skills

Students demonstrate their competency in three writing skills:



Developing a main idea with specific supporting details

Developing a main idea means the writing is clearly connected to the assigned subject or topic. A clear and consistent opinion is developed and supported with sufficient, well-chosen details that strengthen the overall message.

This skill is evaluated in the opinion essay.



Organizing information and ideas in a coherent manner

Organizing information and ideas in a coherent manner means arranging points in a clear, logical order so the writing demonstrates a thoughtful progression of ideas.

This can include sentence structure, sentence combining, paragraph structure and conjunctions. This skill is evaluated in both selected-response questions and in the opinion essay.



Using conventions in a manner that does not distract from clear communication

Using conventions such as syntax, spelling, grammar and punctuation in a manner that does not distract from clear communication means writing in a way that is correct and easy to read so that ideas are understood right away.

In writing, students should apply the conventions of language, such as sentence structure, grammar (e.g., verb endings, homophones), spelling (most common words) and punctuation (e.g., end punctuation, apostrophe, quotation marks) that are expected (refined) by the end of Grade 9 in the Ontario English curriculum. This skill is evaluated in both selected-response questions and the opinion essay.

For the Language Conventions Continuum for Reading and Writing, Grades 1–9, please visit the [Ministry of Education website](#). To see examples of writing questions, please see sections 4, 5 and 7 of the [practice test](#) on [eqao.com](#).

Opinion Essay

For the long-writing task, students demonstrate their ability to communicate ideas and information clearly and coherently through an opinion essay. For this task,

- the topic will be current and familiar to teenagers.
- the student must write three or more paragraphs that include an introduction, development (may comprise more than one paragraph) and a conclusion.
- the student must express an opinion and support it with details. The opinion must be stated clearly at the beginning or end of the response.
- the student must adequately support the opinion with reasons, examples or facts.
- the organization must be coherent, and grammar, spelling, punctuation and sentence structure must not distract from clear communication.
- students have a limit of approximately 500 words to complete their work.

Since a large-scale assessment does not allow for a complete revision and refinement process, written work on the OSSLT is scored as first-draft (unpolished) writing.

Sample Instructions for Opinion Essay:

Write an essay expressing an opinion on the following topic:

Does homework improve learning?

Be sure to include the following:

- an introduction, supporting body paragraphs and a conclusion.
- relevant reasons, examples or facts to support your opinion.
- a clear explanation of your arguments.

Type your response in the box below (approximately 500 words).

For more details and suggestions for how to use the opinion essay rubrics and samples, please see *Understanding the Opinion Essay Scoring Guides: Annotated Student Responses and Scoring Explanations*.

Selected-Response Question Types

On both the reading and the writing components of the test, students will be asked a variety of types of questions: selected-response questions and an open-response question on the reading portions and selected-response questions and an open-response opinion essay in the writing portions.

The selected-response questions include single-selection questions and technology enhanced items.* Technology enhanced items are assessment items (questions) that use technology to improve interaction and engagement with a test question in digital assessments.

The following are examples of technology enhanced items:

- drop-down selections
- drag responses
- checklists

Although question formats may vary (e.g., drop-downs, single-selection responses, drag-and-drop, checklists), all reading questions require students to refer back to the reading selection and demonstrate proficiency in the three reading skills. All selected-response writing questions require students to demonstrate proficiency in organizing ideas and information and in using conventions.

*** For students with Individual Education Plans requiring accommodations that may prevent them from answering technology enhanced questions, an alternative version of the OSSLT that does not contain such questions is available in multiple formats.**

Sample Selected-Response Formats

Below are samples of questions in selected-response formats drawn from both the reading and the writing components of the OSSLT.

Single-selection

1 How is the information in paragraph 3 organized?

- A** in chronological order
- B** as steps in a sequence
- C** from general to specific
- D** from most to least important

Drop-down

Choose the options that best complete the sentence.

"Where do you want to go next asked her brother We need to have a plan."

Checklist

Which of the following facts support Daniel's suggestion that magicicadas could be part of a horror movie?

Choose **Supports** or **Does not support**.

	Supports	Does not support
Magicicadas have red bulging eyes.	☐	☐
Male magicicadas sing to attract female magicicadas.	☐	☐
Humans are outnumbered by magicicadas 600 to one.	☐	☐

Drag and drop

Drag the **two** best answer choices into the correct boxes to complete the sentence.

and collected leaves for the fall festival.

For more examples of selected-response questions, please see the [practice test](#) at [eqao.com](#).

Scoring

How Is the OSSLT Scored?

The selected-response questions are automatically computer-scored, while open-response questions are scored by qualified educators who are trained and follow clear and consistent rubrics.

The generic scoring rubrics for the open-response reading and long-writing tasks are provided below.

Generic Open-Response Reading Rubric

Code	Descriptor
Blank	Nothing is typed in the text box.
I	The response is one of the following: • a comment on or a restatement of the prompt • a misunderstanding of the reading selection or prompt • irrelevant or off-topic (unrelated to the reading selection or prompt) • illegible (random characters; not written in English)
10	response indicates minimal reading comprehension response provides minimal or irrelevant ideas and information from the reading selection
20	response indicates some reading comprehension response provides vague ideas and information from the reading selection
30	response indicates considerable reading comprehension response provides accurate, specific and relevant ideas and information from the reading selection

Generic Topic Development Writing Rubric: Opinion Essay

Code	Descriptor
Blank	Nothing is typed in the text box.
I	The response is one of the following: • a comment on the task • irrelevant or off-topic (content unrelated to the prompt) • illegible (random characters; not written in English) • an opinion with no ideas or details (e.g., “yes” or “no” followed by the restatement of the prompt, or just a “yes” or “no” answer) • a restatement of the prompt
10	The essay is related to the prompt but does not express an opinion. or The essay expresses an opinion with ideas but no supporting details, or it provides details unrelated to the opinion. There is no evidence of content organization.
20	The essay is related to the prompt, but only part of the response expresses and supports an opinion. or The essay is related to the prompt and expresses and supports an opinion, but the opinion is unclear or inconsistent. The connection between the ideas and details and the opinion is not always evident. There are insufficient supporting details: too few or repetitious. There is limited evidence of content organization.
30	The essay is related to the prompt and expresses a clear opinion. There are insufficient and/or vague supporting details or the connection of the details to the opinion is not always clear. There is evidence of content organization, but lapses distract from the overall communication.
40	The essay is related to the prompt. A clear and consistent opinion is developed with sufficient supporting details; however, only some are specific. The content organization is mechanical, and any lapses do not distract from the overall communication.

50	The essay is related to the prompt. A clear and consistent opinion is developed with sufficient specific supporting details. The content organization is logical.
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60	The essay is related to the assigned prompt. A clear and consistent opinion is developed with sufficient specific supporting details that are thoughtfully chosen. The content organization is coherent and demonstrates a thoughtful progression of ideas.
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Generic Conventions Writing Rubric: Opinion Essay

Code	Descriptor
Blank	Nothing is typed in the text box.
1	Illegible (random characters; not written in English)
10	The response is fewer than 30 words (without including the words from the prompt). or 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.

For additional information, please see *Understanding the Opinion Essay Scoring Guides: Annotated Student Responses and Scoring Explanations*.

Determining Results

What Is IRT?

Like many large-scale assessments around the world, EQAO uses statistical methods informed by a set of ideas called item response theory (IRT) to measure how much students know and can do in reading and writing on the OSSLT. This statistical method is used to design assessments and evaluate student performance. It takes into account characteristics of test questions, for example question difficulty. IRT measures student ability on a common and comparable scale, even when students answer different sets of questions. IRT ensures that assessments are as fair and accurate as possible for every student.

IRT takes the following into account:

Question Difficulty	If a student answers hard questions correctly, there is stronger evidence that the student has a higher ability than if the student answered only easy questions correctly.
----------------------------	---

Question Effectiveness	IRT gives different weights to questions depending on how well they can distinguish between students with higher and lower ability.
-------------------------------	---

Guessing	IRT accounts for the chance of guessing to reduce the likelihood of scores being overestimated just because a student guessed some multiple-choice questions correctly.
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This depth of analysis enables IRT to produce a more nuanced and reliable measure of student performance, rather than relying simply on the number of correct answers.

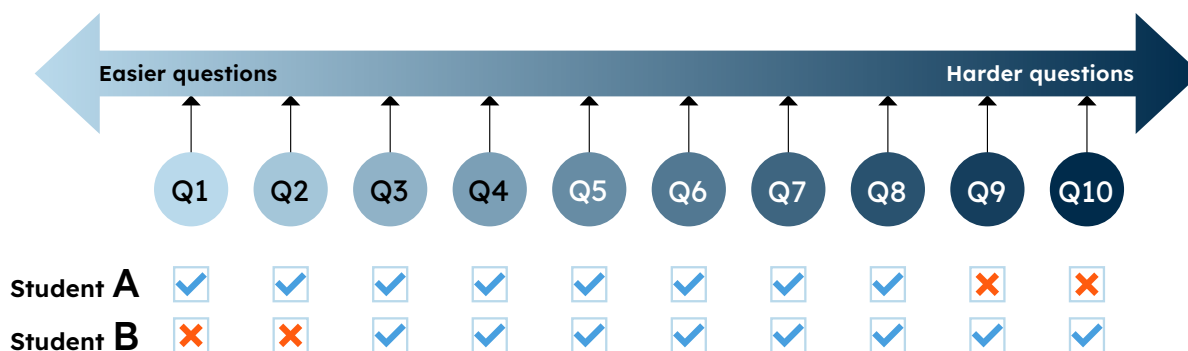
How IRT Determines Student Scores

IRT goes beyond simply counting the number of correct answers by examining the characteristics of each question a student receives, such as its difficulty and effectiveness in measuring student ability. This approach provides a more precise way of measuring student performance, compared to traditional methods.

For example, imagine a test with 10 questions:

Student A answers all but the two hardest questions correctly.

Student B answers all but the two easiest questions correctly.



With traditional scoring, both students would receive the same result, for example, 80%. However, with IRT, their scores would differ, because IRT accounts for the characteristics of the questions.

Benefits of IRT

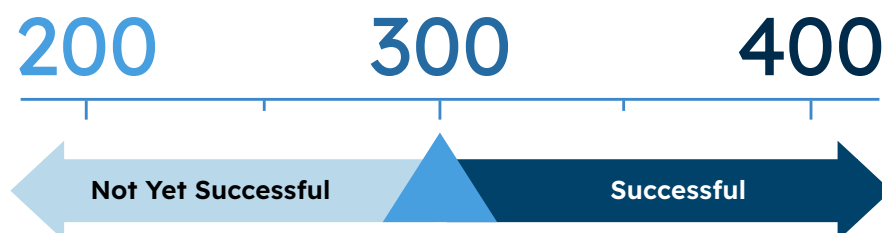
- IRT helps select high-quality assessment questions by analyzing their characteristics and strengthens EQAO's ability to identify and replace biased questions, which in turn promotes fairness.
- IRT estimates student ability based on the characteristics of the questions students received, unlike traditional scoring, which simply counts correct answers. This results in scores that are more accurate for the specific set of questions received and that are less influenced by lucky guesses.
- IRT allows EQAO to create multiple test versions that are comparable in overall difficulty, effectiveness and content coverage. This ensures fairness and maintains test security while keeping scores comparable across different versions.
- IRT ensures that scores remain on a common scale, making it possible to compare results across different years and track student performance and trends reliably.

How the OSSLT Uses IRT

OSSLT student outcomes are assigned using IRT, based on the relationship between students' overall ability in reading and writing and their performance on individual items. The analysis determines the most likely location of a student on the achievement continuum defined by the content of the test. Each student's outcome is determined by the pattern of responses to the selected-response questions and by the scores achieved on the open-response questions.

What this means for individual student results:

A minimum score of 300 is required for a successful outcome. Students who are “not yet successful” will have a score on the scale from 200 to 295. A process of test equating is used to ensure that a score of 300 represents the same level of achievement in literacy each year. Each score represents a position along the continuum of student achievement ranging from 200 to 400, where 200 is the lowest value. As the scale scores do not start at zero, they cannot be interpreted as the number of points out of 400, nor can they be converted into percentages.



To learn more about IRT, see [*From Questions to Scores: How Item Response Theory Enhances EQAO Assessments*](#).

Individual Student Reports

EQAO reports a single literacy score for all students who fully participated in the OSSLT. The result is reported as “successful” or “not yet successful” on an Individual Student Report (ISR). The ISR also provides **next steps** for students who were not yet successful based on common errors or needs. These next steps can be used by teachers and students to consider with regular classroom work and develop a plan to address specific needs. When designing support to help students improve their skills, teachers may consult common next steps that are found on the ISR for students who are not yet successful. Common areas of focus in reading and writing are provided.

Potential next steps for reading:

- make sure you understand what the question is asking and answer that question;
- provide details from the reading selection to support your answer;
- connect your personal knowledge and experience with the details from the reading selection to clarify your response;
- try the practice test to review all types of questions;
- read and reread the question carefully, and eliminate any answers that seem incorrect;
- refer to the reading selection for all associated questions (keep the reading selection open beside the questions when possible); and
- make sure to answer all questions.

Potential next steps for writing:

- relate your response to the assigned prompt;
- develop a clear and consistent opinion;
- include sufficient specific details that are thoughtfully chosen and developed to support your opinion;
- consider how to organize your writing so it flows and there is a thoughtful progression of ideas;
- consistently apply the conventions of language, such as sentence structure, grammar (e.g., verb endings, homophones) and punctuation (e.g., end punctuation, apostrophe, quotation marks), that are expected by the end of Grade 9 in the Ontario English curriculum;
- try the practice test beforehand to review all types of questions;
- read and reread the question carefully, and eliminate any answers that seem incorrect; and
- make sure to answer all the questions.

To view sample ISRs, please consult the [OSSLT Framework](#).

Appendix: Practice Test Sample Annotations

Practice tests are composed of questions retired from operational use. Some annotated questions, along with data from their most recent administration, are included in this document to help guide educator reflection. The full practice test is available at eqao.com.

These annotations include information about what skill is being assessed for each question, some ways students could approach the question and some prompts that educators can use when supporting students or collaborating with staff on ways to support students undertaking the OSSLT.

Ways to Use This Resource

Here is a suggested list of how this guide and sample annotated data can be used in both classroom and broader educational contexts.



Questions to Consider with Students:

- What textual elements can the students identify in reading selections?
- How can the students use the provided tools (e.g., highlighter, line drawing) to approach passages and questions? How can the students reflect on their use of the tools?
- How can the students use the practice test to increase their familiarity and comfort with the assessment and its tools and interactive elements (e.g., speech-to-text, draggable elements)?
- How can the students use scoring guides, rubrics and exemplars to reflect on their work and identify strengths and areas for improvement?
- How can the students reflect on the reading skills (reading the lines, between the lines, beyond the lines) they are using on these tasks?
- How can the students identify and describe Explicit, Implicit and Making Connections skills?
- What familiar strategies can students use during the assessment? How can they identify when and where to use these strategies?



Questions to Consider with Colleagues:

- How can educators use scoring guides/rubrics and annotated exemplars as reflection tools in their own practice?
- What observations can be made about the different types of selected-response and technology enhanced items? What strategies can students use when answering different question types?
- How can educators draw connections between the reading and writing skills identified in this document and their own curriculum expectations?
- What opportunities exist for educators to use similar questions or skills in their own teaching practice and curriculum area?



Questions to Consider When Using the Data and Annotations:

- What conversations can be had when examining “most commonly selected incorrect response” data with other educators?
- What conversations can be had when examining differences in results on specific questions between successful and not yet successful students? What role could question difficulty (see IRT section) play?
- Consider sharing sample questions with staff without including data and annotations. What opportunities exist for educators to make predictions (consider question type, skill type, percentage who answer correctly)? Compare staff predictions to the provided data.
- What questions can educators ask about data on “most commonly selected incorrect responses” (or partially correct responses) that may provide insight into student strengths and areas of need?
- What do commonly selected incorrect responses suggest about student responses?

Understanding the Provided Data

The provincial data provided are from the most recent administration of each question and represent all students in the first-time eligible cohort. Results are presented for the overall first-time eligible population and are further disaggregated into two student groups: those who achieved a “successful” outcome on the OSSLT and those who received a “not yet successful” outcome.

For each question, the results show overall performance for the first-time eligible cohort and are further disaggregated by outcome, showing the performance of students who were successful and those who were not yet successful.

For single-selection multiple-choice and drop-down questions, the percentages given show the percentage of students who selected the correct response. For example, a value of 80% means that 80% of students answered the question correctly. For those questions, we have also provided the incorrect response chosen most by students.

For example:

Student Achievement Outcome	Percentage Who Answered Correctly	Annotation
All	82	This indicates that 82% of all students answered this question correctly.
Successful	90	This indicates that 90% of the students whose outcome was successful correctly answered this question.
Not yet successful	73	This indicates that 73% of the students whose outcome was not yet successful correctly answered this question.

For multiple-score items, this percentage represents the average number of credit points earned out of the maximum possible score. For example, a value of 91% means that, on average, students earned 91% of the available points for that item. On a three-point question, a score of 91% means that students earned an average of 2.73 out of three points. We have also provided an example of a common response that did not earn full marks.

For example:

Student Achievement Outcome	Average Percentage of Score Points Earned	Annotation
All	83	This indicates that all students earned an average of 83% of the available points.
Successful	89	This indicates that the students whose outcome was successful earned an average of 89% of the available points.
Not yet successful	70	This indicates that the students whose outcome was not yet successful earned an average of 70% of the available points.

Reading Selection Sample Questions with Data and Annotations

Reading Selection 1: News Report

The *Morning Star* shines again



By Peter Simpson

In September 2014, the *Morning Star*, which covered the dome-shaped ceiling inside the Canadian Museum of History, shone once again as brightly as it had when it was created 21 years earlier. 1

Alex Janvier, a Dene Suline from the Cold Lake First Nation in Alberta, had completed the year-long restoration of his magnificent painting. 2

The 79-year-old artist surveyed the circular mass of symbols overhead. Each colour, shape and design represents some aspect of Indigenous life or history, such as the sweat lodge ritual that denotes a return to traditional spiritual practices by contemporary Indigenous people across North America. Light bursts from the white star at the centre of this 400-square-metre design. Janvier explains that his people had used the star “as a guide light in the early mornings of the winter hours.” 3

When the museum opened in 1989, Janvier was already a major figure in Indigenous art, along with Bill Reid, Norval Morrisseau and Daphne Odjig. Indigenous architect Douglas Cardinal, who designed the curving, organic shape of the museum, wanted Janvier’s art to be a part of it. At the time, Indigenous art was not even on display in Ottawa’s National Gallery of Canada. 4

This painting was “the first step in the enlightenment of Canada,” said Janvier, who remains proud of his achievement. 5

“I think Alex’s painting helped people realize that First Nations expressions were truly works of art,” Cardinal said as the restored work was unveiled. “It’s a piece that everybody, no matter what culture or background you have, you feel connected to it.” 6

Adapted from “The Morning Star rises better than ever” by Peter Simpson, published in the *Ottawa Citizen*, September 15, 2014. Material republished with the express permission of: *Ottawa Citizen*, a division of Postmedia Network Inc., and Wayne Cuddington/*Ottawa Citizen*. Reprinted with permission.

Selected Data and Annotations from News Report

Question 2 from News Report

How is the information in paragraph 3 organized?

in chronological order

as steps in a sequence

from general to specific

from most to least important

Student Achievement Outcome	Percentage Who Answered Correctly
All	68
Successful	73
Not yet successful	54
Most commonly chosen incorrect answer: <i>Option 2: as steps in a sequence</i>	

Skill: Implicit

Annotation: Students must read and understand paragraph 3 to recognize what organizational structure is used. The paragraph begins with general information and becomes more focused on a single component of the painting.

Question 5 from News Report

Match the aspect of Janvier's artwork to the part of Indigenous life it represents.

Drag and drop your **three** answer choices into the correct boxes.

Dome shape

A winter guide

White star

Traditional spiritual practices

Sweat lodge

The enlightenment of Canada

The Morning Star painting

Student Achievement Outcome	Average Percentage of Score Points Earned
All	88
Successful	94
Not yet successful	65

A commonly selected partially correct response:

Match the aspect of Janvier's artwork to the part of Indigenous life it represents.

Drag and drop your **three** answer choices into the correct boxes.

Dome shape

Sweat lodge

A winter guide

Traditional spiritual practices

White star

The enlightenment of Canada

The *Morning Star* painting

Skill: Explicit

Annotation: Each of the four options uses wording directly from the reading selection. Students must refer to the body paragraphs to locate the key phrases (e.g., “dome shape”, “enlightenment of Canada”) and match aspects to representations.

Question 6 from News Report

Why was it important for Janvier to include aspects of Indigenous life and history in his painting?

Use specific details from the reading selection to support your answer.

Type your response in the box below (approximately 100 words).

Student Achievement Outcome	Average Percentage of Score Points Earned
All	83
Successful	87
Not yet successful	70

Skill: Making Connections

Three sample student responses, one from each scoring code, are provided here with annotations.

Sample Student Response with Annotation (Code 10)

Student Response:

It was important for Janvier to include aspects of Indigenous life and history in his painting because he is from the Cold Lake in Alberta, it was a traditional spiritual practice across North America, and Indigenous art was not even found on display. This story had a huge aspect on Indigenous life and it will remain that way for all eternity.

Annotation:

This response indicates minimal reading comprehension. The response provides a list of details (*Cold Lake in Alberta, it was a traditional spiritual practice across North America, and Indigenous art was not even found on display*) from the reading selection. The response only provides a list of reasons why it was important for Janvier to include aspects of Indigenous life and history in his painting; it does not support or explain those reasons.

Sample Student Response with Annotation (Code 20)

Student Response:

It was important for Janvier to include aspects of Indigenous life and history in his painting. This is because it says “Each colour, shape and design represents some aspect of indigenous life.” This is important because it will teach other Canadians about Indigenous people and culture.

Annotation:

The response indicates some reading comprehension. The response provides a reason why it was important for Janvier to include aspects of Indigenous life and history in his painting (“*teach other Canadians about Indigenous people and culture*”) supported by vague details (“*Each colour, shape and design represents some aspect of indigenous life*”) from the reading selection. An explanation is not provided.

Sample Student Response with Annotation (Code 30)

Student Response:

It was important for Janvier to include aspects of Indigenous life because as Janvier states it was “the first step in the enlightenment of Canada” meaning everyone could finally understand the culture. It also showed rituals and traditional spiritual practices of Indigenous, which many related too; like the light bursts from the white star and many saw it “as a guide at night”. Overall his painting proudly showed that the “First Nations expressions were truly works of art.

Annotation:

The response indicates considerable reading comprehension. The response provides a reason why it was important for Janvier to include aspects of Indigenous life and history in his painting (*everyone could finally understand the culture; showed rituals and traditional spiritual practices*), which is clearly explained (*which many related too; proudly showed ... truly works of art*) and supported by specific and relevant details (*first step in the enlightenment of Canada; light bursts from the white star ... guide at night*) from the reading selection.

Reading Selection 2: Information Paragraph

Goalball is an intense and exciting sport developed specifically for people who are blind or visually impaired. Teams of three try to score goals by rolling or throwing the goalball down a 9 m × 18 m (volleyball size) court toward the opposing team’s net, which spans the entire width of the court. To keep the game fair, all players are required to wear special eyeshades or blindfolds that ensure no one can see anything regardless of the degree of his or her visual impairment. Players, in this totally sightless condition, attempt to prevent the goalball from crossing their goal line by blocking it with their arms, legs and body. With a ball flying at speeds of 65 km/h or more, defense requires strength, agility and good protective gear. The goalball weighs 1.25 kg and is similar in size to a basketball. However, it contains noise bells to help the players track the location of the ball by sound. While play is in progress, absolute silence is required to allow players to concentrate and react instantly to the ball. Cheering is permitted only after a goal is scored and at the end of a game. Since players cannot see the markings on the court, the lines are made tactile by applying tape to the floor. Players can then feel with their hands or feet to orient themselves to their positions. Auditory and spatial awareness are essential. Goalball is a game that by its very design enables athletes who are blind or visually impaired to enjoy an aggressive sport requiring power, quick reflexes and teamwork.



© Ontario Blind Sport Association. © Photo: AP-Letteris Pitarakis/The Canadian Press.

Selected Data and Annotations from Information Paragraph

Question 1 from Information Paragraph

Why do all goalball players have their eyes covered?

- to provide protection
- to make the game more difficult
- to ensure players are treated equally
- to prevent players from becoming distracted

Student Achievement Outcome	Percentage Who Answered Correctly
All	96
Successful	99
Not yet successful	85
Most commonly chosen incorrect answer: <i>Option 1: to provide protection</i>	

Skill: Explicit

Annotation: Students must refer back to the reading selection and find the information (“to keep the game fair”; “regardless of the degree of his or her visual impairment”) that corresponds to the correct answer.

Question 6 from Information Paragraph

Drag and drop your **three** answer choices into the correct boxes.

Goalball has many rules.

Goalball is played in teams of three on a 9 m x 18 m court.

Main idea	Supporting detail	Supporting detail
Goalball is a competitive game developed for those with visual impairments.	Goalball is played with a unique ball that has bells placed inside it so that players can track it.	Goalball players require auditory and spatial awareness.

Student Achievement Outcome	Average Percentage of Score Points Earned
All	84
Successful	88
Not yet successful	68

A commonly selected partially correct response: main idea and one supporting detail correct; one supporting detail incorrect

Identify which one of the following statements is the **main idea** and which two provide **details to support** the main idea.

Drag and drop your **three** answer choices into the correct boxes.

Goalball has many rules.

Goalball players require auditory and spatial awareness.

Main idea	Supporting detail	Supporting detail
Goalball is a competitive game developed for those with visual impairments.	Goalball is played in teams of three on a 9 m x 18 m court.	Goalball is played with a unique ball that has bells placed inside it so that players can track it.

Skill: Implicit

Annotation: Students use global inferencing skills to consider the entirety of the reading passage to identify the correct main idea. The incorrect answer options do not support the central concept of the piece.

Reading Selection 3: Real Life Narrative

Canadian rower is first North American to cross North Atlantic alone

When Montreal rower Mylène Paquette reached the shores of France on November 12, 2013, she became the first North American to complete a solo journey across the treacherous seas of the North Atlantic. It took her 129 days to row across the ocean in her 7.3-metre boat, the *Hermel*, after leaving Halifax on July 6.



The main goals of her journey were to raise awareness about the importance of ocean ecosystems and to encourage people to protect the environment. Paquette chronicled her 5000-kilometre voyage online; she wrote about the numerous sea creatures she spotted, including dolphins, marine birds, squid, jellyfish and a pod of pilot whales that followed her craft for over a week.

However, Paquette had to battle psychological challenges such as loneliness and, at times, the urge to turn back. In fact, about two months into her voyage, as she approached the dangerous seas off the coast of Newfoundland, she felt ready to give up. She even asked the meteorological expert who was guiding her if he would chart a route to shore. “I was really scared,” said Paquette. He told her the currents were too strong; she had no choice but to continue.

But meanwhile Paquette had also found a friend and fellow ocean rower to encourage her. During the first part of her journey, she stayed in touch by satellite phone with English adventurer Sarah Outen. Outen was crossing the North Pacific as she circled the globe by rowboat, kayak and bicycle. She and Paquette spoke for about an hour each week, while each rowed across a different ocean.

In spite of all the time that Paquette had spent on the high seas, she continued to be frightened of falling in the water. Indeed, during her entire trip she entered the water only three times in the space of one hour when she had to scrape barnacles from the hull and repair the boat’s rudder. “Before diving into the ocean, I stuck my head in [the water], wearing goggles, in order to see if something was following me,” she said. “In my imagination, ravenous oceanic creatures capable of finishing me off had nothing better to do [than] to wait for the buffet to be served!”

Paquette had other terrifying moments. Her boat capsized 10 times. It tipped over during storms that generated towering waves—one she estimated to be 12 metres high. “It was quite impressive, like a big building in front of me.” But her vessel righted itself each time, and Paquette suffered only minor injuries as she bounced about inside the cabin, where she was safe from falling into the sea. However, one of those unexpected rolls proved quite costly, sending her satellite phone, antenna and a sea anchor overboard.

Fortunately, only a few days later the *Hermel* was spotted from aboard England's 345-metre-long *Queen Mary 2*. This massive passenger ship changed course to meet up with her, and its crew dropped her fresh supplies, including chocolate, fruit, tea, an anchor and a satellite phone. Paquette recalls how a crowd of passengers gathered on the deck to watch her pick up the gifts, cheering her on and urging her not to give up.

7

Upon her return to dry land in the French port city of Lorient, she was greeted by her loved ones and praised by the Quebec Premier Pauline Marois, who stated, “This young woman showed courage, determination and incredible endurance.”

8



Adapted from "Canadian rower says she's first North American to cross North Atlantic alone," by Andy Blatchford, *The Canadian Press*, November 12, 2013. Reprinted with permission. © Photo: Mylène Paquette (www.mylenepaquette.com)

Selected Data and Annotations from Real Life Narrative

Question 2 from Real Life Narrative

According to the reading selection, what was the purpose of Paquette's journey?

- to promote a cause
- to bring honour to Canada
- to help her overcome her fears
- to allow her to observe marine life

Student Achievement Outcome	Percentage Who Answered Correctly
All	88
Successful	94
Not yet successful	64
Most commonly chosen incorrect response: <i>Option 3: to help her overcome her fears</i>	

Skill: Explicit

Annotation: Students must refer to the passage to find the correct information (“The main goals of her journey were”). The fears referenced in the most commonly selected incorrect response appear later in the reading selection, but overcoming them was not the reason for her journey.

Question 7 from Real Life Narrative

Which **two statements** would Paquette most likely make in her overall reflection about her journey?

Choose **two** statements.

Statements	
"I'm grateful for the support and kindness of others."	☒
"I doubted my ability to complete the journey and wanted to give up."	☒
"The best part of my journey was swimming with the dolphins and other marine life."	☐
"The <i>Hermel</i> was well-built and remained in perfect working order throughout the trip."	☐

Student Achievement Outcome	Average Percentage of Score Points Earned
All	86
Successful	90
Not yet successful	72

A commonly selected partially correct response: one correct check, one incorrect check

Which **two statements** would Paquette most likely make in her overall reflection about her journey?

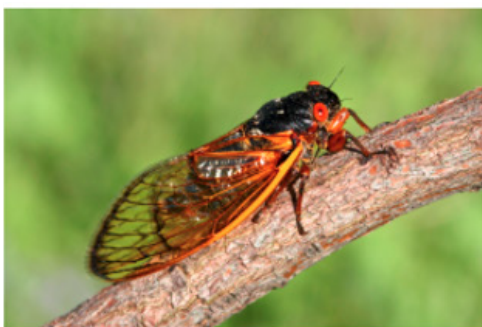
Choose **two** statements.

Statements	
"I'm grateful for the support and kindness of others."	☒
"I doubted my ability to complete the journey and wanted to give up."	☐
"The best part of my journey was swimming with the dolphins and other marine life."	☐
"The <i>Hermel</i> was well-built and remained in perfect working order throughout the trip."	☒

Skill: Making Connections

Annotation: Students must review the entire passage and make connections between Paquette’s experiences to identify the information in the passage that supports the correct statements (feeling ready to give up; asking for a route to shore; speaking with Sarah Outen; supplies being dropped off).

Reading Selection 4: Dialogue



"I'm going to be an entomologist," Jeff announced, as Louisa and Daniel approached the library table. 1

"And spend your life studying insects?" asked Louisa. 2

"You've been reading about the magicicadas—the species of cicadas that invade the northeastern United States every 13 or 17 years—right? I saw that on the Internet too."

Jeff nodded. "Yes! Billions of them emerge from the earth, where they've been living in wingless nymph form. They outnumber the human population from North Carolina to Connecticut by about 600 to one. Scientists estimated the 2013 brood at about 30 billion!" 3

"What do they do underground all that time?" asked Daniel. 4

"Suck on tree roots about a metre beneath the surface, mature and wait for the ground temperature to become precisely 18 degrees Celsius. Then, they surface for their big moment," responded Jeff. "They have bulging red eyes." 5

"Sounds like a horror movie," Daniel shuddered. 6

"The infestation is harmless to humans, but the sheer weight of their numbers can break saplings or young shrubs. Their main purpose is to mate and perpetuate the species," explained Jeff. 7

"No wonder there are so many of them!" exclaimed Daniel. 8

"They make a big racket too," Louisa added. "When the males sing to attract females, the volume can be as high as 94 decibels—loud enough to drown out the sound of a plane flying overhead. But after a few weeks in the trees, they die, and their offspring go underground, only to return 17 years later." 9

"Unlike ordinary cicada species, which come out annually," added Jeff. 10

"So, would biology, chemistry and geography help you prepare for your dream career?" asked Daniel. 11

"I'll research that next," said Jeff. 12

"And include math—to count all those bugs," chuckled Louisa. 13

Written for EQAO.

Selected Data and Annotations from Dialogue

Question 4 from Dialogue

Which word is closest in meaning to “perpetuate” in paragraph 7?

"Their main purpose is to mate and ▼ the species."

- sustain
- release
- change
- prevent

Student Achievement Outcome	Percentage Who Answered Correctly
All	81
Successful	88
Not yet successful	59
Most commonly chosen incorrect answer: <i>Option 2: release</i>	

Skill: Implicit

Annotation: Students must use the context cues in the area surrounding “perpetuate” to help determine the meaning of the word. The 2013 brood was “estimated at 30 billion,” and immediately following the selected sentence, Daniel remarks, “No wonder there are so many of them!”

Question 5 from Dialogue

Which of the following facts support Daniel's suggestion that magicicadas could be part of a horror movie?

Choose **Supports** or **Does not support**.

	Supports	Does not support
Magicicadas have red bulging eyes.	☒	☐
Male magicicadas sing to attract female magicicadas.	☐	☒
Humans are outnumbered by magicicadas 600 to one.	☒	☐

Student Achievement Outcome	Average Percentage of Score Points Earned
All	91
Successful	94
Not yet successful	82

A commonly selected partially correct response:

Which of the following facts support Daniel's suggestion that magicicadas could be part of a horror movie?

Choose **Supports** or **Does not support**.

	Supports	Does not support
Magicicadas have red bulging eyes.	☐	☒
Male magicicadas sing to attract female magicicadas.	☐	☒
Humans are outnumbered by magicicadas 600 to one.	☒	☐

Skill: Making Connections

Annotation: The reading selection does not directly call magicicadas scary, but it provides details such as bulging red eyes, huge numbers and how Daniel “shuddered” when learning about them. Students use their own understanding of what makes something creepy to connect to the statements that could support the idea of magicicadas appearing in a horror movie.

