



2011–2012

Junior High Literacy Assessment

Information Guide

Junior High Literacy Assessment Website

<http://plans.ednet.ns.ca/jhla>

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Introduction to Junior High Literacy Assessment: Information Guide

This guide provides information about the purpose, design, administration, and marking of the Junior High Literacy Assessment.

Junior High Literacy Assessment Overview

The sixth administration of the Junior High Literacy Assessment (JHLA) will take place during the 2011–2012 school year. The purpose of the JHLA is to monitor the progress of individual students in meeting a representative number of reading and viewing and writing outcomes of the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum. The assessment was developed by junior high teachers, representing all school boards in Nova Scotia, under the direction of the Evaluation Services division of the Department of Education.

The assessment is to be administered during the first hour-and-a-half on the mornings of February 27, 28, 29, and March 1, 2012. All grade 9 students in public schools in Nova Scotia will participate in the assessment, with the exception of students with an Individual Program Plan (IPP) in English language arts. Students will read a variety of materials, and will answer questions based on those readings. Materials will include information texts, short stories, poetry or song lyrics, and visual media texts. Students will also write an essay and a story.

The writing portions of the assessment will be scored in the spring by junior high teachers representing all school boards in Nova Scotia. Individual student reports will be sent to schools and then distributed to parents and guardians. It is expected that individual student results will be used to inform instruction and make decisions about forms of support or intervention that would be most effective in further supporting the student's development as a reader and writer in all subject areas.

For the purpose of the Junior High Literacy Assessment, “literacy” is defined as the ability to understand, use, reflect on, and create a variety of written texts, and other forms of text, in order to function and make one’s way independently in the world. Literacy is also defined as the ability to effectively interpret and engage in the world and the ability to develop one’s knowledge and potential.

Curriculum Links

The Junior High Literacy Assessment is based upon the *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum Guide: Grades 7–9*. Some of the General and Specific Curriculum Outcomes included in the *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum Guide: Grades 7–9* lend themselves quite readily to large-scale, external assessments, while others do not. As a result, the assessment addresses only those outcomes suitable for an external assessment: namely, those outcomes associated with the reading, viewing, and writing domains. Below are the General and Specific Curriculum Outcomes addressed by the assessment.

General Curriculum Outcomes—Reading and Viewing

Students will be expected to select, read, and view with understanding a range of literature, information, media, and visual texts.

Students will be expected to interpret, select, and combine information using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies.

Students will be expected to respond critically to a range of texts, applying their understanding of language, form, and genre.

Specific Curriculum Outcomes—Reading and Viewing

Students will be expected to use cueing systems and a variety of strategies to construct meaning in reading and viewing increasingly complex print and media texts.

Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding that information texts are constructed for particular purposes.

Students will be expected to demonstrate that print and media texts are constructed for particular purposes and particular audiences.

General Curriculum Outcomes—Writing and Other Ways of Representing

Students will be expected to use writing and other forms of representation to explore, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learnings; and to use their imaginations.

Students will be expected to create texts collaboratively and independently, using a variety of forms for a range of audiences and purposes.

Students will be expected to use a range of strategies to develop effective writing and other ways of representing and to enhance their clarity, precision, and effectiveness.

Specific Curriculum Outcomes—Writing and Other Ways of Representing

Students will be expected to use a range of strategies in writing and other ways of representing.

Students will be expected to make informed choices of language to create a range of interesting effects in imaginative writing and other ways of representing.

Students will be expected to demonstrate an awareness of the effect of context on writing and other forms of representing.

Students will be expected to consistently use the conventions of written language in final products.

Tables of Specifications

The Junior High Literacy Assessment was developed by grade 9 teachers under the direction of the Department of Education's Evaluation Services division. In order to ascertain the appropriateness of each text's and each question's level of difficulty and ability to discriminate amongst the literacy skills of learners, the assessment was field-tested in classrooms across Nova Scotia and then revised where needed.

Reading and Viewing

Genre	Weighting
Information Text	35%
Visual Media Text	30%
Literary Prose	20%
Poetry / Song	15%

In keeping with the direction of the *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum Guide: Grades 7–9*, the reading and viewing portions of the Junior High Literacy Assessment are comprised of a variety of texts. During the development of the instrument, a committee of experienced teachers determined the weighting of text types.

Cognitive Level	Weighting
Literal and Non-Literal Comprehension	50%
Analysis	50%

Literal Comprehension questions are designed to elicit responses that indicate that students have comprehended explicit information in the text.

Non-Literal Comprehension questions are designed to elicit responses that indicate that students have comprehended implicit information in the text such as inferences, connotative meanings, idioms, and figurative language (e.g., simile and metaphor).

Analysis questions are designed to elicit responses that demonstrate students' ability to think critically about texts by analyzing, synthesizing, or evaluating the explicit and/or implicit information in the text.

Writing and Other Ways of Representing

Genre	Weighting
Persuasive Letter or Short Persuasive Essay	50%
Literary Fiction	50%

In keeping with the direction of the *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum Guide: Grades 7–9*, the Junior High Literacy Assessment engages students in a variety of writing activities.

Transactional writing is a common and important activity in grade 7–9 classrooms. Students are expected to be able to write a variety of transactional pieces (e.g., reports, book reviews, letters (especially business), essays, directions, and instructions).

Literary fiction writing is also a common activity in grade 7–9 classrooms. Beginning in grade Primary, students are given opportunities to tell, to hear, to read, and to write stories, and so the writing of narratives is very familiar to them. Literary prose writing also lends itself to aspects of the curriculum to which transactional writing does not. For example, in writing literary prose, students have more opportunities to demonstrate their abilities to achieve interesting effects in imaginative writing; to make informed choices about style; and to use a broad range of conventions, such as punctuation in dialogue.

Administration of the Assessment

Security

The Junior High Literacy Assessment is a secure form; therefore,

- no part of the assessment, including student work, is to be photocopied
- non-grade 9 students in combined classes will not have the option to participate in the assessment and should be in a separate classroom while the assessment is being written, if possible
- students with an Individual Program Plan (IPP) in English language arts in place as of February 27, 2012 will not have the option to participate in the assessment
- copies of the assessment will not be provided for the teacher's use
- every copy of the assessment sent to the school must be returned to the Department of Education

Before the Assessment

- Teachers should check with the School Assessment Coordinator to ensure that there is a 2011–2012 Junior High Literacy Assessment booklet for every grade 9 student in their class.
- Teachers should ensure that their students will have pens or pencils and erasers, and access to dictionaries and thesauri during the assessment.
- If there is a student new to the school or a student for whom there is no personalized assessment booklet, the student should use one of the non-personalized booklets provided. Teachers should write the full legal name and date of birth of the new student, the provincial board #, provincial school #, and provincial student ID# on the lines provided on the assessment booklet. New students should not use the personalized booklet of a student who no longer attends the school.
- School staff should arrange for students who are to be excluded from the assessment to be relocated in a separate classroom. This includes students with an IPP in English language arts, non-grade 9 students from combined classrooms, and any other students who will not be participating in the assessment.

During the Assessment

- Teachers should arrange the seating of students so the students can have privacy when participating in the assessment.
- Teachers should remind students not to scribble or make unnecessary marks in the assessment booklets.
- Teachers should ensure that students complete only one section of the assessment per day. Students are not permitted to revisit a previous activity on a subsequent day or look ahead in their assessment booklets.
- If necessary, teachers may give students—individually, or as a group—up to 15 minutes more than the allotted time to complete each day's tasks. (This additional 15 minutes is not considered an adaptation, and need not be documented.)
- Teachers should collect all of the assessment booklets at the end of each day's tasks, and keep the booklets in a secure location until the next morning.
- At the conclusion of the assessment, teachers should collect all of the assessment booklets.

After the Assessment

- Teachers should fill in section 1 or 2 on the back cover of a student's booklet if the following is applicable:
 1. The student used an adaptation during the assessment.
 2. The student did not participate in any part of the assessment.
- If section 1 is filled in for a student who used an adaptation during the assessment, the teacher should ensure that a photocopy of the documentation supporting that adaptation is inserted inside the front cover of the student's booklet when the booklet is returned to the Department of Education.
- If section 2 is filled in for a student who has an IPP in English language arts—and who is therefore ineligible to participate in the assessment—the teacher should insert a photocopy of only the front page of the student's IPP inside the front cover of the student's booklet when the booklet is returned to the Department of Education.
- The teacher should give all of the personalized and non-personalized assessment booklets, including the unused ones, to the School Assessment Coordinator on or before Friday, March 9, 2012.

Student Eligibility and Exemptions

All students enrolled in grade 9 English are eligible to participate in the Junior High Literacy Assessment, with the exception of students with an Individual Program Plan in English language arts.

The following section provides information specific to the JHLA about eligibility, exemptions, and the use of adaptations. Please use this section to make informed decisions about eligibility, exemptions, and adaptations and record these decisions on the back cover of the JHLA assessment booklet.

The back cover of the student assessment booklet is designed to record information about students who used an adaptation during the assessment and students who did not participate in any part of the assessment. After the student has completed the assessment, teachers should fill in the applicable circles on the back of the student booklet. The back cover of all other student assessment booklets should remain blank.

Student Participated in the Assessment with Adaptations

Adaptations are strategies and/or resources to accommodate the learning needs of an individual student. Adaptations are planned, implemented, and evaluated to enable a student to achieve the prescribed curriculum outcomes. Adaptations, strategies, and/or resources are documented in the student's cumulative record file. Adaptations used to support the student during instruction should be provided during the assessment, only if such adaptations do not compromise or alter the validity of the assessment, as it is important that the results of the Junior High Literacy Assessment accurately reflect the independent reading and writing abilities of students. Further information about adaptations may be found in *Supporting Student Success: Resource Programming and Services*, Nova Scotia Department of Education.

Evaluation Services has published a document that outlines the use of adaptations on provincial assessments: *Adaptations: Nova Scotia Assessments and Examinations*. A copy of this document is available on the Program for Learning and Assessment for Nova Scotia (PLANS) website (<http://plans.ednet.ns.ca>).

Adaptations made available to the student during the Junior High Literacy Assessment must be in place as of February 27, 2012, and must be documented in the student's cumulative record file (Policy 2.2 of the *Special Education Policy Manual*, Nova Scotia Department of Education). A photocopy of that documentation must be inserted* inside the front cover of the student's assessment booklet when the booklet is returned to the Department of Education.

* Adaptation or IPP paperwork must be inserted inside the front cover of the student's assessment booklet. Do not use staples or paperclips. Please ensure the student name is written on submitted paperwork.

The following is a description of adaptations that may be used during provincial assessments.

A. Additional time

Additional time can be given to a student during an assessment if this is a documented adaptation in the student's cumulative record file. This additional time does not refer to the additional 15 minutes per day that, at the teacher's discretion, may be given to an individual student or the entire class. A student eligible to receive an additional time adaptation can be given up to twice the allotted time for the assessment with periodic, supervised breaks.

B. Alternate setting

A student may complete any part of the assessment in a setting different from that of the other students in the class if this is a documented adaptation in the student's cumulative record file. The proctor must follow the guidelines for administration of the assessment.

C. Alternate format

Alternate formats provided include large-print, Braille, and black-and-white versions of the assessments as well as other formats. This must be a documented adaptation in the student's cumulative record file. The type of alternate format must be specified in the line provided on the assessment booklet.

D. Verbatim scribing

A scribe may be made available to a student during an assessment if the student has a visual impairment or physical injury, or learning disability and if this is a documented adaptation in the student's cumulative record file. A student must use this adaptation on a regular basis in the classroom in order to be eligible for its use in a provincial assessment. See Appendix F for detailed instructions.

If a student for whom "verbatim scribing" is a documented adaptation had a scribe made available to him or her during the writing portions of the assessment, then the element of writing "matters of correctness" in that student's writing will not be evaluated; therefore, the student's report will indicate "insufficient evidence" under the "matters of correctness" element of writing. The student's writing must meet the criteria for "ideas," "organization," and "word choice" in either the letter/essay or story writing tasks in order to meet the expectations for writing overall.

If a student does not have a visual or physical impairment, injury, or learning disability, then it is expected that the student will complete the writing portions of the assessment without a scribe. If, however, a student without a visual or physical impairment, injury, or learning disability has poor or illegible handwriting, then, it is expected that the student will write the assessment independently without a scribe; however, the classroom teacher may provide, as an addition to the student's independent handwritten work, a literal transcript of the student's work produced by the teacher. (The student's independent writing will be evaluated for the element of writing "matters of correctness," so it is important that the teacher transcribe exactly what was written by the student.) In this case, the teacher-produced transcript of the student's handwritten work should be inserted inside the assessment booklet and "verbatim scribing" would not be filled in.

E. Verbatim reading

This adaptation is not allowed on the reading portions of language arts assessments, including the Junior High Literacy Assessment. This would compromise the validity of these reading assessments since the results must reflect the independent abilities of students.

If reading to a student is a documented adaptation in the student's cumulative record file and if this adaptation is used by the student on a regular basis in the classroom, the writing portion of the JHLA can be read to the student. See Appendix G for detailed instructions.

F. Audio CD

Audio CDs of language arts assessments are not available. This would compromise the validity of the reading portions of these assessments since the results must reflect what the students know and can do independently in relation to learning outcomes.

G. 1) Assistive technology: Text-to-Speech

This adaptation is not allowed on the reading portions of language arts assessments. This would compromise the validity of these reading assessments since the results must reflect what students know and can do independently in relation to learning outcomes.

Kurzweil—or any other text-to-speech technology—may be used to read only the writing instructions and prompts to the student, as the writing portions of the assessment are not an assessment of reading, but of writing. (If Kurzweil is mistakenly used during the reading portions of the assessment, or if a teacher mistakenly reads aloud the reading portions of the assessment to the student, the student's assessment report will indicate “insufficient evidence” for reading.)

2) Assistive Technology: Word Processors and Writing Software

If assistive technology software or word processing software is a documented adaptation and if it is used regularly in the classroom, it can be provided to a student for only the writing portions of the language arts assessments as long as all grammar/spell check features and all word/sentence prompters or cueing systems are disabled. The type of assistive technology (and/or software) used must be specified in the line provided on the student's assessment booklet. Because the assessment is a secure form, student writing must be deleted from the computer once a hard copy has been printed for submission with the assessment booklet.

If a student for whom “assistive technology” is a documented adaptation used a computer or word-processing program during the writing portions of the assessment, then the element of “matters of correctness” in that student's writing will not be evaluated; therefore, the student's report will indicate “insufficient evidence” under the “matters of correctness” element of writing. The student's writing must meet the criteria for “ideas,” “organization,” and “word choice” in either the letter/essay or story writing tasks in order to meet the expectations for writing overall.

H. English as a Second Language Students

Students whose first language is not English are expected to participate in the Junior High Literacy Assessment. If a student whose first language is not English has an Individual Program Plan in English language arts, then this student is not eligible to participate in the assessment. Principals, in consultation with parents or guardians, may exempt a student from provincial assessments if the student has been learning English for one year or less. Adaptations may be provided to students whose first language is not English as long as these are documented adaptations. Students whose first language is not English may use bilingual dictionaries or electronic translators that translate only individual words while writing provincial assessments.

I. Other

Adaptations documented in the student's cumulative record file other than those listed above may be provided to students as long as the adaptations do not compromise the validity of the assessment and as long as these adaptations are used by the student on a regular basis in the classroom. The adaptation should be specified on the lines provided on the back cover of the assessment booklet, and a copy of the documentation should be provided in the same manner as with the other listed adaptations.

If you have further questions regarding the use of adaptations in the Junior High Literacy Assessment, please contact your Board Assessment Coordinator. The Department of Education may contact the school for further clarification regarding the use of certain adaptations.

Student Did Not Participate in Any Part of the Assessment

The following students are ineligible to write or are exempted from provincial assessments and do not participate in the Junior High Literacy Assessment.

Student has an (IPP) in English language arts

A student with an Individual Program Plan in English language arts in place as of February 27, 2012 is ineligible to participate in the assessment. A photocopy of only the front page of the student's IPP must be inserted inside the front cover of the student's assessment booklet (please do not use staples or paper clips).

Bereavement

A student who, due to bereavement, was unable to participate in the assessment February 27–March 1, 2012 or during the make-up period of March 2–9, 2012 may be exempted.

Long-term illness

A student who, due to a long-term illness, was not able to participate in the assessment during February 27–March 1, 2012 or during the make-up period of March 2–9, 2012 may be exempted. The exemption "long-term illness" should not be filled in for a student who was absent for part of the assessment due to illness. That student should complete the assessment when he or she returns.

Student is not enrolled in grade 9 at this school

A student who did not participate in any part of the assessment because he or she is no longer enrolled at the school may be exempted.

Other (please specify)

Fill in this circle on the back cover of the student assessment booklet in cases where a student was unable to participate in the assessment during February 27–March 1, 2012 or during the make-up period of March 2–9, 2012 due to some other circumstance not listed above. The nature of the circumstance must be specified on the lines provided.

Scoring and Reporting

The assessment will be scored in the spring by high school teachers representing all school boards in Nova Scotia, and individual student reports will be sent to schools, and then distributed to parents and guardians in June.

Requests for Re-scoring

- A request for the re-scoring of a provincial assessment booklet is to be made to the school principal by a parent or guardian of the student within the time frame given in the accompanying time line on the next page.
- The principal will explain to the assessment was scored (so that all scorings are blind). The principal will further convey the person making the request, in person or by telephone conversation, that the student booklet will not be made available for viewing. The principal will explain the reasoning for this: the assessment is a secured assessment instrument, and on the student booklet itself there is no evidence of how to the person(s) requesting the re-scoring information pertaining to:
 - the tracking of the assessment from the point of student writing to the receipt of the assessment report by the school;
 - the procedures used in the scoring of the assessment booklet to ensure reliable, accurate and fair scoring of student work;
 - the outcome of the re-scoring request and that the determination of the outcome of the re-scoring will be final and the results will replace those of the original scoring of the assessment booklet, even if the outcome is lower than the original score.
- The principal will then have the person requesting the re-scoring confirm his or her request for and his or her acceptance of the outcome of the re-scoring by signing in the required space on the Request for Re-scoring form. The principal will complete the Request for Re-scoring form with all requisite information.
- The principal will forward the completed Request for Re-scoring forms to the Board Assessment Coordinator (BAC) according to the time frame given in the accompanying timeline for this assessment (see next page).
- The Board Assessment Coordinator will forward all requests from his or her board for this assessment to the appropriate coordinator in Evaluation Services according to the time frame given in the accompanying table for this assessment.
- An expert panel of three teachers will re-score the assessment. All assessment booklets will be blind double-scored, and where there is variance between the two re-scores, a third blind scoring will be undertaken. The agreement of any two re-scores will be the final determination. In the event none of the three scores agree, the panel of three will discuss and make a determination, which will then be final. The score determined by this expert panel will be final even if the result is lower than the original score.
- Evaluation Services will return to the school principal (by email attachment, copied to the BAC) the results of the re-scoring of the assessment according to the time frame outlined on the next page.
- The school principal will convey to the person who made the request the results of the re-scoring of the assessment booklet according to the time frame for this assessment.
- The school principal will ensure that the student's cumulative record file is updated with the new assessment report (in the case of a provincial assessment). This will be accomplished according to the time frame given in the accompanying table for this assessment.
- Evaluation Services will update the master data file with any results that differ from the original results. However, data files that have previously been distributed to boards and data files uploaded to dataPLANS will not be altered.

Re-scoring Requests Schedule of Dates

Parent or guardian contacts Principal to request a re-score

- no later than 4 weeks from the date the individual student results are released

Principal forwards parent or guardian re-score request to Board Assessment Coordinator

- no later than 6 weeks from the date the individual student results are released

Board Assessment Coordinator forwards parent or guardian request to Department of Education

- no later than 7 weeks from the date the individual student results are released

Department of Education returns the re-score results to the Principal

- no later than 9 weeks from the date the individual student results are released

Principal conveys the re-score results to the parent or guardian

- no later than 10 weeks from the date the individual student results are released

Principal will update the student's cumulative record file

- no later than 10 weeks from the date the individual student results are released

Note: The specific dates for re-scoring requests will be provided to principals when the individual student assessment results are posted to the Student Records website.

Appendix A: Junior High Literacy Assessment Overview

Junior High Literacy Assessment (JHLA) Information Sheet



Purpose

The purpose of the Junior High Literacy Assessment is to monitor the progress of individual students in meeting a representative number of reading and viewing and writing outcomes of the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum. It is expected that the results of the assessment, together with the results of classroom-based and school-based assessments, are used to inform instruction and decisions about forms of support or intervention that would be most effective in further supporting the student's development as a reader and writer in all subject areas. The results of the assessment are not used to determine whether a student is promoted or retained, and are not used to determine whether a student graduates from high school.

Participants

All grade 9 students in public schools in Nova Scotia will participate in the assessment, with the exception of students with an Individual Program Plan (IPP) in English language arts.

Development

The Junior High Literacy Assessment Advisory Group, comprised of junior high teachers from throughout the province, contributes to the development of the assessment, following the procedures outlined in the Nova Scotia Assessment Development Model. This process is facilitated by the Evaluation Services Division of the Department of Education.

Description

The assessment is administered during one-and-a-half hour sessions over four days in February–March. Students read a variety of materials, and answer questions based on those readings. Materials include information texts, short stories, poetry or song lyrics, and visual media texts. Students also write a persuasive letter or essay, and a story.

Scoring/Reporting

The assessment is scored in the spring by junior high teachers representing all school boards in Nova Scotia, and individual student reports will be sent to schools, and then distributed to parents and guardians at the end of the school year.

Additional Information

For additional information, you may visit the Junior High Literacy Assessment website (<http://plans.ednet.ns.ca/jhla>) or the Department of Education's Evaluation Services website (<http://plans.ednet.ns.ca>).



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Appendix B: Junior High Literacy Assessment: Key Messages

- The purpose of the Junior High Literacy Assessment is to monitor the progress of individual students in meeting a representative number of reading and viewing and writing outcomes of the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum.
- While it is not possible to address every English language arts outcome on the Junior High Literacy Assessment, the assessment is based on a range of outcomes in the domains of reading and viewing and writing.
- The Junior High Literacy Assessment involves reading for information, reading literary prose, and viewing visual media text critically, as well as composing a piece of transactional writing, such as a letter or essay, and a piece of literary prose, such as a narrative.
- For the purpose of the Junior High Literacy Assessment, "literacy" is defined as the ability to understand, use, reflect on, and create a variety of written texts, and other forms of text, in order to function and make one's way independently in the world. Literacy is also defined as the ability to effectively interpret and engage in the world, and the ability to develop one's knowledge and potential.
- It should be remembered that while literacy skills are developed in the school, they are also developed in the home, community, and other areas of life, and they are influenced by many factors. The results of the Junior High Literacy Assessment, should not be viewed solely as a reflection of the students' teachers or schools, not should the results be used to rank or compare schools.
- The literacy skills of students continue to develop as they experience more complex reading material and more specialized writing assignments through their senior high courses.
- A student's performance on the Junior High Literacy Assessment should be viewed in conjunction with the results of school-based and classroom-based assessments as well as school and home observations of the student's strengths and needs.
- It is expected that individual student results will be used to inform instruction and decisions about forms of support that would be most effective in further supporting the student's development as a reader and writer in all subject areas.
- For additional information, you may visit the Junior High Literacy Assessment website (<http://plans.ednet.ns.ca/jhla>) or the Department of Education's Evaluation Services website (<http://plans.ednet.ns.ca>).

Appendix C: School Assessment Coordinator's Checklist

2011–2012 Junior High Literacy Assessment School Assessment Coordinator's Checklist

This year's JHLA is to be administered from Monday, February 27 to Thursday, March 1, 2012.

Before the Assessment

- ☐ Ensure that your school has filled out the 2011–2012 Junior High Literacy Assessment online School Registration Form at <http://plans.ednet.ns.ca/content/school-registration> by Friday, December 2, 2011. The form indicates the school information and number of alternate formats of the assessment required (if any).
- ☐ By Wednesday, February 15, you will have received a package containing the following materials: Information for Parents and Guardians (pamphlet), Information Guide, School Assessment Coordinator's Checklist, Teacher's Checklist, student assessment booklets, Department of Education Student List, Quality Control Declaration, and Canada Post Priority Courier Bill of Lading Slip(s). Immediately check the package to ensure the packing slip accurately reflects what is in the package.
- ☐ If you have not received your materials by Thursday, February 16, you might find a card left at your school by Canada Post. Using the information on that card, please check to see if your package has been left at the post office. If not, or if additional materials are required, please contact Evaluation Services at 424-7746 or at whittyd@gov.ns.ca.
- ☐ Keep the packing slip that will be in the assessment package so that you can check it when returning the booklets to the Department of Education. You must ensure that you return every student booklet that you receive, including any alternate formats of the assessment or additional copies that were sent separately. It is important that every copy of the assessment be returned, as the assessment is a secure instrument. It is also important that you do not exchange student materials with other schools.
- ☐ The pamphlets for parents and guardians should be given immediately to the teachers to distribute to students to take home prior to the assessment. An Information Guide and a Teacher's Checklist should be given immediately to each grade 9 English language arts teacher.
- ☐ Keep the assessment booklets secure. Do not give the booklets to the grade 9 English language arts teachers until the morning of February 27.
- ☐ Note that you have received additional, non-personalized, assessment booklets to be used for any student for whom there is no personalized booklet. It is important to use the non-personalized booklets for such students, rather than use a personalized booklet with the name of a student who is not participating in the assessment or does not attend your school. All additional booklets must also be returned to the department, even if they are not used.
- ☐ Compare the Department of Education's 2011–2012 List of Grade 9 Students enclosed in the assessment materials package against the class lists from your school. (Note that students who were retained in grade 9 participate in the assessment a second time.) Update our student list, crossing out the names of any students who are not enrolled in grade 9 in your school, and adding the names of new students. For each new student, please give the student's full legal name, his or her provincial identification number, sex, and date of birth. That updated list is to be returned with the other materials to the Department of Education after the assessment, so that all students are accounted for.
- ☐ Sort the personalized assessment booklets by class prior to the morning of the assessment.
- ☐ Meet with the grade 9 English language arts teachers the morning of Monday, February 27, and give each of them his or her set of student assessment booklets. Do not give the assessment booklets to the grade 9 teachers prior to the morning of February 27.

After the Assessment

- ☐ Ensure that every student's assessment booklet has been returned to you. Ensure that the teachers have filled out the back covers of the student booklets for the following students:
 - Section 1: Students who used adaptations during the assessment
 - Section 2: Students who did not participate in any part of the assessment
- ☐ Ensure that a photocopy of the documentation from the cumulative record file is inserted inside the booklets of all students who used adaptations during the assessment.
- ☐ Students with an IPP in English language arts are ineligible to participate in the assessment. Ensure that a photocopy of only the front page of the IPP is inserted inside the student's booklet.
- ☐ Ensure that the 2011–2012 List of Grade 9 Students is accurate.
- ☐ Retain all materials at the school until Friday, March 9, in order to provide new students or students who were absent on one or more of the assessment dates with an opportunity to complete the unfinished parts of the assessment.
- ☐ On or before Friday, March 9, double-check the contents of your return package by consulting the Packing Slip that you received with the assessment materials to ensure that you are returning the same number of assessment booklets as received. Be sure to include in your return package any alternate forms of the assessment that you may have received separately.
- ☐ Fill out the Quality Control Declaration.
- ☐ Using the pre-paid Canada Post Priority Courier return Bill of Lading, return to the Department of Education the assessment materials listed below. On the return slip, fill in the weight of the package (an estimation if there is no scale available), return address, and signature. Please drop off your assessment materials at your local Canada Post office or phone the Canada Post toll-free number 1-888-550-6333 to arrange for your package of assessment materials to be picked up by Canada Post. Retain your copy of the return slip for one month in case the package is not delivered and it is necessary to trace the package.

Items to Keep at your School:

- 2011–2012 Junior High Literacy Assessment: Information Guides
- 2011–2012 Junior High Literacy Assessment: School Assessment Coordinator Checklist
- 2011–2012 Junior High Literacy Assessment: Teacher's Checklists

Items to Return to the Department of Education on Friday, March 9:

- All completed student booklets
- All alternate formats of the assessment
- All unused personalized student booklets, with the appropriate information on the back cover completed by a teacher (e.g., booklets assigned to students with an IPP in English language arts who did not participate in the assessment) or by yourself (e.g., to account for students whose names appear in the Department of Education list of students, but who are no longer attending your school.)
- All unused, non-personalized student booklets
- Updated Department of Education 2011–2012 List of Grade 9 Students
- Quality Control Declaration

Thank you for taking the time to properly oversee the administration of the assessment, and for returning all requested materials to the Department of Education. If you have any questions or concerns about any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact Evaluation Services at 424-7746 or at whittyd@gov.ns.ca.

For more information, visit the Junior High Literacy Assessment website (<http://plans.ednet.ns.ca/jhla>).

Appendix D: Teacher's Checklist

2011–2012 Junior High Literacy Assessment Teacher's Checklist

Please take note of the following:

The 2011–2012 Junior High Literacy Assessment should be administered during the first hour-and-a-half on the mornings of Monday, February 27 to Thursday, March 1, 2012.

Students with an IPP in English language arts in place as of February 27, 2012 are not eligible to participate in the assessment. The assessment booklets for those students must be returned to the Department of Education with the appropriate documentation – i.e., a photocopy of only the front page of the IPP – inserted inside the front cover of the student's assessment booklet.

Any student receiving adaptations during the assessment must have a photocopy of the adaptation page from the student's cumulative record file inserted inside the student's booklet when the booklet is returned to the Department of Education. Adaptations must be in place as of February 27, 2012.

Students who were retained in grade 9 are expected to participate in the assessment a second time.

The assessment is a secure form. Therefore:

- no part of the assessment, including student work, is to be photocopied
- students with an IPP in English language arts are not eligible to participate in the assessment
- non-grade 9 students in combined classes will not have the option to participate in the assessment, and should be in a separate classroom while the assessment takes place, if possible
- copies of the assessment will not be provided for the teacher's use
- every copy of the assessment sent to the school must be returned to the Department of Education

For more information, visit the Junior High Literacy Assessment website (<http://plans.ednet.ns.ca/jhla>).

Before the Assessment

- ❑ Check with the School Assessment Coordinator to ensure that there is a 2011–2012 Junior High Literacy Assessment booklet for every grade 9 student in your class.
- ❑ Ensure that your students will have pens or pencils and erasers. (Students may fill out the assessment booklet with either pencils or pens.) Ensure that your students will have access to dictionaries and thesauri during the writing of the assessment. (Students are not permitted to use scrap paper during the assessment.)
- ❑ If you have a student new to your school for whom there is no personalized assessment booklet, use one of the non-personalized booklets that have been provided. In this case, please write the full legal name and date of birth of the student, the provincial board #, provincial school #, and provincial student ID# on the lines provided on the cover of the non-personalized booklet. Do not use the personalized booklet of a student who no longer attends the school.
- ❑ Arrange for students excluded from the assessment to be relocated in a separate classroom. This includes students with an IPP in English language arts, non-grade 9 students from combined classrooms, and students who are exempted from participating in the assessment.

During the Assessment

- ❑ Arrange the seating of students so the students can have privacy when participating in the assessment.
- ❑ Remind students not to scribble or make unnecessary marks in the assessment booklets.
- ❑ Ensure that students complete only one section of the assessment per day. Students are not permitted to revisit a previous section on a subsequent day or look ahead in their assessment booklets.
- ❑ If necessary, students—individually, or as a group—may be given up to 15 minutes more than the allotted time to complete each day’s tasks. (This additional 15 minutes is not considered an adaptation, and need not be documented.)
- ❑ Collect all of the assessment booklets when students have completed a day’s tasks, and keep the booklets in a secure location until the next morning.

After the Assessment

- ❑ Fill in Section 1 or 2 on the back cover of a student’s booklet if the following is applicable:
 1. Student used adaptations during the assessment.
 2. Student did not participate in any part of the assessment.Refer to the 2011–2012 Junior High Literacy Assessment: Information Guide for more information.
- ❑ If you filled in Section 1 for a student who used an adaptation during the assessment, please ensure that a photocopy of the documentation supporting that adaptation is inserted inside the front cover of the student’s booklet when the booklet is returned to the Department of Education.
- ❑ If you filled in Section 2 for a student who has an IPP in English language arts—and is therefore ineligible to participate in the assessment—please insert a photocopy of only the front page of the student’s IPP inside the front cover of the student’s booklet when the booklet is returned to the Department of Education.
- ❑ Give all of the personalized and non-personalized assessment booklets, including the unused ones, to the School Assessment Coordinator on or before Friday, March 9.

Thank you for taking the time to properly oversee the administration of the assessment, and for returning all requested materials to the Department of Education. If you have any questions or concerns about any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact Evaluation Services at 424-7746 or at whittyd@gov.ns.ca.

For more information, visit the Junior High Literacy Assessment website (<http://plans.ednet.ns.ca/jhla>).

Appendix E: Junior High Literacy Assessment Booklet Back Cover

FOR TEACHER USE ONLY

After the assessment, please complete this page for the following students:

1. Students who participated in the assessment with adaptations
2. Students who did not participate in any part of the assessment

Please fill in all applicable circles completely (i.e., ●).

1. Student participated in the assessment with adaptations (see Information Guide)

Documented adaptations (that were used during the assessment)

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Additional time | ☐ Assistive technology (please specify)
_____ |
| ☐ Verbatim scribing | _____ |
| ☐ Alternate setting | _____ |
| ☐ Alternate format (please specify)

_____ | ☐ Other (please specify)

_____ |

2. Student did not participate in any part of the assessment (see Information Guide)

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Student has an IPP in English Language Arts | ☐ Student is not enrolled in grade 9 at this school |
| ☐ Bereavement | ☐ Other (please specify)

_____ |
| ☐ Long-term illness | _____ |

FOR DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION USE ONLY

☐ E ☐ C ☐ O ☐ A ☐ X

All completed and blank booklets are the property of the
Nova Scotia Department of Education

2012



Appendix F: Scribe Information Sheet

This adaptation allows for writing assistance for a student:

- who normally requires a scribe in the classroom,
- who normally has all forms of assessment scribed, or
- who has a temporary condition (such as a broken arm) and is unable to write.

A student requiring a scribe must be assessed in a separate quiet area so that other students writing the assessment are not disturbed.

In English language assessments, *matters of correctness* will not be scored for students whose writing has been scribed.

The scribe must:

- write by hand or type exactly what the student dictates. (Handwritten transcriptions must be made directly in the booklet. Typed transcriptions must be inserted inside the front cover of the appropriate booklet);
- show the student the transcription after the student has finished dictating his or her work;
- make any other modifications the student requests (the scribe may erase, cross out or insert the student's corrections);
- fill in the circles on the assessment booklet as directed by the student;
- read the dictation back to the student if requested.

The scribe must not:

- edit or alter the student's dictation in any way;
- alert the student to mistakes;
- prompt the student in any way;
- initiate the use of test-taking strategies;
- show any reaction to the student's responses;
- correct the student's responses or computations;
- engage in incidental conversation with the student or others during the administration of the assessment.

Appendix G: Reader Information Sheet

This adaptation is not allowed on the reading portions of language arts assessments. This would compromise the validity of these reading assessments since the results of these assessments must reflect the independent abilities of students.

If reading to a student is a documented adaptation in the student's cumulative record file and if this adaptation is used by the student on a regular basis in the classroom, only the writing portion of the Junior High Literacy Assessment can be read to the student. (The verbatim reading adaptation is allowed only in mathematics assessments, in the writing portions of language arts assessments, and in Nova Scotia Examinations as long as the relevant documentation is provided.)

- It is important to note that the reader adaptation is not allowed on the reading portions of language arts assessments (ELLA, ELA, ARL, JHLA, ARLS).
- The reader must read the examination or assessment verbatim (i.e., exactly as it appears in the examination or assessment student booklet). The reader may not add emphasis, inflection, or read in such a way as to prompt or guide the student. The reader may not ask leading questions, provide suggestions, provide interpretations, or word definition of any kind.
- The reader must read in such a way that the student understands the beginning and the end of each sentence and paragraph. Without leading the students, the reader must be aware of and obey all punctuation and read in such a way that the student understands the use and purpose of punctuation.
- The reader may repeat readings as often as necessary and must read consistently in the same way each time.
- A reader should be an educator from the school or the Board.
- An assessment or examination that is administered involving a reader shall take place in a separate location so that other students who are writing are not disturbed.
- The teacher will record on the back cover of the assessment or on the front cover of the examination that a reader assisted the student.
- Students must complete the assessment or examination in the allotted time, unless additional time is a documented adaptation used regularly in classroom assessment by a student.

Appendix H: Frequently Asked Questions

1. What happens if a school, county, or board has a storm day?

Should a storm day on February 27, 28, 29, or March 1 interrupt the administration of the Junior High Literacy Assessment in a school, county, or board, then the administration of the assessment will resume in sequence, one section of the assessment per day, when the school, county, or board reopens. (It is important that the assessment be administered in sequence, only one section per day, even if that means that some schools may be out-of-sync with others.) March 2-9 is designated as a make-up period, in which to ensure that all students have had an opportunity to participate in the assessment. Schools should return all assessment booklets to the Department of Education by Friday, March 9.

2. When must the assessment booklets be returned to the Department of Education?

In the event that snow days interrupt the administration of the Junior High Literacy Assessment, schools may utilize the make-up period ending on Friday, March 9 to finish the assessment; therefore, Friday, March 9 remains as the return date for assessment booklets. However, in those cases where an individual student may have missed a day or two of the assessment for reasons unrelated to the weather, and needs time to finish the assessment, the student's school may keep the entire set of assessment booklets at the school until the following Monday or Tuesday so that the student may finish the assessment. If a school will be keeping the assessment booklets at the school until the following Monday or Tuesday, the school should notify the Department of Education by phone at 424-7746 or by email at JHLA@gov.ns.ca. Should a student not be able to finish the assessment within the time allotted, including the extension, his or her assessment report will read "insufficient evidence" for either reading or writing or both.

3. How do I return the assessment?

On or before Friday, March 9th, double-check the contents of your return package by consulting the Packing Slip that you received with the assessment materials to ensure that you are returning the same number of assessment booklets as received. Be sure to include in your return package any alternate forms of the assessment that you may have received separately. Fill out the Quality Control Declaration. Using the pre-paid Canada Post Priority Courier return Bill of Lading, return to the Department of Education the assessment materials listed on the School Assessment Coordinator's Checklist. On the return slip, fill in the weight of the package (an estimation, if there is no scale available), return address, and signature. Please drop off your assessment materials at your local Canada Post office or phone the Canada Post toll-free number 1-888-550-6333 to arrange for your package of assessment materials to be picked up by Canada Post. Retain your copy of the return slip for one month in case the package is not delivered and it is necessary to trace the package.

4. What should I do with extra copies of the 2011-2012 Junior High Literacy Assessment booklets?

As the 2011–2012 Junior High Literacy Assessment is a secure form, every copy that is sent to the school must be returned to the Department of Education.

5. What does secure assessment mean?

The Junior High Literacy Assessment is a secure form. Therefore, non-grade nine students in combined classes will not have the option to write the assessment; students with an Individual Program Plan (IPP) in English language arts will not have the option to write the

assessment; copies will not be provided for the teacher's use; every copy sent to the school must be returned to the Department of Education; and no part of the assessment, including student work, is to be photocopied.

6. Why must the assessment remain secure?

Making the assessment secure allows the Department of Education to equate forms year-over-year, and allows the department to perform longitudinal studies of student performance. By embedding assessment items from one year's assessment in the following year's assessment, the department is able to make a genuine comparison of student performance on those common items, independent of the overall difficulty of the assessments. Over the years, the department intends to build a "bank" of such assessment items, allowing for the equating of assessments year-over-year.

7. Do students with an Individual Program Plan (IPP) in English language arts participate in the assessment?

No. Students with an Individual Program Plan (IPP) in English language arts in place as of February 27, 2012 will not participate in the assessment as they have already been identified as needing support. The entire booklet for those students must be returned to the Department of Education with documentation inserted (i.e., a photocopy of only the front page of the IPP), and with the back cover of the student's assessment booklet completed appropriately. Students for whom an IPP in English language arts is in progress are expected to participate in the assessment.

8. Do French immersion students participate in the assessment? Won't they be at a disadvantage?

Yes. French immersion students will participate in the assessment. No. They will not be at a disadvantage, as research has shown that French immersion students have just as much opportunity to succeed in an English-language assessment as do their counterparts in the English program.

9. Do students for whom English is an additional language participate in the assessment?

Yes. Students for whom English is an additional language are expected to participate in the assessment.

10. Do international, foreign, or exchange students participate in the assessment?

Yes. International, foreign, and exchange students are expected to participate in the assessment.

11. Do students who were retained in grade 9 participate in the assessment a second time?

Yes. Students who were retained in grade 9 participate in the Junior High Literacy Assessment a second time. The main reason for this is that, if a student did not meet the expectations for reading and/or writing the first time, taking the assessment a second time provides "fresh" results for the student and for his or her grade 10 teachers. Similarly, even if a student met the expectations for both reading and writing the first time, the fresh results can be compared to the old results, and that comparison may prove instructive. (Because the results are converted to a scaled score, such comparisons can be made year-over-year.)

12. Do students who are home-schooled participate in the assessment?

No. Students who have been formally withdrawn from the Public School Program, and are home-schooled are not eligible to participate in the assessment. (Note: Many students

considered to be “home-schooled” are, in fact, participating in the Public School Program—even if only for a subject or two. Such students may be registered at their local school, and, as such, should be offered the opportunity to participate in the assessment.)

13. Do students who participate in the Public School Program in an alternate location participate in the assessment?

Yes. Students who are participating in the Public School Program in an alternate location are eligible to participate in the assessment.

14. Do students who are suspended participate in the assessment?

Students who are suspended are expected to participate in the assessment, if at all possible. Whether they are serving an in-school suspension or a traditional out-of-school suspension, whether the suspension is for just one day, five days, or is year-long, the student should be offered the opportunity to participate in the assessment. Moreover, it is best if arrangements can be made for a student who is suspended to participate in the assessment at the same time as the other students.

However, in practical terms, it might be difficult to make the appropriate arrangements for a student who is suspended to participate in the assessment. For example, in the case of an in-school suspension, because it is not expected, nor appropriate, for the student to write the assessment in the same room as the other students, arrangements would have to be made for that student to write the assessment in an alternate location in the school building, supervised by a teacher. If this is not possible, then the student would write the assessment when his or her in-school suspension is over, and he or she rejoins the class.

In the case of an out-of-school suspension, whether for one day, five, or the rest of the school year, at the discretion of the principal, the student may be invited to the school to write the assessment at the same time as the rest of the students. Where appropriate, the principal may require a parent or guardian to accompany the student to and from the school. In some cases, the principal may decide that it would not be appropriate for the student to be present at the school during the suspension; in those cases, the student would begin to write the assessment when he or she returns from the suspension. (However, students have only until March 9 to participate in the assessment, as March 9 is the date on which the assessment booklets are to be returned to the Department of Education.) If the principal decides that is not appropriate for a student who is suspended to participate in the assessment, or the appropriate arrangements cannot be made, or the student would not be able to complete the assessment by March 9, then the school may make a site-based decision to exempt the student from the assessment. In such cases, the school would complete Section 2 on the back of the student’s assessment booklet, indicating on the lines provided that the student did not participate in the assessment due to a suspension.

15. Are students allowed to use dictionaries and thesauri when they participate in the assessment?

Yes. Students are allowed to use a dictionary or thesaurus at any time during the assessment.

16. What are the acceptable adaptations that I may allow my students to use?

The acceptable adaptations are listed on the back cover of the 2011–2012 Junior High Literacy Assessment booklet. Note that the only acceptable adaptations are those that have been documented in the student’s cumulative record file as being the usual adaptations in place for that student during his or her regular schoolwork. However, adaptations that would

compromise the validity of the assessment are not permitted. For example, using assistive technology or human verbatim reading to read aloud the reading components of the assessment would not be acceptable since the results would not reflect the student's independent reading ability. Please refer to the *Adaptations: Nova Scotia Assessments and Exams* document for more detailed information (<https://plans.ednet.ns.ca/files/plans/PLANSAdaptations.pdf>). Photocopies of adaptation documentation must be inserted inside the students' assessment booklets when the booklets are returned to the Department of Education.

17. Can students use Kurzweil during the assessment?

Kurzweil—or any other text-to-speech technology—cannot be used in the reading portions of the Junior High Literacy Assessment (i.e., in the information texts, literary prose, visual media texts, and poetry/song portions). In the same way that teachers are not permitted to read the reading portions of the assessment to students, any technology that does the same is not permitted. As the assessment is an assessment of reading/viewing and writing—where "reading" includes the independent decoding, comprehension, and analysis of text—adaptations that perform the decoding of text for students compromise the validity of the assessment.

However, Kurzweil may be used in the writing portions of the assessment without compromising the validity of the assessment. Kurzweil may be used to read the writing instructions, prompts, and checklists to the student, as the writing portions of the assessment are not an assessment of reading, but of writing. (Similarly, if it is a documented adaptation, a teacher may read the writing instructions, prompts, and checklists to the student without compromising the validity of the assessment.)

Note: If Kurzweil is mistakenly used during the reading portions of the assessment, or if a teacher mistakenly reads the reading portions of the assessment to the student, the student's assessment report will indicate "insufficient evidence" for reading.

18. Can students dictate their letter or story on the assessment using a speech-to-text program?

Yes. If it is a documented adaptation for the student, the student may use a speech-to-text program to dictate his or her essay or story on the Junior High Literacy Assessment. Speech-to-text programs are considered an acceptable adaptation in the writing portions of the assessment in the same way that verbatim scribing is considered an acceptable adaptation, without altering or compromising the validity of the assessment. Because the assessment is a secure form, student writing must be deleted from the computer once a hard copy has been printed for submission with the assessment booklet.

If a speech-to-text program is used during the writing portions of the assessment, then the element of writing "matters of correctness" in that student's writing will not be evaluated, and the student's assessment report will indicate "insufficient evidence" for "matters of correctness." The student's writing must then meet the criteria for just "ideas," "organization," and "word choice" in at least one of the two writing tasks in order for the student to meet the expectations for writing overall.

As with any adaptation used during the assessment, the use of a speech-to-text program must be documented in the student's cumulative record file, and a photocopy of that

documentation must accompany the student's assessment booklet when the completed booklet is returned to the Department of Education.

As well, on the back of the student's assessment booklet, in the section "Documented adaptations," the circle for "assistive technology (please specify)" should be filled in, and, on the lines provided, it should be indicated that a speech-to-text program was used only for the writing portions of the assessment.

19. What about combined classes? Should my non-grade 9 students write the assessment?

No. Those students will have to be accommodated otherwise during the assessment.

20. What about multiple English classes—but just one English language arts teacher? Who should administer the assessment to the other classes?

All grade 9 students should be writing the assessment at the same time. Therefore, the English language arts teacher should circulate between the classes writing the assessment in order to oversee the administration of the assessment and to answer any questions. This procedure ensures consistency and uniformity across classes and schools.

21. Can all the grade 9 students write the assessment together in the gymnasium or cafeteria?

No. Students should write the assessment in the classroom where they would normally take English language arts or, if this is not possible, then in their home room classroom. Gymnasiums, auditoriums, cafeterias, etc. are not appropriate venues for the administration of the assessment. The assessment should be seen as just another part of the students' day, and students should participate in the assessment in a familiar environment where they can be comfortable and relaxed.

22. What do I do if one of my students is absent for one day of the assessment?

The student is expected to continue writing the assessment by picking up from where he or she left off. For example, if a student is absent on Wednesday, he or she should begin to write Wednesday's work when he or she returns. Students may write only one section on any single day. All sections of the assessment are to be completed.

23. What do I do if one of my students is absent for the entire week of the assessment?

If the student is absent for the entire week of the assessment, the student is expected to write the assessment the following week. It is recommended that you consult with your school's administration in order to find a convenient time and place for the student to write the assessment. The school's assessment booklets must be returned to the Department of Education on March 9.

24. What if the teacher is absent during the assessment?

The substitute teacher should be given the teacher's checklist and the information guide in advance to become fully acquainted with the procedures for the various sections of the assessment. As well, it would be beneficial if the substitute teacher could confer with another teacher who administered a previous year's Junior High Literacy Assessment.

25. How can I prepare my students for the assessment?

It would be beneficial to let students know ahead of time what the assessment entails. Students will feel happier and more relaxed once they know what to anticipate. You may let

the students know that the assessment activities will be much like what they do in their everyday work (e.g., reading a story, information texts, and a poem, and writing a letter and a story). Your positive comments about the assessment will encourage students to do their best.

26. How much may/should I help my students when they participate in the assessment?

What instructions may I give to my students?

In order to ensure an accurate picture of students' independent literacy skills, it is important that you not help students other than by directing them to the appropriate pages on which to work. You can, and should, encourage your students to try their best, to read the instructions carefully, to take their time, and to check their work. You may encourage a student to move on to other questions if you notice that he or she is spending too much time on a question or task. If you notice that a student has two circles penciled in for the same question, you should point that out to the student.

27. May I define terms to my students? May I explain or clarify questions on the assessment?

No. Students are allowed to use a dictionary to look up unfamiliar words. Similarly, students are allowed to use a thesaurus to look up synonyms and antonyms of words. You may read aloud individual words that students ask you, but you may not read the texts or explain the questions to the students.

28. May I give my students more time than that allotted per day?

Yes. Each day you may give your students an additional 15 minutes—but no more. It is important that all students across the province are given approximately the same amount of time to complete the assessment.

29. May students go back and complete sections that they may not have completed on previous days?

No. In order to ensure an accurate picture of students' literacy skills, it is important that students are given only the time allotted each day and do not return to a previous day's work.

30. How will the assessments be scored?

The reading and viewing tasks will be scored by computer at the Department of Education. The writing tasks will be marked by a provincial team of grade 9 teachers, under the direction of the department, at a marking session April 11–14, 2012.

31. How will the results of the 2011–2012 Junior High Literacy Assessment be reported?

The results of the assessment will be reported in a number of ways. In early June, the Department of Education will provide the principals of schools with grade 9 with electronic copies of the *2011–2012 Junior High Literacy Assessment: Report for Teachers and School Administration* to be printed and distributed to the students' teachers. The Report will contain information about each student's performance on the assessment in reading by genre, cognitive level, and outcome, and in writing by element of writing (i.e., ideas, organization, word choice, and matters of correctness). At the same time, the department will provide the principals with electronic copies of the *2011–2012 Junior High Literacy Assessment: Report for Parents and Guardians*, to be printed and distributed to the students' parents and guardians.

32. Should the results of this assessment be used as part of students' class marks?

No. Students' class marks are determined by their classroom teacher, and are based upon each student's achievement in relation to a wide range of curricular outcomes over time. The results of this assessment should not be used as part of students' class marks.

33. Do the results of the Junior High Literacy Assessment affect report card marks?

No. While the assessment identifies students who need support and interventions in the area of literacy, report card marks are generated by classroom teachers, who evaluate their students in the areas of speaking and listening, reading and viewing, and writing and other ways of representing.

34. What do I do if I have a question that is not answered above?

For more information, please visit the Junior High Literacy Assessment website (<http://plans.ednet.ns.ca/jhla>). If you have a question that is not answered above or at the website, you should ask your School Assessment Coordinator for assistance. If you are still unable to have your question answered, please do not hesitate to contact your Board Assessment Coordinator.

Appendix I: Nova Scotia Assessment Development Model

All Nova Scotia provincial assessments and examinations are developed by an advisory group of teachers, under the direction of the professional staff of Evaluation Services.

