

Nova Scotia Examination: English 10

Lessons Learned

Words can be like x-rays if you use them properly – they'll go through everything. You read and you're pierced.

– Aldous Huxley

If there's a book that you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it.

– Toni Morrison

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Introduction

This document is intended to support classroom teachers and administrators at the school, regional and provincial levels by using information gained from the Nova Scotia Examination in English 10 results to inform next steps for literacy instruction. It specifically addresses areas that students across the province found challenging based on evidence from examination results.

Seven “Lessons Learned” from the results of the Nova Scotia English 10 examination are presented here. Each lesson learned lays out the evidence for the need to focus on a particular area of the curriculum in English Language Arts. Exam questions and examples of student responses are discussed, and instructional strategies are then suggested for each lesson learned. A primary purpose of this document is to communicate to teachers the need for focus on certain areas in the ELA curriculum based on province-wide results in the examination. Another purpose of this document is to suggest strategies for teachers when planning classroom instruction not only in Grade 10 but in Grades 9, 11 and 12 as well. By identifying these needs in Grade 10, the hope is that they will continue to be addressed throughout students’ high school years.

School teams can use this document in concert with their school’s Item Description Report. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development makes this report available every year to all regional centres for education. The reports include student achievement data at the school, regional, and provincial levels for all questions in reading on the NSE English 10. By analyzing their performance on groupings of questions dealing with similar outcomes, schools can identify areas of strength and areas where changes in instruction and/or assessment might be made. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development also provides each region with data on student achievement in writing on the NSE English 10. This data is broken down into four criteria at the individual student, school, region and provincial levels. Using this data in conjunction with the information in this document will foster continued discussions, explorations and support for literacy focus at the classroom, school, regional and provincial levels.

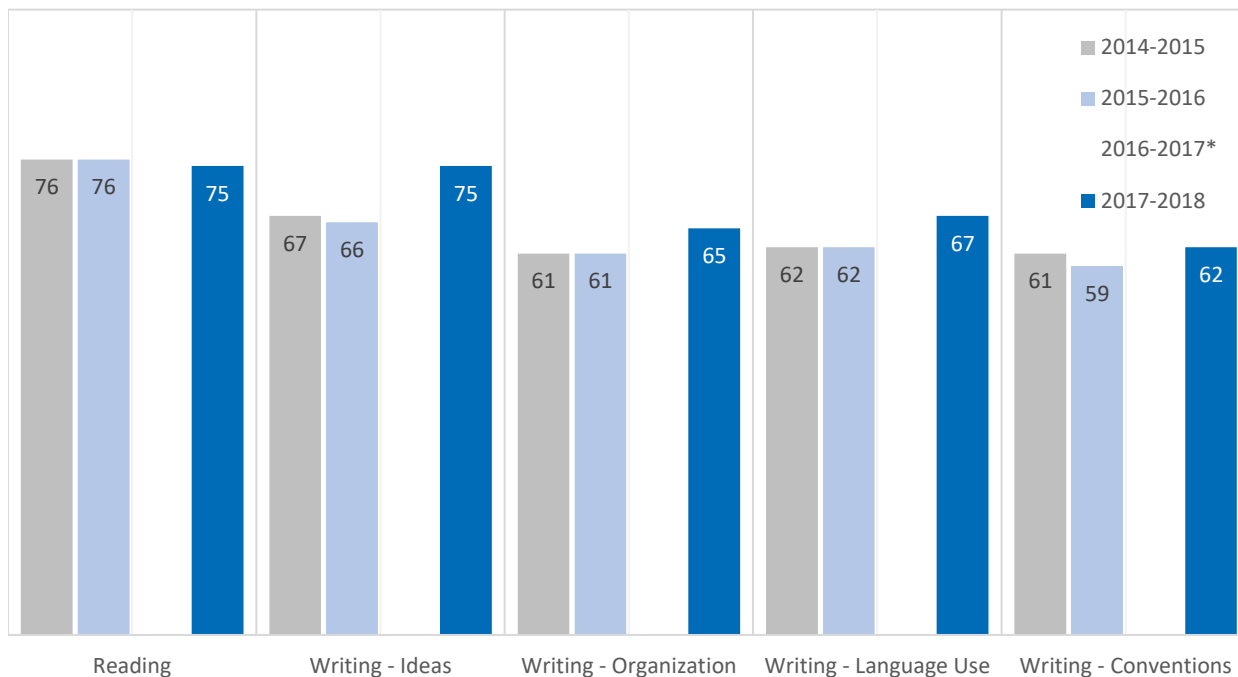
Assessment evidence from a variety of sources should be used to inform next steps for individual students. It is important to note that assessment and instructional strategies discussed in this document are by no means exhaustive. Strategies must be adapted to be relevant and meaningful for students’ diverse needs. Sharroky Hollie’s *Strategies for Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning* should be used to guide instruction. Also, please see “Key messages in instruction and assessment” (Appendix R) for guidance in developing a program of instruction and assessment that meets the needs of each student.

Further support for teachers can be found in the *Nova Scotia Examination English 10 Information Webinar* (recorded in January 2019) that can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/k9lynK6zKl>.

Bibliographical information for citations and references in this document can be found in the Resources section (p. 29). This section also lists publications and websites that will be helpful for teachers in planning instruction and assessment.

This document is a collaborative effort between the Student Assessment and Evaluation and Innovative Educational Programs divisions of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and classroom teachers from all over the province who have provided their input and suggestions in working committees and in scoring session focus groups.

Nova Scotia Examination: English 10 Results



*The NSE English 10 was not administered in 2016-17.

Note regarding scoring and reporting of Nova Scotia Examination English 10 results:

It is important to note that the NSE English 10 examination is scored by the student's teacher and is worth 20% of the student's course mark, which is also determined by the student's teacher. An NSE English 10 Marking Guide is provided to each English 10 teacher for use in marking the examinations. Teachers mark student exams using the guide, following the instructions for recording student marks on the Teacher Mark Record form. These forms are retained at the school.

In addition to the school level marking described above, English teachers representing all regional centres of education score all student examinations at a provincial scoring session held in the summer. Results from the provincial scoring session are used to provide information to policy makers on the implementation of the course curriculum and on standards of student achievement in relation to expected learning outcomes. Individual student reports provide information about students' performance in reading and writing. These results are used by teachers, together with classroom assessment information, to inform instructional decisions. For more information regarding provincial scoring sessions, see the *Nova Scotia Examination English 10 Information Guide* available at www.plans.ednet.ns.ca under English 10/Documents. To apply to be a scorer, see the "Professional Opportunities" section at www.plans.ednet.ns.ca.

Nova Scotia Examination: English 10 – Reading Overview

A variety of text genres and reading tasks are represented in the examination:

- Four text genres are included in the examination: narrative text, information text, poetic text and visual/media text.
- Student scores in poetic text and information text are significantly lower than scores in narrative text and visual/media text.
- Students are required to use information from the reading passages in the examination to support a written argument. Their ability to use correctly understood details from the reading passages in the exam to support an argument is scored as Ideas-1 in the Reading Response rubric. Scores in Ideas-1 are significantly lower than other reading scores.

Cognitive Levels

Reading questions on the NSE English 10 reflect three cognitive levels:

- **Literal** comprehension questions are designed to elicit responses that indicate the student has comprehended explicit information in the text.
- **Non-literal** comprehension questions are designed to elicit responses that indicate the student has comprehended implicit information in the text such as inferences, connotative meaning, idioms, and figurative language.
- **Analysis** questions are designed to elicit responses that indicate the student has thought critically about texts by analyzing, synthesizing, or evaluating the explicit and/or implicit information in the text.
- There is no significant difference in scores between the cognitive levels.

Tables of Specifications

Table 1: Examination Format

Section	Number and Type of Questions	Points	Suggested Time
Reading: Prose	20 Selected Response	20 points	40–45 minutes
Writing: Persuasive Writing	1 Constructed Response	24 points	35–45 minutes
Reading: Poetry	10 Selected Response	10 points	20–25 minutes
Reading: Visual/Media Text	10 Selected Response	10 points	20–25 minutes
Reading/Writing: Reading Response	1 Constructed Response	20 points	35–40 minutes
Total:	42 questions	84 points	150–180 minutes

Table 2: Specifications for Reading/Viewing

Number of Reading Tasks	Type of Text	Points	Points per Cognitive Level: Literal Comprehension	Points per Cognitive Level: Non-Literal Comprehension	Points per Cognitive Level: Analysis
2–4	Prose*	20 points	5–8	5–8	5–8
1 or 2	Poetry	10 points	3–5	3–5	3–5
1 or 2	Visual/Media Text	10 points	3–5	3–5	3–5
	Reading Response**				

* Prose: short story, information text, essay, real-life narrative, and other types of prose writing.

** Teacher scoring of the Reading Response is based on the writing rubric provided in the Marking Guide. However, provincial scoring of the Reading Response task includes a score for the “Ideas 1” criterion in the Reading Response rubric that counts towards an analysis-level reading question on the Nova Scotia Examination English 10 – Individual Student Report. Student achievement in reading is reported on this report at one of the four performance levels in reading (See Appendix Q “Performance levels in reading”).

Table 3: Specifications for Writing

Writing Task	Number and Type of Questions
Persuasive Writing	Scored on a four-level rubric using four criteria: Ideas (8 points) Organization (8 points) Language use (4 points) Conventions (4 points) Total score out of 24.
Reading Response	Scored on a four-level rubric using four criteria: Ideas 1 (4 points) Ideas 2 (4 points) Organization (4 points) Language use (4 points) Conventions (4 points) Total score out of 20.

LESSON 1: Helping students to read and understand poetic texts

A. Evidence

Understanding poetry presents challenges for many students. Of the four genres in the NSE English 10, scores in poetry are the lowest. Evidence of the types of challenges students face is presented in this section.

The poem “To Be of Use” is reproduced in Appendix A. Examination questions based on the poem are reproduced in Appendix B. Two examples of questions that many students did not answer correctly are discussed below. Student responses to these two questions provide information about skills which require further attention in teaching reading of poetic texts.

In the last stanza (lines 18-26), work that is well done is likened to

- a different shapes.
- b museum rooms.
- c people’s hands used to smear dirt.
- d pottery used to store provisions.

- This is an *analysis* question (see “Cognitive Levels” page 3). It requires that students examine and analyze different aspects of the text that contribute to meaning.
- This question is connected to the ELA10 curriculum outcome 7.1: “students will be expected to examine the different aspects of texts (language, style, graphics, tone, etc.) that contribute to meaning and effect.”
- The correct answer is option d. Work well done is compared to pottery used to store provisions: “a shape that satisfies... Greek amphoras for wine or oil... Hopi vases that held corn...The pitcher cries for water to carry” (footnotes are provided in the exam to explain the meaning of “Greek amphoras” and “Hopi vases”). This metaphor, that likens work well done to pottery used to store provisions, is sustained throughout the last stanza. Options a, b, and c refer to various aspects of the metaphor; the pottery has different shapes, it can be put in museum rooms and is made by people using their hands and dirt.

In the next section, skills required to understand figurative language will be discussed and some teaching strategies suggested.

The tone of the poem can best be described as:

- a assertive
- b content
- c dark
- d hopeful

- This is an *analysis* question (see “Cognitive Levels” page 3). It requires that students examine and analyze different aspects of the text that contribute to meaning.

- This question is connected to the ELA10 curriculum outcome 7.1: “students will be expected to examine the different aspects of texts (language, style, graphics, tone, etc.) that contribute to meaning and effect.”
- The correct answer is a. The speaker asserts the opinion that he or she likes people who work hard at tasks that are useful such as harvesting food. The poem assertively states a strong opinion about the type of work people do. It does not offer a happy view of the world (option b), nor a dark view (option c), nor does it indicate hopefulness (option d) in improving a situation.

In the next section, skills required to identify the tone of a text will be discussed and some teaching strategies suggested.

B. Targeted Skills and Instructional Suggestions

Understanding a poem as text

Resistance to poetry or anxiety about reading poetry can be addressed if the teacher commits to making it a regular part of the class. If a wide variety of poetry is presented for regular use in class and if personal preferences - the teacher’s as well as the students’ - are acknowledged, students will become familiar with poetic language in its many forms.

Before asking students to read a poem independently it is important that teachers explicitly teach figurative language, sound devices, structure, and form. Introduce the following “How to Read a Poem” by modeling these strategies for students. Modeling involves sharing your thoughts aloud as a reader of the poem and writing your comments on display for students to see.

How to Read a Poem (Adapted from Allan Wolf, *Immersed in Verse: An Informative, Slightly Irreverent and Totally Tremendous Guide to Living the Poet’s Life*, 2009.)

- Look at the poem’s title. Make a prediction about what the poem means to you.
- Read the poem out loud if you can—at least read it out loud in your head. Listen to it.
- Access your prior knowledge by asking yourself what you already know about the subject of the poem.
- Write down a quick first-impression of the poem.
- Annotate the poem freely as you reread it. Jot down your thinking as you ask these questions:
 - What stands out and is interesting?
 - What is confusing?
 - What words and expressions are interesting? Exciting? Unknown?
 - What are the phrases or lines that you particularly like?
 - How do these phrases or lines add meaning or understanding to the poem?
- Identify the narrator.
- Break up the poem into meaningful pieces (stanza by stanza or idea by idea). Breaking down difficult passages into more comprehensible pieces is sometimes called “chunking”.
- Look for patterns. Consider form and function. Look for changes in tone, focus, narrator, structure, voice, patterns.
- Look up the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- Pay attention to text that looks different from the rest of the poem (bold, italics, asterisks). Consider footnotes.
- Pay attention to breaks between stanzas or between lines.
- Consider sound devices (rhyme, rhythm, repetition, alliteration, onomatopoeia).

- Identify figurative language and literary devices and consider what they add to the poem (alliteration, symbolism, hyperbole, simile, metaphor, personification, irony, onomatopoeia, allusion).
- Find the crucial moments.
- Ask yourself if your understanding of the poem has improved. Read the poem through again, out loud if you can.
- Determine the message of the poem. Explain your thinking.
- Identify the theme of the poem.
- Read the poem again. What do you notice after this third read?
- Return to the title and ask yourself “What does the poem mean?” “How does the title relate to the meaning of the poem?”
- Reread the poem checking for new understanding.

Once students have watched and listened to the teacher model the strategies above, they should have opportunities to read and work, to discuss feelings and understandings in small and large group settings. It is important that they also have multiple opportunities to read and work independently. Some students will benefit from working through these strategies individually with the teacher.

Understanding figurative language

Teachers must explicitly teach figurative language to their students. Providing explicit instruction regarding the use of imagery, figurative language, and literary devices such as similes, metaphors, personification, hyperbole, alliteration, assonance, and consonance is critical to the understanding of poetry. Poetry, dealing as it does with capturing impressions, feelings, and ideas and communicating them in a condensed fashion, is an ideal form to support students’ speculative and metacognitive thinking. It is important to take students beyond the superficial understanding of the individual figures of speech to the how and why the poet has used these figures. In one classroom example, when reading the poem *To Be of Use*, students considered the lines “without dallying in the shallows and swim off with sure strokes almost out of sight” and determined that the poet meant “People dallying in the shallows are lazy, and the ones that swim off are the ones that go for their opportunities.” These students demonstrated that the understanding of individual figures of speech leads to a holistic understanding of the message or theme of the poem.

Students should know that we use and encounter figurative language all the time when we speak, read and write. Words that are used outside of their literal meaning or in interesting ways contribute beauty and force to oral language, song, stories, legends, visual media texts, information texts as well as poetry. In the sample questions above, the figurative language and poetic devices used need to be understood in order to fully appreciate the meaning of the poem. Students who are familiar with reading and using figurative language will be able to overcome many of the challenges in texts that use words or language in figurative way.

Identifying the tone of a text

Understanding the tone of a text is a key aspect of reading comprehension and is particularly challenging in poetry. Students need to transition from how they feel about a poem to recognizing the feelings and impressions that the poet or narrator is communicating. Understanding the poet’s or the narrator’s attitudes and feelings leads to an understanding of the tone. When determining tone, students should ask “How does the poet or narrator feel?”, “What is the poet’s or narrator’s attitude about the subject?”, and “How do I know?” Make sure students can select words, phrases, examples of figurative language and literary devices that communicate and provide evidence for their view of poet’s or narrator’s attitude. When describing the tone of a poem, use words that relate to emotions, such as humorous, angry, playful, cheerful, sad, gloomy, etc.,

All texts, not just poems, are written to communicate a specific tone that is related to the main message of a text: for example, the narrators in “To Be of Use” and in the information text “I Just Can’t Wrap My Head Around

the Scourge of Overpackaging” (Appendix H; discussed in Lesson 2) use an assertive tone to communicate the message of their strong opinions. It is important that students understand that this is intentional in good writing.

Students can practice determining the tone of any text they read or view. Students can also practice using words, phrases and figurative language to create certain tones when they write.

Students must understand that poems such as this sample text are communicating a message and that the act of reading should uncover this message in all its subtlety and detail. Students need strategies such as the following to help them understand poems and other poetic texts:

- Start with short poems or songs to enable students with a wide range of reading levels to practice close reading. Some students may benefit from beginning close reading with elementary level poems and progressively moving up to more challenging texts.
- Help students independently establish a purpose for reading so that they can focus their attention on this purpose while reading. See Appendix C “Identifying a purpose for reading”.
- Coach students to ask themselves basic questions as they reflect on a specific portion of any text. See Appendix D “Questions to help students independently understand a text”.
- Explicitly teach students how to independently apply reading strategies when reading different types of texts and genres. See Appendix E “Explicitly teach various reading strategies”.
- Explicitly teach students how to actively engage with a text by annotating it. See Appendix F “Annotating text”.
- Explicitly teach the differences between connotation and denotation to give students tools to understand the subtleties of meaning in texts. See Appendix G “Connotation and denotation.”

LESSON 2: Helping students to read and understand information texts

A. Evidence

Students tend to perform less well in understanding information texts than they do in understanding narrative or visual/media texts in the examination. Evidence of the types of challenges students face is presented in this section.

The information text “I Just Can’t Wrap My Head Around the Scourge of Overpackaging” is reproduced in Appendix H. Examination questions based on this text are reproduced in Appendix I. Two examples of questions that many students did not answer correctly are discussed below. Student responses to these questions provide information about skills which require further attention in teaching reading of information texts.

Why do customers need to have “a little forethought” (line 48) to shop at the store Unpackaged?

- a They can buy only what they need.
- b They must return jam jars to the store.
- c They should bring containers for their purchases.
- d They will be overwhelmed by the variety of items.

- This is a *non-literal* question (see “Cognitive Levels” page 3). It requires that integrate information and make subtle inferences to draw conclusions.
- This question is connected to the ELA10 curriculum outcome 4.3: “Students will be expected to seek meaning in reading, using a variety of strategies such as cueing systems, utilizing prior knowledge, analyzing, inferring, predicting, synthesizing, and evaluating.”
- Many students chose option a. However, even though the text says, “the shop has everything you need”, it does not say that customers can buy only what they need there.
- Some students chose options b or d. Neither of these options are supported in the text: it does not indicate that customers are required to return jam jars to the store nor does it indicate that customers are overwhelmed by the variety of choice in the store.
- The word “forethought” gives a clue to the correct answer which is option c. The question asks what customers need to think about before going to this store (using forethought). Students must use the following information stated in the text: “While you can buy your first Kentish bramble jam in a jar, you are strongly encouraged after that to bring the jar back and fill it directly from the oft-replenished vat. Same goes for organic yogurt, chutney...” to conclude that customers need to remember to bring containers before going to the store.

The “old truism of less being more” (lines 54-55) in the context of this article means that

- Ⓐ buying less is better than buying more.
- Ⓑ less packaging makes more sense.
- Ⓒ the less you buy, the more you save.
- Ⓓ using less packaging is becoming more popular.

- This is a *literal* question (see “Cognitive Levels” page 3). It requires that students use explicitly stated details to understand literary devices and techniques and how they contribute to meaning.
- This question is connected to the ELA10 curriculum outcome 4.5: “Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the impact literary devices and media techniques (editing, symbolism, imagery, figurative language, irony, etc.) have on shaping the understanding of a text.”
- Many students chose either option a or c. However, the text does not argue that people should buy less, nor that people should buy less to save money. The argument presented in the text is about using less packaging, not buying fewer products. A few students chose option d which contradicts the message of the text that overpackaging is becoming more of a problem.
- The text uses figurative language and idiomatic phrases to conclude the argument that less packaging should be used: “...staff will also try to gently explain the retailer’s mission, which essentially boils down to the old truism of less being more.” Students are more likely to choose the correct answer (option b) if they understand what “boils down to” and “old truism” mean and how they are used as literary techniques.

In the next section, skills required to build vocabulary and identify the main message of an information text will be discussed and some teaching strategies suggested.

B. Targeted Skills and Instructional Suggestions

Vocabulary building

Students may not know the meaning of all the words in a text. For example, the words “forethought”, “truism”, and the expression “boils down to” need to be understood in order to fully appreciate the meaning of “I Just Can’t Wrap my Head Around the Scourge of Overpackaging”. Students need strategies such as the following to build their vocabulary and to determine the meaning of words and expressions:

- Flood the classroom with vocabulary rich talk.
- Explicitly teach significant root words, prefixes and suffixes.
- Teach students how to pay attention to new words and try to figure them out.
- Explicitly teach dictionary use.
- Model close reading strategies that enable students to reflect on the meanings of individual words and sentences.
- Explicitly teach and model how to determine meaning by considering context.

Determining the main message of a text

It is essential to read an information text closely to determine its main message. In both sample questions above, the correct answer will be evident if the text is read closely and its main message understood even if the exact definition of each word or expression is not clear to the reader. The message of “I Just Can’t Wrap my Head Around the Scourge of Overpackaging” is clearly that less packaging should be used, and this message is underscored by many details and examples. In the first question, students may see the words “The shop has everything you need” in the text and choose the answer option that uses similar wording, but in doing so they are not reading closely enough to determine that “having everything you need” does not mean the same thing as “buying only what you need”.

In the second question, students who choose options that indicate that the message is about buying less are not reading the text closely. They may believe or may have heard from others that buying less is better, or that buying less saves money, but this is not the main message of the text.

Students must understand that information texts such as this sample text present a clear argument and that the act of reading should uncover this argument in all its subtlety and detail. Students need strategies such as the following to help them understand the main message and supporting details of a text:

- Start with short texts such as shorter articles, biographies, personal narratives to enable students with a wide range of reading levels to practice close reading. Some students may benefit from beginning close reading with elementary level texts and progressively moving up to more challenging texts.
- Help students independently establish a purpose for reading so that they can focus their attention on this purpose while reading. See Appendix C “Identifying a purpose for reading.”
- Coach students to ask themselves basic questions as they reflect on a specific portion of any text. See Appendix D “Questions to help students independently understand a text.”
- Explicitly teach the characteristics of each text feature to help students find and understand information. See Appendix J “Text features: instructional and assessment strategies.”
- Explicitly teach students how to independently apply reading strategies when reading different types of texts and genres. See Appendix E “Explicitly teach various reading strategies.”
- Explicitly teach students how to actively engage with a text by annotating it. See Appendix F “Annotating text.”
- Explicitly teach the differences between connotation and denotation to give students tools to understand the subtleties of meaning in texts. See Appendix G “Connotation and denotation.”

LESSON 3: Helping students extract details from texts to support their point of view

A. Evidence

Students were given the following topic for the Reading Response task in the English 10 examination:

Write about how one or more texts you have read or viewed in this examination demonstrate an opinion about what is good or not good, right or not right.

See Appendix K for the Reading Response scoring rubrics. These rubrics are used by teachers to score student writing for five criteria: *Ideas 1- Quality of Text Comprehension*, *Ideas 2 – Quality of Writing, Organization, Language Use* and *Conventions*. These criteria are described at four levels.

Ideas 1 – Quality of Text Comprehension counts towards a student’s reading score in provincial individual student reports. This criterion assesses students’ ability to read closely and to use information in texts to support a written argument. When scoring this criterion, teachers should pay close attention to the descriptors, especially the words that are unique to each level.

IDEAS 1 – QUALITY OF TEXT COMPREHENSION

- Level 4: Demonstrates a **thorough** understanding of the text(s) offering an **insightful** response with **strong** support from the text(s).
- Level 3: Demonstrates a **clear** understanding of the text(s) offering a **thoughtful** response with **relevant** support from the text(s).
- Level 2: Demonstrates a **limited** understanding of the text(s) offering a **simple** response with **vague and/or minimal** support from the text(s).
- Level 1: Demonstrates a **misreading or significant misunderstanding** of the text(s) offering an **irrelevant** response with **minimal or no support** from the text(s).

Five samples of student writing are reproduced in Appendix L. The Ideas 1 score and annotation are included along with each sample of student writing. This score indicates how well the writing demonstrates an understanding of the texts in the examination and how effectively the texts were used to support a point of view. The texts “To Be of Use” (Appendix A) and “I Just Can’t Wrap My Head Around the Scourge of Overpackaging” (Appendix H) are referred to by students in these samples. Samples show a range of achievement from level 1 to 4.

Read the five student samples in Appendix L before proceeding to the next section.

B. Targeted skills and instructional suggestions

Close reading

The scored student samples in Appendix L show that a close and accurate reading of the text is necessary to determine which details are relevant to the topic and to the argument students choose to make. It is important that the students first understand what the text is saying to ensure that the details chosen as supporting evidence are correctly understood and are relevant to their argument.

Close reading is thoughtful, critical analysis of a text that focuses on significant details or patterns in order to develop a deep, precise understanding of the text's form, craft and meanings. It is important that teachers explicitly teach close reading strategies. Introduce the following steps by modeling them for students. Modeling involves sharing your thoughts aloud as a reader and writing your comments on display for students to see:

- Read once (focused silent read).
- Ask higher order questions (analysis, non-literal). These questions should be sufficiently complex that they require students to look for and identify details that support their answers. When modeling this step, the teacher can answer their own higher order questions out loud so that students can see and hear what they will eventually do themselves.
- Read again deliberately with purpose.
- Annotate the text. When modeling this step, write your notes on display for students to see.
- Notice things that are confusing, ask questions.
- Discuss the text with others.
- Read again for detail: What are the details? Where do I find them? What do I do with them? How do these details support the main message of the text?

Once students have watched and listened to the teacher model the strategies above, they should have opportunities to read and work, discuss thoughts and understandings in large and small group settings. It is important that they also have multiple opportunities to read and work independently. Some students will benefit from working through these strategies individually with the teacher.

Using details from a text to support an argument

The scored student samples in Appendix L show that students need to be able to effectively extract relevant information from a close reading of the texts in the exam and then synthesize that information in their written response to the topic provided. Students must understand that reading response goes beyond writing about their opinions or feelings about the text.

- Encourage the use of the following reading strategies: putting the text in your own words, making connections, accessing prior knowledge, identifying the main idea, identifying supporting details.
- Explicitly teach students how to deconstruct the reading response question being asked before reading the texts, so that they know to look for information which would be the most relevant for their reading response.
- Use the Reading Response Scoring Rubric (Appendix K) during classroom activities, helping students understand the various levels of Ideas 1- Quality of Text Comprehension. Use the samples in Appendix L as teaching tools.
- Promote and value oral language activities during class time by providing students with ample opportunities to express and defend a point of view orally based on a close reading of a text. Invite students to base their discussions around an essential question of your creation related to class readings.
- Provide a prompt and ask students to defend a position in writing using details from a text read in class.
- Whether students are working orally or writing independently, make sure they receive explicit feedback about their work. Always ask "How do you know? What is your evidence?"

In order to write an effective reading response essay, students must understand that a reading passage presents a clear argument and that the act of reading should uncover this argument in all its subtlety and detail. Students need strategies such as the following to help them understand the main message and supporting details of a text:

- Start with short texts such as shorter articles, biographies, personal narratives to enable students with a wide range of reading levels to practice close reading. Some students may benefit from beginning close reading with elementary level texts and progressively moving up to more challenging texts.

- Help students independently establish a purpose for reading so that they can focus their attention on this purpose while reading. See Appendix C “Identifying a purpose for reading”.
- Coach students to ask themselves basic questions as they reflect on a specific portion of any text. See Appendix D “Questions to help students independently understand a text”.
- Explicitly teach students how to independently apply reading strategies when reading different types of texts and genres. See Appendix E “Explicitly teach various reading strategies”.
- Explicitly teach students how to actively engage with a text by annotating it. See Appendix F “Annotating text”.
- Explicitly teach the differences between connotation and denotation to give students tools to understand the subtleties of meaning in texts. See Appendix G “Connotation and denotation.”
- Explicitly teach the characteristics of each text feature to help students find and understand information. See Appendix J “Text features: instructional and assessment strategies”.

Nova Scotia Examination: English 10 – Writing Overview

Writing on the NSE English 10 consists of two prompts:

- Persuasive Writing
- Reading Response

Scoring of Writing Criteria

Writing on the NSE English 10 is scored for four criteria:

- Ideas: developing a main idea and supporting it with relevant details
- Organization: using transitions effectively to organize writing
- Language use: using language effectively to communicate in writing
- Conventions: using conventions effectively to communicate in writing.

The order of the lessons presented in the Writing section reflects the overall percentage of students meeting provincial expectations from lowest to highest: Conventions (Lesson 4), Organization (Lesson 5), Language Use (Lesson 6) and Ideas (Lesson 7).

LESSON 4: Helping students to use conventions effectively in their writing

A. Evidence

Students were given the following topic for the Persuasive Writing essay in the English 10 examination.

People of different ages can learn from each other.

See Appendix M for the Persuasive Writing scoring rubrics. These rubrics are used by teachers to score student writing for four criteria – Ideas, Organization, Language Use and Conventions. These criteria are described at four levels.

Provincially, 62% of students scored level 3 or above in Conventions in 2017-18. When scoring Conventions, teachers look for spelling, punctuation, grammar (parts of speech) and syntax (rules governing how parts of speech are put together to create well-formed sentences). When using the rubric, teachers should pay close attention to the descriptors, especially the words that are unique to each level.

CONVENTIONS

LEVEL 4: A variety of **consistently correct** conventions contribute to **enhanced** communication.

LEVEL 3: A variety of **generally correct** conventions contribute to **effective** communication.

LEVEL 2: Errors in conventions are **noticeable** but communication is **coherent**.

LEVEL 1: Errors in conventions contribute to **confusing** communication, or there is **little evidence** of conventions.

Seven scored student samples of writing can be found in Appendix N. Each sample is followed by a detailed annotation that explains the scores given in each of the four criteria. For evidence of how students are doing in conventions, read the student writing samples and then read all seven annotations for conventions. Samples show a range of achievement from level 1 to 4.

B. Targeted Skills and Instructional Suggestions

Place these samples on an “anchor wall”. Students can compare their writing to the samples on the wall and identify, either in a conference or in a journal, what conventions they should focus on to improve their writing.

Concepts related to conventions should be explicitly taught when appropriate. Begin by discovering what students already have under control and where they need further guidance. Create mini-lessons (7 to 10 minutes) that address specific concepts based on patterns of misuse or misunderstanding. Depending on what students need, these mini-lessons can be for the whole class, small groups or individual students. Explicitly teach, within these short, planned mini-lessons, all varieties of conventions. See the “Conventions: Developmental Stages” chart at the end of this chapter for a list of conventions, all of which can be explicitly taught.

Provide opportunities for students to practice. Encourage self-assessment. Provide students with opportunities to share and reflect, then revise, edit, and proofread.

One way to embed grammar and conventions in students’ writing is through constant exposure to well-written texts. Expose students to mentor texts and discuss the use of conventions in them. Ask students to identify the following (adding other grammatical concepts as needed) as they read these well-written mentor texts:

- verbs and verb tenses

- subject/verb agreement
- adverbs and adjectives
- nouns
- pronouns
- conjunctions
- prepositions
- punctuation: periods, exclamation marks, question marks, capitalization, contractions, apostrophes, commas, colons, semi-colons, quotation marks, dashes etc.
- correct sentence structure
- correct word order

Using student samples of writing to model proficiency in conventions

Model reading through the following samples of writing, making comments on the conventions used in the writing as noted in parentheses below. This strategy can be used with any piece of writing and with other criteria (ideas, organization, or language use). Once this strategy has been modeled by the teacher, students can do this themselves either with their own writing or with texts they are reading.

The following two samples of student writing are reproduced in their entirety in Appendix N.

Sample Conventions – Level 4 (from Persuasive Writing student sample 2)

Learning is a wonderful thing. (Simple, well punctuated sentence.) *Everyone learns in different ways, from different sources, but the most simple and efficient way to learn is from other people - the things they do, the things they say and the things they show.* (The use of superlative adjectives enhances the writing. Correct sentence structure with agreement of subject and verbs. Complex sentence well punctuated with commas and a dash.) *By learning from other people, we can save ourselves a lot of trouble, and collect more information than we even bargained for.* (Syntax and punctuation are correct, and meaning is enhanced by beginning this sentence with a preposition.)

Sample Conventions – Level 3 (from Persuasive Writing student sample 4)

Yes, perhaps the design for a new public building looks attractive to those in their twenties, no one thought about how uncomfortable those stairs would be for elderly people to climb. (Correct use of present and past tenses. This sentence shows effective control of conventions but meaning could be enhanced with the addition of the conjunction “but” between the two phrases joined by a comma.) *And the waiting rooms have nothing for toddlers to play with.* (This sentence is grammatically correct. The meaning could be enhanced by changing the syntax and reversing the subject and predicate to “*And toddlers have nothing to play with in the waiting rooms*”).

Conventions: Developmental Stages

The chart below shows the progression of grammatical concepts that students should know and have under control by grade 10 (Student Developmental Stage 3). Use this chart to identify concepts to teach in mini-lessons for the whole class, small groups or individual students.

Student Developmental Stage 1	Student Developmental Stage 2	Student Developmental Stage 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts of speech (nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverb, prepositions, conjunctions) • Sentence type (simple) • Capitalization • Ending punctuation (period, question mark, exclamation mark) • Contractions • Parts of a sentence (subject, predicate) • Subject-verb agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts of speech (common nouns, proper nouns, linking verbs, personal pronouns) • Sentence type (compound) • Tenses (present, past) • Internal punctuation (comma, colon, quotation marks, apostrophe) • Possessives, plurals ('s, s) • Parts of a sentence (object) • Abbreviations • Homophones, homonyms • Synonyms, antonyms • Commonly misused words • Prefixes, suffixes • Double negative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts of speech (collective nouns, concrete nouns, abstract nouns, subjective pronouns, objective pronouns, possessive pronouns) • Sentence types (complex, compound-complex) • Tense (future) • Internal punctuation (semicolon, dash, hyphen, parentheses, ellipsis) • Italics • Parts of a sentence (prepositional phrase, clause) • Pronoun-antecedent agreement • Run-on sentence, sentence fragment • Jargon, cliché, euphemism

LESSON 5: Helping students to organize their writing effectively

A. Evidence

Students were given the following topic for the Persuasive Writing essay in the English 10 examination.

People of different ages can learn from each other

See Appendix M for the Persuasive Writing scoring rubrics. These rubrics are used by teachers to score student writing for four criteria – Ideas, Organization, Language Use and Conventions. These criteria are described at four levels.

Provincially, 65% of students scored level 3 or above in Organization in 2017-18. When scoring Organization, teachers look for how transitions contribute to the writing. Transitions can be single words, expressions, sentences or phrases that link ideas, and paragraphs. Transitions can work as organizing factors throughout the entire piece of writing or within individual paragraphs. When using the rubric, teachers should pay close attention to the descriptors, especially the words that are unique to each level.

ORGANIZATION

LEVEL 4: *The writing is **skillfully** organized with **skillful** use of **varied** transitions.*

LEVEL 3: *The writing is **organized** with **effective** use of **varied** transitions.*

LEVEL 2: *The writing is **somewhat** organized with **vague or mechanical** transitions.*

LEVEL 1: *The writing is **lacking** organization; there is **little or no evidence** of transitions.*

Seven scored student samples of writing can be found in Appendix N. Each sample is followed by a detailed annotation that explains the scores given in each of the four criteria. For evidence of how students are doing in organization, read the student writing samples and then read all seven annotations for organization. Samples show a range of achievement from level 1 to 4.

B. Targeted Skills and Instructional Suggestions

Place these writing samples on an “anchor wall”. Students can compare their writing to the samples on the wall and identify, either in a conference or in a journal, what they should focus on to improve the organization of their writing.

Writing should be organized in a logical sequence of ideas using a variety of transitional devices.

Writing is thinking on a page. How it is organized provides structure and flow. Organizing thoughts will lead to an effective piece of writing. It is important to begin with a plan. The plan should suit the idea, the audience, the purpose and the writer’s style. When organizing a piece of writing, the writer should be clear about the main idea that is being communicated. This main idea should be supported with carefully selected details that inform the reader and that lead the reader forward in a way that makes sense. The conclusion should provide closure. It should answer unanswered questions, resolve outstanding issues, and emphasize the main idea. Transitioning from one idea to another should be seamless.

Select well-written passages, poetry, short story, or fiction. Cut the text into pieces and have the students attempt to make sense of it by arranging it back into order. In small groups, ask students to look for a lead sentence, an introduction, topic sentences in paragraphs, transitional words and phrases and a conclusion. Ask them to explain why they chose these organizational elements. Ask students to provide a rationale for the way they have arranged the passage and the meaning. Compare their version to the original version.

Predominant patterns of organization include:

1. Enumeration: listing pieces of information (facts, propositions, events, ideas), usually qualifying the listing by criteria such as size or importance.
2. Time Order: arranging facts, events, or concepts into a sequence, using references to time (such as dates or time of day) to order them.
3. Compare and Contrast: pointing out similarities and differences between facts, people, events, concepts, etc.
4. Cause and Effect: showing how facts, events, or concepts (effects) happen or come into being because of other facts, events, or concepts (causes).

Students can learn cues or signals that draw attention to the organizational pattern being used:

1. Enumeration is often signaled by words or phrases such as “to begin with,” “first,” “secondly,” “next,” “then,” “most important,” “also.”
2. Time Order may have words such as “on (date),” “not long after,” “now,” “before,” “after,” “when.”
3. Compare and Contrast demands such words and phrases as “however,” “but,” “as well as,” “on the other hand,” “not only ... but also,” “either ... or,” “while,” “although,” “unless,” “similarly,” “yet.”
4. Cause and Effect calls for “because,” “since,” “therefore,” “consequently,” “as a result,” “this led to,” “so that,” “nevertheless,” “accordingly,” “if ... then,” “thus.”

Using student samples of writing to model proficiency in organization

Model reading through the following samples of writing, making comments on the organization used in the writing as noted in parentheses below. This strategy can be used with any piece of writing and with other criteria (ideas, language use or conventions). Once this strategy has been modeled, students can do this themselves either with their own writing or with texts they are reading.

The following two samples of student writing are reproduced in their entirety in Appendix N.

Sample Organization - Level 4 (from Persuasive Writing student sample 2)

The introductory paragraph below demonstrates a clear progression of related ideas and/or events and is unified and complete. Students can put themselves in the place of the reader, ask a series of questions to understand the organization of this piece and apply good organizational techniques in their own writing.

Humans learn mainly by imitation and trial and error. (Do I have an effective opening or lead sentence?) We all did it as children; experimented – say, jumping off the back of the couch, and if our finding hurt us, we didn’t do it again. We learned that certain things = pain, and pain is bad. (Do my ideas transition easily as they do here where details support the lead sentence?) Yet, we never bothered to listen to our parents, who warned us against such things. See, contrary to what we believed as toddlers, we can learn things from people. We can learn a great variety of lessons from others’ mistakes, listening, or simply watching. (Have I included sentences such as these that introduce the reader to the next paragraph? The next paragraph discusses another aspect of the main idea – that we learn by other people’s mistakes.)

Other questions students can ask are: Have I used transitional devices and how have I used them? Does my writing have a clear beginning, middle, and ending (if that structure suits the writer’s purpose)? Does each of my ideas work individually while still being connected to my other ideas? Does my closing sentence provide a satisfactory summation?

Sample Organization - Level 3 (from Persuasive Writing student sample 4)

A main idea is presented in the opening paragraph: *Age should not be a barrier when it comes to learning from one another.*

The writing demonstrates effective use of varied transitions. *...and yet so many times...; although nothing will ever be able to..., But it is so much easier...; and, Not only good...*

The ideas are sequential and follow in a logical progression. *Age should not be a barrier when it comes to learning from one another...; Many things affect people of different ages, and yet so many times...; If people of all different ages had been asked...; But it is so much easier to value someone's opinion when you understand their perspective.*

The final paragraph provides an effective conclusion. The writer reiterates the main idea: *Everyone can benefit from all ages coming together...*

Transitions used in Nova Scotia Examinations English 10 student writing

The transitions listed below were taken from student writing in the NSE English 10 examinations and can be shared with students. Ask students to think of other transitional words and phrases to add to this list. A complete list of transitions used in other grade level provincial assessments can be found in Appendix O.

ultimately, essentially, based on how, unique to, as the, also serves as, first of all...second, in conclusion, often, every...every...will have, although, so, have you ever, whether it be...or, everyday there are, it gives, everyone wants, all of these, it makes, or some form of, though not always, sometimes, we are more...than, is one strong example, after reading, when I think about, but how does, it is helped by, overall, it generally, it implies, she points out that, it will cause, as well as, also as, is not the only but is the most, what if, when reading, even though, as long as, this I find, to think, it was supposed, a lot can change, nothing in the world is, whether it is...or, you know those times when...and, I think by now, it applies to, and I noted that, have you ever...then, many...may not be...but, have you ever...but then, I have my doubts, I would look for, sometimes things can be, while the, this shows, just because, because of, as...we often, quite frequently we, one of the main reasons...another, we often assume that, to conclude, in saying that though, which means that, mainly by, mainly, other times, if you were to, yet, so many times, although nothing will be able to, but it's so much, not only could, and no, it isn't always...but, whenever, my first argument, without this, as stated above, and arguably, even if not, and ultimately, in the very same way that, have you ever, if a, say that, no matter how, be it, because they offer, how can, is it, go on then...take, aforementioned, in addition, after...of some kind, they may seem...but, once you, if you do...then, if you don't...then, simply, such, all you have to do is, well then, but in the end, most of, but is it really, without this...would, so, be it your, such as, it isn't just, this is just as, I do believe, so far, an even bigger, all I need, an excellent example, if people want, the most, we can...by doing, in order to, so all in all, this can be proven, as the last...suggested, overall it can be said, on the other hand.

LESSON 6: Helping students to use language effectively in their writing

A. Evidence

Students were given the following topic for the Persuasive Writing essay in the English 10 examination.

People of different ages can learn from each other.

See Appendix M for the Persuasive Writing scoring rubrics. These rubrics are used by teachers to score student writing for four criteria – Ideas, Organization, Language Use and Conventions. These criteria are described at four levels.

Provincially, 67% of students scored level 3 or above in Language Use in 2017-18. When scoring Language Use, teachers look for vocabulary, figurative language, a variety of sentence structures and lengths, and voice. Voice, in particular, seems to create some confusion because it encompasses most aspects of language use and is closely related to other traits. When using the rubric, teachers should pay close attention to the descriptors, especially the words that are unique to each level.

LANGUAGE USE

LEVEL 4: Language use contributes to **vivid and skillful** writing.

LEVEL 3: Language use contributes to **clear and fluid** writing.

LEVEL 2: Language use contributes to **vague or mechanical** writing.

LEVEL 1: Language use contributes to **confusing** writing, or there is **little evidence** of language use.

Seven scored student samples of writing can be found in Appendix N. Each sample is followed by a detailed annotation that explains the scores given in each of the four criteria. For evidence of how students are doing in language use, read the student writing samples and then read all seven annotations for language use. Samples show a range of achievement from level 1 to 4.

B. Targeted Skills and Instructional Suggestion

Place these writing samples on an “anchor wall”. Students can compare their writing to the samples on the wall and identify, either in a conference or in a journal, what they should focus on to improve the use of language in their writing.

Use the following descriptions of word choice and vocabulary, tone, figurative language, imagery, sentence style and voice to guide instruction in language use.

Word Choice and Vocabulary

The selection of words should convey as precisely and effectively as possible the writer’s ideas and intended message. Active verbs and strong nouns are at the heart of good writing, creating vivid images and enabling the reader to visualize what the author is saying. Good writers make their word selections based on appropriateness, precision, and variety. See Lesson 2 for instructional suggestions on how to build vocabulary.

Tone

Tone can be described as the attitude conveyed by the writer in a piece of writing. Word choice, arguments, and examples, along with other elements of writing style create tone. See Lesson 1 for instructional suggestions on how to identify the tone of a text.

Figurative language

This is language that surpasses literal denotation and has a deeper meaning, also known as connotation. This language creatively expresses ideas and information to enhance and elevate the writing. Figurative language forces the reader to think actively by comparing, contrasting, exaggerating, visualizing and representing. See Lesson 1 for strategies to help students understand figurative language.

Imagery

Imagery is a type of figurative language that includes descriptions appealing to the intended audience's sense of smell, sight, taste, touch, and/or hearing. Good writers use imagery to show meaning rather than simply telling.

Sentence Style

The grammatical structure of a sentence can be simple, compound or complex. A variety of sentence types and lengths in a piece of writing contribute to the writer's style and voice.

Voice

Voice is, according to Kelly Gallagher in *Write Like This*, evidence of the author's personality on the written page. Peter Elbow in *Writing Without Teachers* writes: "Voice is the force that will make a reader listen to you, the energy that drives the meaning you seek to convey to your readers... It is the voice in your writing that contains its source of power" (pp. 6-7).

Voice is intangible for many students and they need strategies to understand what makes writing interesting and unique as well as what distinguishes one writer's style from another.

- Use mentor texts to anchor students' understanding of language use.
- Explicitly teach the elements that create voice in writing (word choice, a variety of sentence structures and lengths, tone, imagery and figurative language.)
- Validate students' own language and help them to incorporate it in context. Use Sharroky Hollie's *Strategies for Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning*, especially Section 2 to guide your instruction.
- Teach students how to avoid clichés or to use them effectively.

Using student samples of writing to model proficiency in language use

Model reading through the following samples of writing, making comments on the use of language in the writing as noted in parentheses below. This strategy can be used with any piece of writing and with other criteria (ideas, organization, or conventions). Once this strategy has been modeled, students can do this themselves either with their own writing or with texts they are reading.

The following two samples of student writing are reproduced in their entirety in Appendix N.

Sample Language Use – Level 4 (from Persuasive Writing student sample 2)

Many great minds have agreed that learning from mistakes is one of the best ways to avoid future blunders. (Words are skillfully chosen.) ... The stories have an important life lesson tucked away in the words that have lasted for centuries. (Vivid imagery.) ... If you were to ask a guru the secrets of the world, he would tell you to look around yourself. We've all heard it before - watch and learn. (Vivid voice and tone.) ... You notice patterns and learn unfathomable things, simply by watching as the world spins. (Skillful choice of words and use of vivid figurative language.)

Sample Language Use – Level 3 (from Persuasive Writing student sample 4)

Age should not be a barrier when it comes to learning from one another. (Effective use of imagery.) ...
If people of different ages made a conscious effort to learn from each other problems would be solved quicker, everyone would be much more empathetic, and younger generations could learn lessons worth passing on. (Variety of sentence styles and lengths contributes to the fluidity of the writing in these two sentences.) ... *Yes, perhaps the design for a new public building looks attractive to those in their twenties, no one thought about how uncomfortable those stairs would be for elderly people to climb.* (Choice of the transitional phrase “Yes, perhaps” adds to the fluidity of the writing.) *Younger people are brats, and old people are grouchy, or so we perceive. But is this inevitable, and does anyone bother to find out why?* (The use of a question contributes to the clarity of the language.) ...*Empathy, tolerance and openmindedness make this life virtually limitless.* (Word choice is generally effective with the word “limitless” not as effective as the other words in the sentence.)

Identifying elements of a writer’s voice: information text

The following excerpt is taken from the information text “I Just Can’t Wrap my Head Around the Scourge of Overpacking” (Appendix H). It may be used as a mentor text for helping students learn to recognize, identify, and ultimately apply in their own writing, some elements of voice. Students will also benefit from comparing and contrasting the subtle differences between “voice” as found in expository versus narrative texts.

If I could, I would limit all my shopping to the goods on offer at Unpackaged, an innovative London retailer that is taking the problem of excess baggage seriously. The brainchild of owner and environmentalist Catherine Conway, the shop is located in a converted dairy and operates a lot like an old-fashioned general store.

Not only is everything on offer organic and/or local, it’s also free of excess packaging. While you can buy your first Kentish bramble jam in a jar, you are strongly encouraged after that to bring the jar back and fill it directly from the oft-replenished vat. Same goes for the organic yogurt, chutney, rolled oats, lentils, beans, nuts, olive oil, wine vinegar, eco-friendly dishwasher detergent, hand cream, and shampoo. In essence, the shop has everything you need and nothing that, with a little forethought, you don’t. It’s also much cheaper than your average trendy locavore hot spot since there’s no fancy containers to pay for.

Word Choice

Topic specific nouns:

- shopping
- goods
- retailer
- owner
- environmentalist
- vat
- retailer
- containers
- dairy

Strong adjectives:

- innovative
- excess
- converted
- local
- organic

- oft-replenished
- cheaper

Descriptive verbs:

- limit
- operates
- encouraged

Transitional words and phrases:

- in essence
- With a little forethought
- not only
- same goes

Figurative/Creative Language

- “like an old-fashioned general store”- simile
- “brainchild”- personification
- “trendy locavore”- linguistic creativity

Guiding Questions

- What do you notice about the variety and types of word choices?
- What contributes to the informative yet conversational tone of this extract?
- Discuss how the tone is appropriate or not for this writing genre and its intended audience?

Activity

Following the class discussions, revise the above excerpt so that it conveys a more formal informational tone.

See Appendix P for more suggestions on how to identify elements of a writer’s voice.

LESSON 7: Helping students to communicate and develop a clear main idea in their writing

A. Evidence

Students were given the following topic for the Persuasive Writing essay in the English 10 examination.

People of different ages can learn from each other

See Appendix M for the Persuasive Writing scoring rubrics. These rubrics are used by teachers to score student writing for four criteria – Ideas, Organization, Language Use and Conventions. These are described at four levels.

Provincially, 75% of students scored level 3 or above in Ideas in 2017-18. When scoring Ideas, teachers look for how well the writing articulates a main idea and how well this main idea is developed with supporting details. When using the rubric, teachers should pay close attention to the descriptors, especially the words that are unique to each level.

IDEAS

LEVEL 4: A main idea is **distinct** and is developed through **vivid and relevant** details.

LEVEL 3: A main idea is **clear** and is developed through **relevant** details.

LEVEL 2: A main idea is **evident** and is **somewhat developed** through details, **some of which may be irrelevant**.

LEVEL 1: A main idea is **not present**, or a main idea is **not developed** with details, or **writing does not address the prompt**.

Seven scored student samples of writing can be found in Appendix N. Each sample is followed by a detailed annotation that explains the scores given in each of the four criteria. For evidence of how students are doing in ideas, read the student writing samples and then read all seven annotations for ideas. Samples show a range of achievement from level 1 to 4.

B. Targeted skills and instructional suggestions

The writing samples in Appendix N can be placed on an “anchor wall”. Students can compare their writing to the samples on the wall and identify, either in a conference or in a journal, what they should focus on to improve the clarity and development of a main idea in their writing.

The main idea is the key or central thought of a text. It can be either explicitly stated or purposely implied. When it is implied, the reader must “read between the lines” or make an inference to understand it. The main idea should be developed with secondary ideas (arguments or facts) and be supported by examples and details. These details add clarification and enhance what is communicated. The main idea and supporting details help the intended audience understand the message of the text and remember important information. They help the reader scaffold elements of the text to further enhance understanding. The main idea and supporting details form the content of the writing and can be distinguished from organization, language use and conventions which are formal elements of the writer’s craft.

Using student samples of writing to model proficiency in ideas

Model reading through the following samples of writing, making comments on the ideas and supporting details in the writing as noted in parentheses below. This strategy can be used with any piece of writing and with other

criteria (organization, language use or conventions). Once this strategy has been modeled, students can do this themselves either with their own writing or with texts they are reading.

The following samples of student writing are reproduced in their entirety in Appendix N.

Sample Ideas - Level 4 (from Persuasive Writing student sample 2)

Humans learn mainly by imitation and trial and error. ...*We can learn a great variety of lessons from others mistakes, listening or simply watching...* (The main idea is distinctly stated.) *Learning by examples is a lot more common than you might think, and a lot more useful...* (The main idea is further developed.) *Many great minds have agreed that learning from mistakes is one of the best ways to avoid future blunders.* (This sentence expands on the main idea.) ... *Aesop's Fables are famous for their mottos. The stories have an important life lesson tucked away in the words that have lasted for centuries. They're still around today, teaching children for the future.* (These sentences include vivid and relevant details that support the main idea.) ... *We naturally grasp concepts by watching and copying other people- so naturally, in fact, that we don't even notice it.* (This sentence expands on the main idea.) *When you look at the people around you, pay attention to all the hidden messages that you wouldn't normally notice. You notice patterns and learn unfathomable things, simply by watching as the world spins.* (These sentences provide vivid details that support the main idea.)

Sample Ideas - Level 3 (from Persuasive Writing student sample 4)

If people of different ages made a conscious effort to learn from each other, problems would be solved quicker, everyone would be much more empathetic, and younger generations could learn lessons worth passing on... (The main idea is clearly stated.) *Yes, perhaps the design for a new public building looks attractive to those in their twenties, but no one thought about how uncomfortable those stairs would be for elderly people to climb. And the waiting rooms have nothing for toddlers to play with. If people of all different ages had been asked what they'd like to see in the building, and the owners and designers had considered their concerns, everybody would have ended up much happier.* (These sentences provide relevant supporting details of the main idea.) *Although nothing will ever be able to please everybody, most issues could be resolved in a much more efficient manner (even avoided) if people of all ages valued each others opinions.* (This sentence expands on the main idea.) ...*Not only could learning someone's "story" broaden one's own idea of what they think is 'the norm', but it may be even interesting... inspiring.* (This relevant detail supports the main idea.)

Developing writers' ideas

It is essential to provide students with strategies to help them narrow down broad topics and focus their ideas. They also require skills to develop main ideas, secondary ideas, examples and details.

Before crafting a text, writers must determine a message which they wish to convey, an awareness of their intended audience and ideas upon which they will elaborate. Many students find on demand writing to an assigned prompt challenging and benefit from best instructional practices such as the workshop model: this model calls for direct instruction followed by teacher modeling, then student practice in generating and developing ideas, and finally students sharing their writing.

- Discuss with students the concept of main ideas. Stress that whenever we communicate with someone, we try to defend important points. Authors do the same thing in their writing. In order for the readers to understand what the writer wants to convey, authors must present a distinct and clear main idea.
- Provide students with copies of an informational text or an exemplary student writing sample. Ask them to find the following: the main idea, topic sentences in paragraphs, and supporting details. Dissecting

pieces of a well-crafted text encourages students to transfer these elements to their own writing. Present the following tips for locating main ideas and supporting details.

- Look for a summary sentence that states the main idea in the introductory paragraphs. Stated main ideas are often found in the first or last sentence of a paragraph. If there is no summary sentence, figure out the main idea by searching for key facts or ideas.
- What is this paragraph about?
- What is the main purpose of the paragraph?
- What key words or sections of the paragraph stand out or are more important?
- Then state the main idea in your own words. After finding the main idea, look over the paragraph again. Find facts or examples that are related to the main idea. These are the supporting details.
- Model how to narrow down broad writing topics. The more authentic, relevant and high interest the topic is to your students, the more engaged they will be. Explain that the subject of “the media”, for example, is a broad one. Students can narrow this subject down to “social media”, then further narrow it down to “the effects of social media on youth.”

See *Cross-curricular Reading Tools (revised)*, Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET), pp. 14-16 for more ideas on helping students develop a main idea.

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Appendix A: Poem

To be of use

The people I love the best
Jump into work head first
Without dallying in the shallows
And swim off with sure strokes almost out of sight.
5 They seem to be natives of that element,
The black sleek heads of seals
Bouncing like half-submerged balls.

I love people who harness themselves, an ox to a heavy cart,
Who pull like water buffalo, with massive patience.
10 Who strain in the mud and the muck to move things forward,
Who do what has to be done, again and again.

I want to be with people who submerge
In the task, who go into the fields to harvest
And work in a row and pass the bags along,
15 Who are not parlour generals and field deserters
But move in a common rhythm
When the food must come in or the fire be put out.

The work of the world is common as mud.
Botched, it smears the hands, crumbles to dust.
20 But the thing worth doing well done
Has a shape that satisfies, clean and evident.
Greek amphoras¹ for wine or oil,
Hopi vases² that held corn, are put in museums
But you know they were made to be used.
25 The pitcher cries for water to carry
And a person for work that is real.

– Marge Piercy

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- 1 Amphora: a tall two-handled jar used by the ancient Greeks and Romans
 - 2 Vases produced by the Hopi, a group of Native American people.

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Appendix B: Questions based on “To be of use”

Read “To be of use” and answer the following questions. Select the best answer and fill in the bubble completely.

1. In the first stanza (lines 1-7) people the speaker loves the best
 - a. are afraid of work.
 - b. dive into their work.
 - c. hate to be submerged by work.
 - d. love their work.
2. The word “element” (line 5) refers to:
 - a. air
 - b. earth
 - c. fire
 - d. water
3. The animal metaphors in the second stanza (lines 8-11) symbolize
 - a. people who have little patience.
 - b. people who like to do things.
 - c. people who tire easily.
 - d. people who endure hard labour.
4. What type of work is described in the second stanza (lines 8-11)?
 - a. complex work
 - b. detailed work
 - c. easy work
 - d. repetitive work
5. The speaker of the poem prefers “to be with people” (line 12) who
 - a. carry out complex jobs.
 - b. grow a variety of good foods.
 - c. perform useful tasks with others.
 - d. put out fires on their own.
6. Which of the following best describes the speaker’s opinion of “parlour generals and field deserters” (line 15)?
 - a. They do not do useful work.
 - b. They do not work well together.
 - c. They prevent food from coming in.
 - d. They work too hard.
7. What does “move in a common rhythm” in line 16 mean?
 - a. dance together
 - b. leave together
 - c. strategize together
 - d. toil together

8. In the last stanza (lines 18-26), work that is well done is likened to

- a. different shapes.
- b. museum rooms.
- c. people's hands used to smear dirt.
- d. pottery used to store provisions.

9. The best meaning for the word "real" in the last line is

- a. difficult
- b. dirty
- c. physical
- d. useful

10. The tone of the poem can best be described as:

- a. assertive
- b. content
- c. dark
- d. hopeful

ANSWERS: 1.b 2.d 3.d 4.d 5.c 6.a 7.d 8.d 9.d 10.a

Appendix C: Identifying a purpose for reading

Proficient readers may not always be consciously aware of their reason for reading; however, they always do have a purpose. Understanding the reason why you are reading makes the experience more meaningful and helps clarify the meaning of the text.

Readers need a sense of their own reading purpose. Knowing the purpose will help students focus their attention on important aspects of their reading. Readers should take the time to think about purpose, to reflect on and clarify their reasons for reading. Establishing a purpose for reading makes a significant difference in what the reader focuses on during reading. Skimming may serve the reader's purpose if he/she wants to glean the main idea of a text. However, the reader's purpose may be quite different: reading for enjoyment, learning how to do something, or understanding and remembering facts or ideas. A reader's purpose affects everything about reading. It determines what is important in the text, what is remembered, and what comprehension strategy a reader uses to enhance meaning.

Prior to reading, the teacher can help students gain their own sense of reading with a purpose. Setting a purpose requires a reader to respond to several questions. It is a good idea for readers to put their purposes into questions, so that while they are reading, they are searching for answers. The following questions may be helpful in directing students to read for a purpose.

- Why am I reading this text?
- What type of material is this?
- What is the material about?

When helping students to consider their purpose for reading, teachers may ask questions such as: "Read to find out what happens when ...," "As you read, look for three reasons why ...," "What do you know about this topic?" (the background or prior knowledge that a student brings to the reading experience is a key component affecting understanding), and "Are you looking for specific information that you can use in support of an argument?" Struggling readers wait for purposes to be set for them and read to find the information requested by that purpose statement. Self-selected purposes are preferable to purposes provided by the teacher. When students set their own purposes, engagement with text is increased and comprehension is improved. Purpose influences the reading strategies used by readers and affects what they will remember. Some purposes to help students prepare for reading and specific reading strategies are listed in the following chart:

Purposes	Related Strategies
To access prior knowledge and to develop vocabulary and/or ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • semantic maps • graphic organizers • summarizing • KWL • SQ3R • brainstorming • vocabulary study • visualizing
To predict and self-direct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • previewing • reciprocal teaching • KWL • anticipation guide • think-aloud • skimming
To learn about text features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • story maps • text feature maps
To use a particular strategy and understand how it works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explicit instruction • modeling • questioning • collaboration

Cross Curricular Reading Tools (revised), Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training, 2006, pp. 17-18

Appendix D: Questions to help students independently understand a text

Encourage students to ask themselves questions like these as they read:

- Who is speaking in the passage?
- Who seems to be the main audience? (To whom is the narrator speaking?)
- What is the first thing that jumps out at me? Why?
- What's the next thing I notice? Are these two things connected? How? Do they seem to be saying different things?
- What seems important here? Why?
- What does the author mean by _____? What exact words lead me to this meaning?
- Is the author trying to convince me of something? What? How do I know?
- Is there something missing from this passage that I expected to find? Why might the author have left this out?
- Is there anything that could have been explained more thoroughly for greater clarity?
- Is there a message or main idea? What in the text led me to this conclusion?
- How does this sentence/passage fit into the text as a whole?
- What is the author telling me here?
- Are there any hard or important words?
- What does the author want me to understand?
- How does the author play with language to add to meaning?

Boyles, Nancy. "Closing in on Close Reading" in *Educational Leadership*. (December 2012/January 2013), v. 70 n. 4 pp. 36-41. <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/dec12/vol70/num04/Closing-in-on-Close-Reading.aspx>

Appendix E: Explicitly teach various reading strategies

Reading for meaning is the active thinking process of understanding texts. In order to make meaning, effective readers know that what they read must be comprehensible; when they read, the text must make sense. When effective readers become confused, they monitor their understanding, and automatically revert to reading strategies such as rereading, questioning, and/or summarizing to help them problem solve and maintain the meaning of the text.

Students may need explicit instruction demonstrating how to elaborate on the author’s intended meaning, and how to support their understandings. For example, the teacher may want to provide explicit speaking and listening instruction by modelling the sorts of questions that help to promote and support exploratory talk before the students engage in such talk in small groups. To support students in their reading of a text, it is recommended that teachers provide background knowledge and stimulate interest in a topic before the students read about it. As well, when introducing a unit of study, teachers should engage students in co-constructing criteria so they have a clear understanding of the learning targets and the criteria for success (i.e. what they are expected to know and be able to do at the end of the unit).

If you notice that ...	Then you need to ...
a student is consistently reading text that is too difficult or too easy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set goals with the student • model techniques for selecting text • assign short pieces of text that provide a little bit of challenge for students • provide the student with a number of texts to choose from
a student has difficulty with reading fluency (reads slow and choppy or much too fast)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • model fluent reading • have the student read the same piece more than once • have the student practice with text that is at his or her independent reading level
a student has difficulty with comprehension and understanding text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confer with the student • ensure the student is reading text that is at his or her instructional level • encourage the student to discuss the text with a small group
a student is unable to locate information relevant to a topic of study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide questions for investigation • model questioning and the process of locating information
a student does not critically evaluate text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide the student with questions or prompts to encourage critical thinking • model critical thinking using a think-aloud • begin by providing the student with easy/obvious texts for evaluation and move toward more complex text

Teaching in Action Grades 10-12: A Teaching Resource, p. 42.

The process of understanding text occurs before, during, and after reading or viewing. Before students engage in reading or viewing, teachers can assist them in making connections between their personal knowledge and experience, and the texts to be read or viewed. Such pre-reading classroom strategies might include the following:

- Make predictions about the topic or contents of the text to be read based on the title, illustrations, or other text features that may be present.
- Provide background knowledge about an unfamiliar topic or setting by viewing a video or still images related to the theme or topic.
- Activate students' existing background knowledge through reflective, metacognitive talk or writing, supported by graphic organizers when needed or appropriate.
- During reading or viewing, cueing systems are used in an integrated way to get information from texts, and a number of thinking strategies are applied by readers/viewers to link that information with their prior knowledge to construct meaning. Proficient readers apply strategies in an integrated and flexible way, so it is important for teachers to provide explicit instruction in the context of authentic reading situations such as read aloud or conferring during independent reading.

The following are examples of comprehension strategies that should be taught. Teachers should look for these skills when observing and conferring with students:

Making Connections: Linking what is being read with personal experience (text-to-self), with what was previously read (text-to-text), and with a knowledge of the world (text-to-world) to better understand what is being read:

- This reminds me of a time when ...
- This part explains the part on page ...

Questioning: Asking questions about the text or the topic in order to better understand what is being read:

- Before I started to read, I wondered ...
- I am confused because the visuals seem to say something different than the text.
- This part makes me wonder about ...
- This doesn't seem to make sense.
- I wonder if there is a mistake.

Inferring: Interpreting "clues" left by the author and combining interpretation with prior knowledge to create meaning:

- Based on what I am reading I think the word means ...
- I think ... because it says ...

Visualizing: Picturing ideas and images based on the language and description used by the author:

- I can picture the part where it says ...
- I imagine what it must be like to ...
- I like the way the author describes ...

Determining Importance: Knowing what is important and being able to identify key ideas:

- This is about ...
- This is important because ...
- This information is interesting, but it isn't part of the main idea.
- This word is in bold, so it must be important.
- I can use headings and subheadings to help me find the information I am looking for.

Analyzing: Examining parts or all of a text in terms of its content, structure, and meaning:

- I notice the author used this technique/word choice ...
- I think the author tried to ...
- This doesn't fit with what I know ...
- This would have been better if ...

Synthesizing: Building a new understanding by combining what is already known with what was read:

- Now that I have read this, I am beginning to think differently about...
- For me this is about ...

Appendix F: Annotating text

Annotating text promotes active engagement with the text and encourages students to think as they read. Teachers can teach students several symbols and ways to mark the text.

Students should be introduced to symbols, such as, a “check mark” to signify “I understand”, an “!” to show that this part of the text is interesting or understood, a “?” to indicate that this part of the text is confusing or not comprehensible.

Cris Tovani's adaptation* of this strategy includes using sticky notes and highlighters. This can only be done if you own the text and can mark in it. Otherwise a copy of the text must be available to mark. Tovani encourages teachers to make four main considerations when using an annotative strategy:

1. Use codes to show different types of thinking occurring while students read the text. For example, *BK* means background knowledge and helps the reader make a connection between the text and their everyday life.
2. Model how to use the coding process for your students by conducting a think-aloud with a piece of text. Use a transparency or smartboard so students can visualize what they will need to do.
3. Give students accessible text for them to mark. If they aren't connecting to the text, they will not be able to consistently describe their coding. Also, don't assign too many codes at once, ease them into the process! Encourage all attempts they make.
4. Use highlighters when students come across something in the text they do not understand or find confusing. Use yellow highlighters for what they don't understand, and green highlighters for what they find confusing. Choose a short piece of text for this part of annotating, so students don't feel overwhelmed.
5. Students can also make comments and ask questions in the margin. These questions can be for further research to find answers, or to ask the class for clarification. They can circle definitions and meanings, write key words and definitions in the margin, or make connections as they read.

*Adapted from *I Read It, But I Don't Get It*, Cris Tovani, 2000.

See also “Sample Assessment Criteria/Checklist for Text Annotations”, *Teaching in Action Grades 10-12*. p. 658.

Appendix G: Connotation and denotation

Connotation—The Power of Word Choice

Ask students which they would rather be:

- sophisticated or elegant
- skinny or slim
- frugal or thrifty
- a problem solver or a conniving person
- a take-charge person or a controlling person
- stubborn or strong-willed

Have students defend their choices by explaining the differences in the words. State that although the words have similar dictionary meanings, our response to them varies because of the connotation: the meaning that a word suggests or implies. A connotation includes the emotions or associations that surround a word. For example, the word “modern” strictly means “belonging to recent times,” but the word’s connotations can include such notions as “new,” “up-to-date,” and/or “experimental.” Words can have positive, neutral, or negative connotations.

Read mentor texts that illustrate powerful vocabulary. Have the students reread each selection using the following mentor text focus questions to guide them:

- What do you notice about the word choices in the mentor text?
- What else do you notice?
- What sticks with you?
- What effect does this have?
- What did you notice that you might try in your writing?

Students can write directly on the mentor text or they can answer the questions in point form in their writer’s notebooks.

Share students’ responses. Ensure that word choice is discussed but respond to all examples of author’s craft identified by students. Teachers need to direct the discussion and focus on the topic of the specific focus lesson without stifling students’ comments about additional elements of the mentor text.

Examples of potential ideas to discuss for Craig Kielburger’s speech “Inspiring a New Generation of Young Leaders” https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=14&v=D3nZgA-bFbo and Jim Hill’s blog, “Maybe Dats Youwr Pwoblem Too” <http://jameswhall.blogspot.com/2008/01/maybe-dats-your-pwoblem-too.html> include:

“Inspiring a New Generation of Young Leaders”

- tone—talking directly to the listener
- the use of fragments to make a point
- starting sentences with a conjunction to get the reader’s attention
- the use of repetition for emphasis
- the use of contrast to illustrate differences
- the inclusion of personal anecdotes
- the use of a clear, strong voice to present experiences

“Maybe Dats Youwr Pwoblem Too”

- misspellings (why?)
- font—upper case for the word SPIDERMAN, contrast between the simple vocabulary and the sophisticated idea of our suits or reputations
- the purpose of the question at the end of the poem

Have students complete a quick write in their writer’s notebook. Allow them to write for five to ten minutes on an issue that is connected to the mentor text or a topic of their choice (for example, one of the topics— personal problems, world problems, or reputation—that is connected to Kielburger’s and Hall’s works). The quick write can be used by students later in the unit when they have to choose a topic for their writing assignment.

Optional: Have students research what an author says about text creation. Have them record the author’s comments and their reactions to the author’s comments. For example, show Jim Hall’s blog for a Spiderman poem as he writes about the poem and the writer-reader connection:

<http://jameswhall.blogspot.com/2008/01/maybe-dats-yourpwoblem-too.html>.

Students can share their work in a read-aloud, shared reading, or silent reading. The discussion could be in a small group, as a Socratic Circle, whole-class, or as a journal response. If a journal response is chosen, collect journals and respond to the students’ writing by trying to prompt them into deeper thinking. Remind students that they can add to their thoughts once they read the comments and feedback provided.

Have students complete an exit slip. Students must pick a word from one of the mentor texts and explain its connotation using words, pictures, or a combination of words and pictures. Collect and sort the Exit Slips into two groups: understands connotation and does not understand connotation. Use this as assessment for learning. If needed, create a guided writing group with the students who do not understand connotation and re-teach the concept.

For information about quick writes or free writes see *Inside Writing: How to Teach the Details of Craft*, by Donald Graves and Penny Kittle, pp. 2–5, and *Get It Written, Get It Right*, by Anne Ratchford, pp. 5–7.

See *Write Beside Them: Risk, Voice, and Clarity in High-School Writing*, by Penny Kittle, pp. 51–55, for ideas on how to use freewriting as a place to find writing topics.

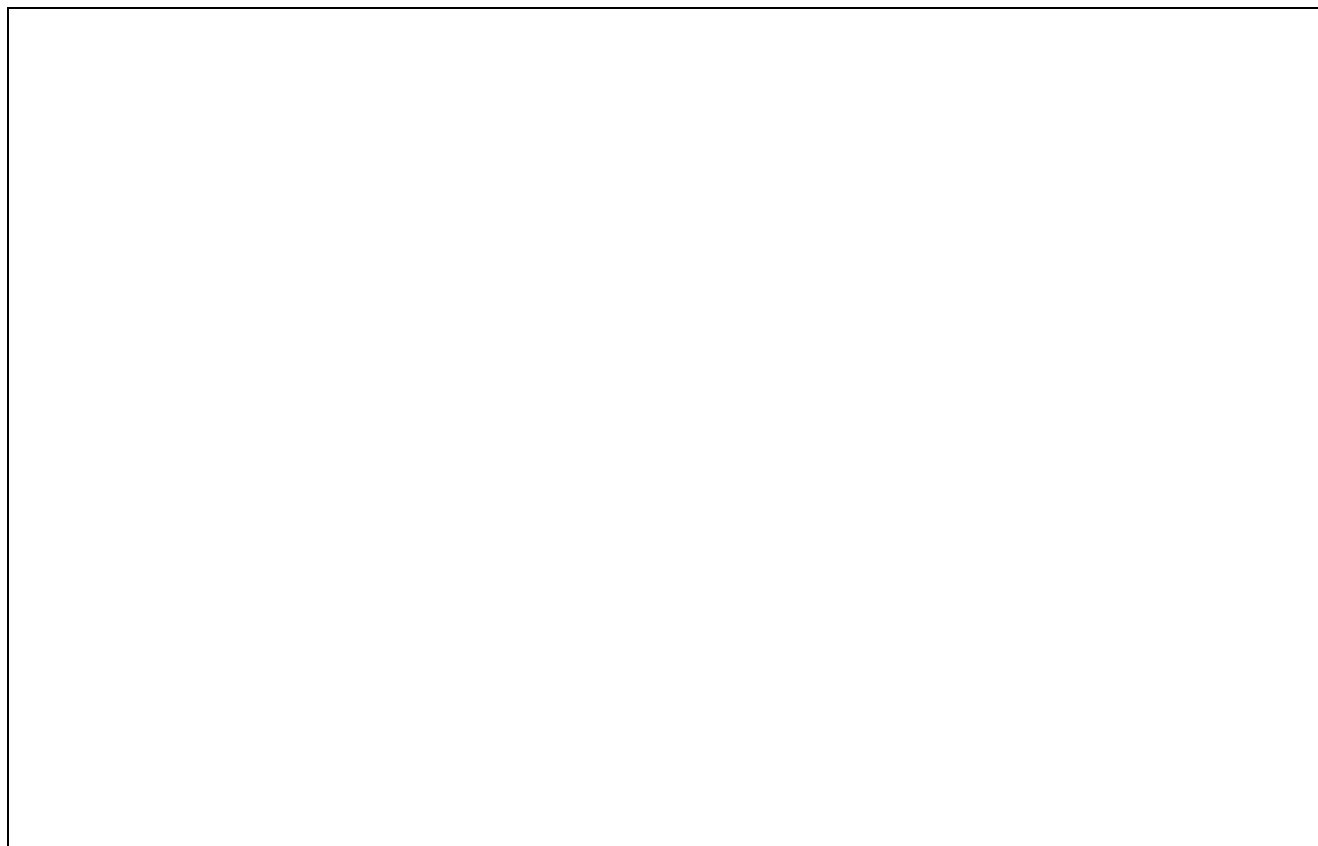
Exit Slip Connotation

Word from the mentor text: _____

Denotation of the word:

Connotation of the word:

Visual representation of the word's connotation:



See *Teaching in Action Grades 10-12: A Teaching Resource* pp. 440-442.

Teachers must collect evidence of student learning from a variety of sources that include conversations, observations, and products. (See Anne Davies, *Making Classroom Assessment Work*, 2007)

- **Conversations**

Talking with a student gives insight into the student's learning. Conversations may be very informal, or they can be quite structured, in the form of a conference. A talk can provide insight into things that might not be apparent simply from observation or from products. Conversations allow students the opportunity to explain how or why they did something, as well as give the teacher a chance to ask probing questions requiring deeper thinking. It should be noted that the category of conversations also includes students' journals and reflections that provide a written form of conversation with the teacher.

- **Observations**

Observing a student while engaged in the learning process allows insight into this process at various points along the way; it does not require the process to be complete. Observation is an ideal way to assess achievement of many of the speaking and listening outcomes in particular.

- **Products**

Products include all of the work that a student completes. They can be written texts such as essays, lists of books read, responses, or poetry. They can also include visual or oral products such as posters, radio or video ads, or a dramatization of a scene from a novel.

Provide explicit instruction in reading comprehension using the reciprocal teaching strategy that includes predicting, visualizing, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. **Reciprocal teaching** involves the teacher and ideally a small group of students in a dialogue regarding segments of a shared text. The teacher and students take turns assuming the role of leader in guiding this dialogue. The leader reads aloud a segment of a passage as group members follow along silently. The group members then pose questions that focus on main ideas. The leader answers and summarizes the content. The group discusses and clarifies any remaining difficulties in understanding meaning of the passage. The group then makes a prediction about the next segment of the passage. A second student takes on the role of leader for the next segment of text. This strategy is particularly useful in structuring Guided Reading sessions during reading workshop.

The **Turn and Talk** and **Think, Pair, Share** strategies help students understand difficult text or concepts, and clear up confusion that they might have. They provide quick, efficient means of providing talk time for students within the context of a wide variety of instructional approaches and classroom structures. They provide opportunities for students to activate prior knowledge about a topic or issue, to filter information, to draw conclusions and to consider points of view. Graphic organizers may be used to scaffold these activities for some students needing differentiation.

For **Turn and Talk**, students may work in a small group setting, but it is generally used with a partner. After a time spent reading or viewing text, or listening to instruction, the teacher poses a focusing question or statement, and students are asked to turn to a partner and talk about it. The students discuss, ask questions, and clarify ideas for a short time, then return to the previous activity or shift the discussion to the whole class.

Think, Pair, Share follows a very similar process, with the addition of using writing or some other form of representation to support students' thinking. After a time spent reading or viewing text, or listening to instruction, the teacher poses a focusing question or statement, and students are asked to free write or use some other form of representation to think about the topic for a few minutes. Students turn to a partner and talk about the topic for a short time, then shift the discussion to the whole class.

There are many possible variations of these note-making strategies, **Double-entry Diary** and **Cornell Notes**. Generally, students divide a notebook page into two columns: the questions/key word column on the left, and the note-making column, which is twice the size of the question column, on the right. A space for summarizing and reflection is left at the bottom of the page. As students read or view text, conduct research, or listen to oral

presentations, they can take note of main ideas in the right-hand column, and record questions for future clarification in the left-hand column.

There are many applications and adaptations for this note-making strategy. Teachers might use this format to support students' reading or viewing of difficult texts. By changing the purpose of the columns, students can be guided to use targeted comprehension strategies, track when meaning breaks down, or respond to the text in other meaningful ways. Regardless of the variation, after note-making students write a brief summary or reflection in the space at the bottom of the page.

Open Journal

An open journal is a place where students can record their responses to the text in a manner that communicates information and responses in a less structured but still meaningful way. Students record ideas and information that relate to the text in a form that might include:

- comments and connections they have made to the text.
- questions or things they wonder about that are prompted by the text.
- quotes from the text.
- words they like the sound of.
- additional information they have gathered to help extend or clarify the text.
- poetry they have written based on the text.
- sketches or art work.
- a letter to a character, the author, etc.
- a revision or new ending, chapter, lead, etc.
- observations they have made about author's craft or the construction of the text.

Appendix H: Information Text

“I Just Can’t Wrap My Head Around the Scourge of Overpackaging”

Like many a bad scene, it all started with an apple.

I was on my way to the gym when low blood sugar struck. All I wanted was a piece of fruit. Popping into a big-box grocery store, I quickly found one, chilling in the open-air crisper, tucked into a cardboard tray, shrink-wrapped in cellophane, waxed to perfection beside three other apples. The price? Roughly
5 \$4.50. Problem was, I just wanted one. And I didn’t want any of the packaging.

So I did what any socially conscious person with low blood sugar would do in such a situation: I poked my fingernail through the cellophane and plucked a single Granny Smith from the tray. I then took it up to the checkout counter and placed it on the conveyor, where it bumped down the belt toward a teenage clerk who stared at the unpackaged apple, then at me and then back at the apple. It was as if he had just
10 been presented with a baby’s decapitated head.

“What’s that?” he asked.

“An apple,” I said.

“But it’s...it’s not...” he searched.

“I just wanted one,” I explained.

15 He shook his head. “Can’t scan it.”

The clerk and I then exchanged a few more words. His included “can’t help,” “other customers,” and “waiting.” Among mine were “ludicrous,” “inflexible,” “rip-off,” and “stinking load of corporate crap.”

Getting nowhere, I finally asked the clerk to hold the line and marched back to the crisper, grabbed the (now) three-pack of remaining apples, handed them over, paid the \$4.50 and – still holding up the
20 queue – proceeded to rip off all the packaging and throw it on the floor. I walked out the store, angrily munching my overpriced apple. No, it wasn’t my finest moment, but my outburst reflected my growing frustration with the travesty of overpackaging.

“Mmm...,” a wise girlfriend of mine said over tea a few days later. “Sounds like you were suffering from an acute case of wrap rage.”

25 Of course, I have been suffering from wrap rage for years, but I just never knew what to call it. Ever since I cut my thumb trying to remove a Sony Walkman from a clamshell pack on Christmas morning in 1986, I have been a wrap-rage-aholic, begging sales clerks not to bundle things in tissue paper and shoving whole chickens straight into my purse. No need for a bag, thanks. I’m good.

Really, though, I'm not good. Nor am I alone. According to a recent story entitled "Aboxalypse Now,"
30 (in *Mother Jones*, a magazine that reports on politics, the environment, human rights, and culture), 35
percent of Americans say they seek alternatives to excessively packaged good, while nearly half of
consumers worldwide claim they would choose sustainable packaging over convenience. In spite of this,
nearly one-third of Americans' waste consists of packaging and only 43 percent is recycled. And here in
Britain, where cling-filmed cucumbers are sold in plastic cartons, a recent government study revealed that
35 almost 40 percent of packaging found in the typical grocery cart cannot be easily recycled.

Add to this the extra price of packaging – average estimates range from 10 to 40 percent of the total
cost of food products – and wrap rage seems the only sane reaction to a needlessly shrink-wrapped
society. As a blogger for *Packaging Digest*, a trade publication, put it recently, "the battle against
overpackaging isn't about environmental stuff. This is about keeping people from going totally insane."

40 If I could, I would limit all of my shopping to the goods on offer at Unpackaged, an innovative London
retailer that is taking the problem of excess baggage seriously. The brainchild of owner and
environmentalist Catherine Conway, the shop is located in a converted dairy and operates a lot like an old-
fashioned general store.

Not only is everything on offer organic and/or local, it's also free of excess packaging. While you can
45 buy your first Kentish bramble jam in a jar, you are strongly encouraged after that to bring the jar back
and fill it directly from the oft-replenished vat. Same goes for organic yogurt, chutney, rolled oats, lentils,
beans nuts, olive oil, wine vinegar, eco-friendly dishwasher detergent, hand cream, and shampoo. In
essence, the shop has everything you need and nothing that, with a little forethought, you don't. It's also
much cheaper than your average trendy locavore hot spot since there's no fancy containers to pay for.

50 During a recent visit, the shop was full with people on their way home from work in bicycle gear,
scooping cereal and nuts into reused Ziploc bags they had pulled from their pockets. A smiley hippie girl
behind the counter informed me that Unpackaged will provide bags to first-time customers who purchase
\$20 worth of goods or more. "We don't want to be mean about it," she said. But, she added, staff will also
try to gently explain the retailer's mission, which essentially boils down to the old truism of less being
55 more.

I bought a single green apple and went happily munching on my way.

– Leah McLaren, *The Globe and Mail*, 2010

theglobeandmail.com/life/im-suffering-from-overpackaging-rage/
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Appendix I: Questions based on “I Just Can’t Wrap My Head Around the Scourge of Overpackaging”

Read “I Just Can’t Wrap My Head Around the Scourge of Overpackaging” and answer the following questions. Select the best answer and fill in the bubble completely.

1. Why does the author open a package of apples in the grocery store?
 - a. She cannot afford to pay for all the apples.
 - b. She disapproves of the packaging.
 - c. She is desperately hungry.
 - d. She needs only one apple.
2. The clerk’s reaction to the apple at the checkout counter indicates
 - a. that he was angry.
 - b. that he was frightened.
 - c. that he was sad.
 - d. that he was surprised.
3. The word “marched” (line 18) in this context indicates that the narrator is
 - a. aggravated.
 - b. nasty.
 - c. offended.
 - d. speedy.
4. Why did the narrator throw the apple packaging on the floor of the store?
 - a. She didn’t want to carry the packaging with her.
 - b. She wanted to make a statement about overpackaging.
 - c. She was angry with the clerk and wanted to annoy him.
 - d. She was feeling weak and irritable.
5. “It wasn’t my finest moment” (line 21) suggests that the author feels
 - a. completely satisfied.
 - b. slightly ashamed.
 - c. somewhat angry.
 - d. very proud.
6. When did the author’s frustration with overpackaging begin?
 - a. When she hurt herself on a package.
 - b. When she paid a visit to the store Unpackaged.
 - c. When she read “Aboxalypse Now” in a magazine.
 - d. When she wanted to buy a single apple.
7. The author considers the store Unpackaged “innovative” (line 40) because
 - a. it appeals to different consumers.
 - b. it encourages re-using.
 - c. it is in a converted dairy.
 - d. it sells environmentally friendly goods.

8. Why do costumers need to have “a little forethought” (line 48) to shop at the store Unpackaged?

- a. They can buy only what they need.
- b. They must return jam jars to the store.
- c. They should bring containers for their purchases.
- d. They will be overwhelmed by the variety of items.

9. The “old truism of less being more” (lines 54-55) in the context of this article means that

- a. buying less is better than buying more.
- b. less packaging makes more sense.
- c. the less you buy, the more you save.
- d. using less packaging is becoming more popular.

10. What is the main message of the article?

- a. Consumers should try to buy locally grown food.
- b. Large stores are impersonal.
- c. Many consumer goods are overpackaged.
- d. Small businesses are better than big businesses.

ANSWERS: 1.d 2.d 3.a 4.b 5.b 6.a 7.b 8.c 9.b 10.c

Appendix J: Text features: instructional and assessment strategies

Text features are the various print features (font, bold, bullets, etc.); visual supports (diagrams, graphs, maps, charts, etc.); organizational support (table of contents, glossary, titles, etc.); and vocabulary cues (for example, in conclusion, on the other hand) used by authors and publishers to assist readers in locating information and making meaning from texts.

Text features help students to understand the ideas being presented, to identify main ideas as well as to develop new vocabulary. Explicitly teaching the characteristics of each text feature will help students to find and understand information allowing them to be better learners and more effective readers. By searching for text features through skimming and scanning the text, background knowledge is activated. This helps students to make connections to the text they are reading, aiding comprehension.

- Using an information text or a nonfiction text introduces the students to several of the text features which can be found within the text. Discuss each of the text features and ask the students what purpose the text feature offers to the reader to aid in understanding the text. Explain that text features are part of the organizational design of the text and that their function is to support the reader's comprehension. Create an anchor chart of the various text features and describe the characteristics of each one. For example, words that are in bold alert the reader to slow down and to pay particular attention to the word; italicized words are used for emphasis or to separate different kinds of information.
- Let students explore several texts with a partner to discover the text features. Ask each pair of students to create a T-chart—ask the students to list the text features that they discover on the left side of the T-chart and on the right side of the T-chart to explain the characteristics of the text feature and how the text features helped them to understand the text.
- In a whole class discussion, talk about the students' findings and their understandings of the text features. "Which text features supported you in understanding the text? Which text features have you listed in your T-chart? What is the purpose of each of the text features that you have noted? Is the text feature effective in the context in which it is used in the text?"

Text Feature Assessment Strategies

Teachers must collect evidence of student learning from a variety of sources that include conversations, observations, and products (Davies, 2007).

Conversations: Talking with a student gives insight into the student's learning. Conversations may be very informal, or they can be quite structured, in the form of a conference. A talk can provide insight into things that might not be apparent simply from observation or from products. Conversations allow students the opportunity to explain how or why they did something, as well as give the teacher a chance to ask probing questions requiring deeper thinking. It should be noted that the category of conversations also includes students' journals and reflections that provide a written form of conversation with the teacher.

Observations: Observing a student while engaged in the learning process allows insight into this process at various points along the way; it does not require the process to be complete. Observation is an ideal way to assess achievement of many of the speaking and listening outcomes in particular.

Products: Products include all of the work that a student completes. Products can be written texts such as essays, lists of books read, responses, or poetry. Products can also be visual or oral, such as posters, radio or video ads, or a dramatization of a scene from a novel.

- Group students according to similar reading levels. Provide each group with sample texts that are at an independent reading level for the group so that they can practice using text features for navigation and comprehension.

- After explicit instruction, use an exit slip to assess students' understandings of text features. Use the exit slip to sort students into three groups according to their understanding of text features: understands text features, beginning to understand text features, having difficulty understanding text features. Then provide additional support, in small groups, to the students needing further explicit instruction, while the rest of the class begins to complete an assigned task on text features.
- Vary the level of support by giving a visual representation, which includes definitions of the text features or examples for each text feature, to students who require this scaffolding.
- Vary the task for students. Some students can show understanding by identifying the text feature in a variety of nonfiction texts. Others can create their own example of a non-fiction writing that includes a variety of appropriate text features to support the reader.
- Explicitly teach a variety of previewing strategies that involve use of text features and text structures.
- Review, and continue to explicitly teach and model how to use text features to help construct comprehension and find information in texts.
- Use mentor texts to teach text features and text structures characteristic of a variety of print and non-print texts.
- Conduct a scavenger hunt where students skim texts to locate and identify text features and record them on a graphic organizer or note template.
- Model and explicitly teach strategies for making notes, such as determining importance, lifting key words, examining text features and text structure, as well as annotating texts.

Appendix K: Reading Response scoring rubrics

Reading Response scoring rubric for use during provincial scoring sessions.

Ideas 1 – Quality of Text Comprehension	
4	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the text(s) offering an insightful response with strong support from the text(s).
3	Demonstrates a clear understanding of the text(s) offering a thoughtful response with relevant support from the text(s).
2	Demonstrates a limited understanding of the text(s) offering a simplistic response with vague and/or minimal support from the text(s).
1	Demonstrates a misreading or significant misunderstanding of the text(s) offering an irrelevant response with minimal or no support from the text(s).
Ideas 2 – Quality of Writing	
4	A main idea is distinct and is developed through vivid and relevant details.
3	A main idea is clear and is developed through relevant details.
2	A main idea is evident and is somewhat developed through details, some of which may be irrelevant.
1	A main idea is not present, or a main idea is not developed with details, or writing does not address the prompt.
Organization	
4	The writing is skillfully organized with skillful use of varied transitions.
3	The writing is organized with effective use of varied transitions.
2	The writing is somewhat organized with vague or mechanical transitions.
1	The writing is lacking organization; there is little or no evidence of transitions.
Language Use	
4	Language use contributes to vivid and skillful writing.
3	Language use contributes to clear and fluid writing.
2	Language use contributes to vague or mechanical writing.
1	Language use contributes to confusing writing, or there is little evidence of language use.
Conventions	
4	A variety of consistently correct conventions contribute to enhanced communication.
3	A variety of generally correct conventions contribute to effective communication.
2	Errors in conventions are noticeable, but communication is coherent.
1	Errors in conventions contribute to confusing communication, or there is little evidence of conventions.
Not Enough Evidence	
There is not enough evidence to assess the student’s writing (e.g., indecipherable, blank paper, not enough information to score).	

Reading Response scoring rubric for use by English 10 teachers when marking examinations.

Ideas	
Ideas 1 – Quality of Text Comprehension	
4 points	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the text(s) offering an insightful response with strong support from the text(s).
3 points	Demonstrates a clear understanding of the text(s) offering a thoughtful response with relevant support from the text(s).
2 points	Demonstrates a limited understanding of the text(s) offering a simplistic response with vague and/or minimal support from the text(s).
1 point	Demonstrates a misreading or significant misunderstanding of the text(s) offering an irrelevant response with minimal or no support from the text(s).
Ideas 2 – Quality of Writing	
4 points	A main idea is distinct and is developed through vivid and relevant details.
3 points	A main idea is clear and is developed through relevant details.
2 points	A main idea is evident and is somewhat developed through details, some of which may be irrelevant.
1 point	A main idea is not present, or a main idea is not developed with details, or writing does not address the prompt.
Organization	
4 points	The writing is skillfully organized with skillful use of varied transitions.
3 points	The writing is organized with effective use of varied transitions.
2 points	The writing is somewhat organized with vague or mechanical transitions.
1 point	The writing is lacking organization; there is little or no evidence of transitions.
Language Use	
4 points	Language use contributes to vivid and skillful writing.
3 points	Language use contributes to clear and fluid writing.
2 points	Language use contributes to vague or mechanical writing.
1 point	Language use contributes to confusing writing, or there is little evidence of language use.
Conventions	
4 points	A variety of consistently correct conventions contribute to enhanced communication.
3 points	A variety of generally correct conventions contribute to effective communication.
2 points	Errors in conventions are noticeable, but communication is coherent.
1 point	Errors in conventions contribute to confusing communication, or there is little evidence of conventions.

Note: Students who do not respond to the writing task should receive a 0 for that task.

Appendix L: Reading response student writing samples

Reading Response Student sample 1

Most of the texts presented in this examination portrayed opinions on what is good and what is right. The one that stuck out the most was "I Just Can't Wrap my Head Around the Scourge of Overpackaging". This text had a clear view on what is good and what is right.

"I Just Can't Wrap my Head Around the Scourge of Packaging" used very clear language to convey that less packaging is better. It used language and words like "wrap rage" to convey the sense of negativity towards items with more packaging. The author describes themselves as a wrap-rage alcoholic" which adds to the sense of negativity towards greater amounts of packaging. The author used facts such as "35 percent of Americans say they seek alternatives to excessively packaged goods" to convey their opinion towards packaging. The author also portrayed the story Unpackaged in a very positive light, since they opposed large amounts of packaging as well. The author referred to the store as innovative and described it very well, to add to the sense of positivity towards it. The author also says that they were happy at the end because they found what they were looking for. This gives the reader the impression that the store is very good, and the feeling that they want to go there. Overall, this article clearly conveyed the message that less packaging is far better than more packaging.

In conclusion, the article "I Just Can't Wrap my Head Around the Scourge of Overpackaging" displayed clear signs that they were trying to convince the reader that something is good or right. It used certain words and phrases to convince the reader that their opinion is right. It also kept the argument one sided so that the reader doesn't start doubting them. Overall it showed recurring signs of a positive message towards the store.

ANNOTATION: Ideas 1 for student sample 1

LEVEL 4: Thorough understanding of the text: *...which adds to the sense of negativity towards...; portrayed the store Unpackaged in a very positive light.* Insightful response with strong support from the text: *They all also kept the argument one sided so that the reader doesn't start doubting them.*

Reading Response Student sample 2

The text "I Just Can't Wrap my Head Around the Scourge of Overpackaging" portrays its opinion on what is good and what is not good. This text tells us that too much packaging is used and that we should reuse our containers. It informs us that not many people recycle. Too much packaging is bad for people and the environment.

The author states that everything is overpackaged: "my outburst reflected my growing frustration with the travesty of overpacking." (lines 21-22). She is angry that there is too much packaging. The author wants us to see her opinion on overpackaging and maybe change our minds. She doesn't believe there is any need for overpackaging. In her opinion overpackaging is bad.

Leah McLaren says, "While you can buy your first Kentish bramble am in a jar, you are strongly encouraged after that to bring the jar black and fill it directly from the oft-replenished vat" (line 51-53). There are some stores that encourage you to reuse your container. The author is very happy with this store and would shop there all the time. She believes they are doing good for the people and that every store should do the same.

The author tells us that not many people recycle. "Only 43 percent is recycled" (line 38). She believes that too much of overpackaging causes this problem. "As a logger for Packing Digest, a trade publication, put it recently, "the battle against overpackaging isn't about environmental stuff. This is about keeping people from going totally insane" (line 38-39).

In the author's text, it was clear that she thought overpackaging is bad and we should reuse things more often. She points out that overpackaging is today's problem and it will cause problems in the future. Leah McLaren wants us to see that overpackaging is bad and we should recycle more. Overpackaging is bad for us and the environment.

ANNOTATION: Ideas 1 for student sample 2

LEVEL 3: Clear understanding of the text: *The author wants us to see her opinion on overpackaging and maybe change our minds.* Thoughtful response with relevant support from the text: *'This is about keeping people from going totally insane.'* Leah McLaren agrees with this thought and uses it in her writing to tell people to use less packaging.

Reading Response Student sample 3

Texts usually state their opinion whether it's good or bad. In the text "I Just Can't Wrap my Head Around the Scourge of Overpackaging" by Leah McLaren. She talks about how overpackaging is not only annoying for people but it actually affects things like waste. "nearly one-third of Americans' waste consists of packaging and only 43 percent is recycled." She is clearly stating her opinion in this text, she tells readers that overpackaging is becoming a problem. This is an example of saying that it is not good and her opinion is right.

The poem "to Be of Use" talks about how the author loves people who dive into their work and that can work good with others. The author says "I want to be with people who submerge in the task." I think that this poem has a very good opinion and is right because people who love their job or anything want to work with people who feel the same and not just do something because they are forced to. I also like how the author used animals as a metaphor, for example she says "who pull like water buffalo, with massive patience." I think by using metaphor it made her point come across more clearly because it engages the reader more by that then if you just said who work really hard.

Both the opinions in the text and poem are really good and right. They both use good word choices and good supporting details. Overall I think overpackaging is bad and I do love people who work hard and dive into their work.

ANNOTATION: Ideas 1 for student sample 3

LEVEL 2: *Demonstrates a limited understanding of the text: I think that this poem has a very good opinion and is right because people who love their job or anything want to work with people who feel the same and not just do something because they are forced to. Vague and minimal support from the text: I think by using metaphors it made her point come across more clearly because it engages the reader more by that then if you just said who work really hard.*

Reading Response Student sample 4

The story "I just can't wrap my head around the scourge of overpackaging" stood out to me because of strong opinions on the subject and the pun in the title. In this piece of writing it talks about how the narrator has wrap rage due to useless overpackaging on every day products. In lines 34-41, the text spews out some statistics about a variety of overpackaging things. But the fact stood out to me was "that almost 40 percent of packaging found in the typical grocery cart cannot be easily recycled" (pg 8 in booklet.) Why are we not more concerned about this?

In this article the author clearly states what she feels is wrong and right. And also gives her support to a store called "Unpackaged" (page 8, ln 47) which cuts down on over-packaging by reusing jars, instead of keeping products under high security lockdown.

In conclusion I feel this article best shows what's right and what's wrong because the author has strong views about the topic, the author states her opinion, some facts about the topic and her support to a store that dramatically cuts down on packaging.

ANNOTATION: Ideas 1 for student sample 4

LEVEL 2: *Demonstrates limited understanding of the text with vague support from the text: In this piece of writing it talks about how the narrator has wrap rage due to useless overpackaging on every day products. In lines 34-41, The text spews out some statistics, about a variety of overpackaging things.*

Reading Response Student sample 5

Texts often do have an opinion about something, wether it be "what is or is not good", "right or wrong". To Be of Use is opinionating that doing what is right is better than any of stakes that are in place. As long as you are doing what you think is right, you can look on to a brighter future. I just can't wrap my head around the scourage of overpacking, is opinionating that anybody can do the right thing, it all comes down to who will act to do the right thing, and not just talk about it. The people who just haven't learned what is right yet.

ANNOTATION: Ideas 1 for student sample 5

LEVEL 1: Misreading of the text: *'To Be of Use' is opinionating that doing what is right is better than any of the stakes that are in place.* Minimal support from the text: *I just can't wrap my head around the scourage of overpacking is opinionating that anybody can do the right thing, it all comes down to who will act to do the right thing, and not just talk about it.*

Appendix M: Persuasive Writing scoring rubrics

Persuasive Writing scoring rubric for use during provincial scoring sessions

Ideas	
4	A main idea is distinct and is developed through vivid and relevant details.
3	A main idea is clear and is developed through relevant details.
2	A main idea is evident and is somewhat developed through details, some of which may be irrelevant.
1	A main idea is not present, or a main idea is not developed with details, or writing does not address the prompt.
Organization	
4	The writing is skillfully organized with skillful use of varied transitions.
3	The writing is organized with effective use of varied transitions.
2	The writing is somewhat organized with vague or mechanical transitions.
1	The writing is lacking organization; there is little or no evidence of transitions.
Language Use	
4	Language use contributes to vivid and skillful writing.
3	Language use contributes to clear and fluid writing.
2	Language use contributes to vague or mechanical writing.
1	Language use contributes to confusing writing, or there is little evidence of language use.
Conventions	
4	A variety of consistently correct conventions contribute to enhanced communication.
3	A variety of generally correct conventions contribute to effective communication.
2	Errors in conventions are noticeable, but communication is coherent.
1	Errors in conventions contribute to confusing communication, or there is little evidence of conventions.
Not Enough Evidence	
There is not enough evidence to assess the student's writing (e.g., indecipherable, blank paper, not enough information to score).	

Persuasive Writing scoring rubric: for use by English 10 teachers when marking examinations

Ideas	
7–8 points	A main idea is distinct and is developed through vivid and relevant details.
5–6 points	A main idea is clear and is developed through relevant details.
3–4 points	A main idea is evident and is somewhat developed through details, some of which may be irrelevant.
1–2 points	A main idea is not present, or a main idea is not developed with details, or writing does not address the prompt.
Organization	
7–8 points	The writing is skillfully organized with skillful use of varied transitions.
5–6 points	The writing is organized with effective use of varied transitions.
3–4 points	The writing is somewhat organized with vague or mechanical transitions.
1–2 points	The writing is lacking organization; there is little or no evidence of transitions.
Language Use	
4 points	Language use contributes to vivid and skillful writing.
3 points	Language use contributes to clear and fluid writing.
2 points	Language use contributes to vague or mechanical writing.
1 point	Language use contributes to confusing writing, or there is little evidence of language use.
Conventions	
4 points	A variety of consistently correct conventions contribute to enhanced communication.
3 points	A variety of generally correct conventions contribute to effective communication.
2 points	Errors in conventions are noticeable, but communication is coherent.
1 point	Errors in conventions contribute to confusing communication, or there is little evidence of conventions.

Note: Students who do not respond to the writing task should receive a 0 for that task.

Appendix N: Persuasive writing student writing samples

The following seven samples of student writing respond to the examination prompt “People of different ages can learn from each other.” Each sample is followed by a detailed annotation that explains the score given for each of the four writing criteria – Ideas, Organization, Language Use and Conventions.

Persuasive Writing Student Sample 1

There are many varieties of people in the world, and each and every person in the world has dealt with or experienced different things at many different stages in our lives, we will always have a story to tell, as a new song to be sung. People of all ages can learn something from one another because each of us has a different knowledge as story that can be shared and, as human beings, we are always capable of learning something new.

Younger people, including teens such as myself, are always trying new things, and also learning new things about the world, and about growing up. Even though we are the ones who are constantly being taught new things, we are also quite capable of teaching our elders a thing or two. Over the years, our parents and grandparents tend to lose sight of some of the important things in life, and with the hustle and bustle of everyday adult life, they tend to forget to take a moment to enjoy life. At the teenage stage in life, we are learning to become good adults, but we are also enjoying our lives as young people before we have a lot of responsibilities. Teenagers are notorious for knowing when they can just let loose and have fun, which is something that most adults and elderly people can learn from them.

In saying that though, there are many things that adults and elderly people can teach us, the younger people. Adults, and the elderly people especially have already lived through their adolescent years, and have been victims of the same mistakes that we make as teenagers. Since they're already dealt with what we are going through, they are the perfect candidates for teaching younger people right from wrongs. Older people have been living on this planet for a longer time, which means that they've seen more than younger people have. They are wise, and can teach younger people to make the right decisions throughout their lives.

We humans are always learning and trying new things, no matter what stage we are going through in our lives. Because of this, we are always capable of learning new things from each other, and teaching each other new things. Though we may be experts in different aspects of the world, no one at any age is an expert in the way of living life, but we are all capable of helping each other out, which is why all people can learn something from other people of all ages.

ANNOTATION

Ideas – 4: A main idea is distinct: *People of all ages can learn something from one another because each of us has a different knowledge or story that can be shared and, as human beings, we are always capable of learning something new.* The main idea is developed through vivid and relevant details: *Teenagers are notorious for knowing when they can just let loose and have fun, which is something that most adults and elderly people can learn from them.*

Organization – 4: The writing shows skillful use of varied transitions: *In saying that though...; which means that...* Each paragraph is skillfully organized around one main idea and the entire piece of writing follows a logical sequence of ideas.

Language Use – 4: The language used contributes to vivid and skillful writing: *Even though we are the ones who are constantly being taught new things, we are also quite capable of teaching our elders a thing or two; Since they've already dealt with what we are going through, they are the perfect candidates for teaching younger people right from wrong.*

Conventions – 4: A variety of consistently correct conventions contribute to enhanced communication: many difficult words are correctly spelled and complex sentences are correctly punctuated using a variety of conventions.

Persuasive Writing Student sample 2

Humans learn mainly by imitation and trial and error. We all did it as children; experimented - say, jumping off the back of the couch, and if our findings hurt us, we didn't do it again. We learned that certain things = pain, and pain is bad. Yet, we never bothered to listen to our parents, who warned us against such things. See, contrary to what we believed as toddlers, we can learn things from people. We can learn a great variety of lessons from others mistakes, listening or simply watching.

When you saw your sibling do something dumb you didn't go try it immediately after. You learned from their mistakes to save yourself the trouble. Learning by examples is a lot more common than you might think, and a lot more useful. When others slip up, it's easily a way to find out what will or will not work. Many great minds have agreed that learning from mistakes is one of the best ways to avoid future blunders. Whether witness the mistake or hear about it, it's like trial and error minus the pain of, say, breaking your arm.

Aesop's Fables are famous for their mottos. The stories have an important life lesson tucked away in the words that have lasted for centuries. They're still around today, teaching children for the future. Aesop had one main intent when he told his stories: have the people listen and learn. We can learn so much from listening to what people have to say. Sometimes, they say the perfect thing at just the right moment to teach you what you need to know. Other times, a friend will warn you of incoming danger. By listening, we can learn an unbelievable amount from the world around us, lessons waiting be heard. We are born with a mouth to see, two eyes, and two ears so why don't we put them to use?

If you were to ask a guru the secrets of the world, he would tell You to look around yourself. We've all heard it before - watch and learn. If you're not blind, you've probably been depending a lot on your vision throughout your life. We depend on sight so much, but how often do we take a step back and observe our colleagues? Body language counts for more than the words themselves, and eyes are windows to the soul. We naturally grasp concepts by watching and copying other people - so naturally in fact, that we don't even notice it. When you look at the people around you, pay attention to all the hidden messages that you wouldn't normally notice. You notice patterns and learn unfathomable things, simply by watching as the world spins.

Learning is a wonderful thing. Everyone learns in different ways, from different sources, but the most simple and efficient way to learn is from other people - the things they do, the things they say and the things they show. By learning from other people, we can save ourselves a lot of trouble, and collect more information than we even bargained for.

ANNOTATION

Ideas – 4: A main idea is distinct: *We can learn a great variety of lessons from others mistakes, listening or simply watching* and is developed through vivid and relevant details: *When you saw your siblings do something dumb, you didn't go try it immediately after; ...a friend will warn you of incoming danger; We naturally grasp concepts by watching and copying other people – so naturally in fact, that we don't even notice it.* Overall the ideas are exceptionally well chosen and expressed for on-demand writing. The main idea is extensively developed with secondary ideas and details that are always relevant and vividly expressed rather than simply stated.

Organization – 4: The writing is skillfully organized with skillful use of transitions. The opening or lead sentence is effective: *Humans learn mainly by imitation and trial and error.* It is followed by details that are ordered in a way that allows the reader to follow easily: *We all did it... We learned... Yet... See... When you saw...; Other times...; If you were to ask a guru...; Learning is a wonderful thing.* Each paragraph can function independently from the others and all paragraphs are connected logically. For example, in the first paragraph ideas follow each other in an orderly fashion culminating in a summation sentence which complete the paragraph and leads naturally into the next paragraph: *We can learn a great variety of lessons from others mistakes, listening or simply watching.* Consecutive paragraphs mirror this pattern. The final paragraph provides an effective conclusion. The writer reiterates the main idea: *Everyone learns in different ways from different sources.*

Language Use – 4: The language used contributes to vivid and skillful writing: *You learned from their mistakes to save yourself the trouble; ...tucked away in the words...; By listening, we can learn an unbelievable amount from the world around us, lessons waiting to be heard.*

Conventions – 4: There is a variety of consistently correct conventions including spelling and correctly punctuated complex sentences. The writing demonstrates control of punctuation (internal and external), subject-verb agreement and uses correct tenses. Many difficult words are spelled correctly such as *imitation, immediately, contrary, unfathomable* and *efficient.*

Persuasive Writing Student sample 3

There are many people on planet earth. Many are different ages, from a newborn baby to someone over one hundred years of age. No matter what age someone is everyone from a baby to someone over one hundred has something to offer somebody different from themselves. Youth have hope and innocence which can inspire you. Which adults seem to forget over time. Elderly people have experience and wisdom to offer to younger people facing the world and still at work adults have the values of hard work to share.

The youth of any generation can inspire older people who have forgotten their youthful ways with their innocence and hope. Young children can remind older people of their younger years when they were a child, when the only worries they had was who they were going to play with later and convincing mom to let them stay up late. They remind them when they still believed in Santa Claus and they'd hope for great presents this year and hope they wouldnt get a lump of coal. You see that adults forget these things very easily when they get trapped in the adult world filled with work and responsibilities. Adults forget how to have fun and learn how to stress themselves out instead. If any adult could just look at their child or someone elses child for a moment and remember how to have fun the world would be a nicer place.

The Elderly people have seen and experience it all. They survived youth, they survived adulthood, and now they can spend their time reminising on their younger years. With all their experience they have so much knowledge to offer, they have seen the passing of a milenium, war's, new social behaviours they have to have something to teach us. Elderly people can teach us how to handle things properly and maturely because theyve learnt from their mistakes.

Adults have something to offer too. They live in the world of work, decisions and responsibilities. With all the work they do they can help prepare the youth for their years to come. You spend all of your elementary school career getting prepared for junior high by adults, you spend junior high getting prepared for high school by adults and you get prepared for adulthood by adults and there's a lot to learn.

People of different ages can learn from each other. The youth can teach hope and innocence. The elderly teach their wisdom they learnt from years of experience and adults teach us how to prepare for life and be better off than they were. Throughout life you learn and you forget but no matter how much you learn there will always be something else you can learn.

ANNOTATION

Ideas – 3: A main idea is clear: *No matter what age someone is everyone from a baby to someone over one hundred has something to offer somebody different from themselves* and is developed through relevant details: *They remind them when they still believed in Santa Claus and they'd hope for great presents this year and hope they wouldnt get a lump of coal; ...you get prepared for adulthood by adults and there's a lot to learn.*

Organization – 3: The writing is organized with an effective introduction: *Elderly people have experience and wisdom to offer to younger people facing the world and still at work adults have the values of hard work to share.* Effective use of varied transitions with a topic sentence in each paragraph.

Language Use – 3: The language used contributes to clear and fluid writing with effective imagery and appropriate word choice: *If any adult could just look at their child or someone else's child for a moment and remember how to have fun the world would be a nicer place.*

Conventions – 3: The writing uses a variety of generally correct conventions. A variety of sentence lengths are punctuated correctly and are grammatically correct: *Young children can remind older people of their younger years when they were a child, when the only worries they had was who they were going to play with later and convincing mom to let them stay up late.* Despite some spelling mistakes, grade level words are generally spelled correctly.

Persuasive Writing Student sample 4

Age should not be a barrier when it comes to learning from one another. People of different ages and eras have opinions that are so mesmerizingly different it's no wonder there's so much fighting in our world. If people of different ages made a conscious effort to learn from each other problems would be solved quicker, everyone would be much more empathetic, and younger generations could learn lessons worth passing on.

Many things affect people of different ages, and yet so many times it's only middle-aged people making executive decisions. Yes, perhaps the design for a new public building looks attractive to those in their twenties, but no one thought about how uncomfortable those stairs would be for elderly people to climb. And the waiting rooms have nothing for toddlers to play with.

If people of all different ages had been asked what they'd like to see in the building, and the owners and designers had considered their concerns, everybody would have ended up much happier. Although nothing will ever be able to please everybody, most issues could be resolved in a much more efficient manner (even avoided) if people of all ages valued each others opinions.

But it's so much easier to value someone's opinion when you understand their perspective. This is why people of the same age group share similar opinions; they've had similar experience. "Younger people are brats, and old people are grouchy," or so we perceive. But is this inevitable, and does anyone bother to find out why? If people of different ages were more willing to listen to each other they would probably be much more empathetic. Empathy, tolerance and openmindedness make this life virtually limitless.

Not only could learning someone's "story" broaden one's own idea of what they think is "the norm," but it may be even interesting... inspiring. The elderly have been through more than the younger generations have, and therefore have seen much more drastic change. There's lots of talk about the future and how hopeful it looks, but people must be aware of the mistakes that have been made so they aren't made again. Younger people may even be made more aware of the injustices today when looking at the world through the eyes of someone two, three or ten times their age. And they just might try to change it.

Everyone can benefit from all ages coming together, in countless ways. But in many respects young people will benefit from it most, because they are the future. And no, it isn't always the easiest task, but it's definitely possible.

ANNOTATION

Ideas – 3: A main idea is clear: *If people of different ages made a conscious effort to learn from each other problems would be solved quicker, everyone would be much more empathetic, and younger generations could learn lessons worth passing on* and is developed through relevant details: *Yes, perhaps the design for a new public building looks attractive to those in their twenties, but no one thought about how uncomfortable those stairs would be for elderly people to climb. And the waiting rooms have nothing for toddlers to play with.* Overall the ideas adhere very well to the prompt and show clarity and attention to detail. The main idea is conveyed clearly, but not distinctly. The supporting details are appropriate, but not vivid.

Organization – 3: The writing shows effective use of varied transitions: *...and yet so many times...; Although nothing will ever be able to...; But it's so much easier...; Not only could...* The conclusion is effective: *And no, it isn't always the easiest task, but it's definitely possible.* The opening or lead sentence is effective and the ideas that follow are in a logical progression: *Age should... Many things affect people of different ages, and yet so many times... If people of all ages had been asked... But it is so much easier*

to value...when.... In the conclusion, the writing reiterates the main idea: *Everyone can benefit from all ages coming together.*

Language Use – 3: The use of language contributes to clear and fluid writing: *Not only could learning someone’s “story” broaden one’s own idea of what they think is “the norm,” but it may be even interesting... inspiring; Younger people may even be made more aware of the injustices today when looking at the world through the eyes of someone two three or ten times their age. And they just might try to change it.* Transitional phrases add to the fluidity of the writing: *Yes, perhaps the design for a new public building looks attractive to those in their twenties, but no one thought about how...* Adjectives and adverbs are effective: *if people of different ages made a conscious effort to learn from each other problems would be solved quicker. Empathy, tolerance and openmindedness make this life virtually limitless.*

Conventions – 4: The writing shows a variety of consistently correct conventions: correct use of semi-colon, brackets, and commas as well as consistently correct spelling of difficult words.

Persuasive Writing Student sample 5

Don't you think people of different ages can learn from each other? Some people argue that older people have more knowledge than younger one's. Older people have more experiences and skills so older people don't have anything new that they can learn from younger people. Since, there are new electronic device that younger people have more experiences than older people, they all can learn from each other. People from different ages can learn from each other because they have different experiences and different way of thinking.

People from different ages have different experiences. In old days, people don't used to have different electronic devices like we do now, for example they didn't had iphones, ipods, laptops and other devices we do now so we have way more experiences about it. People from old days have different experiences than us like they have experienced world war 2, they have better knowledge than us in farming and hunting. They have lived more so they have a lot experience which we can learn from them.

People from different ages have different way of thinking, like in olden days, people use to think that earth is in middle of the solar system and all other planets move around in. As a new generation, we learned that sun is in middle of the solar system. People from olden days could know the time with out watching clock or other device that gives time, like my grand-father, he can still estimate the time within different of 10-15 min.

People of different ages can teach each-other. People of different ages live differently with different device and in different ways. They all have different skills. People of different ages can learn from each-other, because, they have different experiences and different way of thinking. Nobody is perfect which can learn nothing from other.

ANNOTATION

Ideas – 2: A main idea is evident but lacks clarity: *People of different ages can learn from each other because they have different experiences and different way of thinking* and is somewhat developed through details: *...for example they didn't had iphones, ipods, laptops and other devices we do now so we have way more experiences about it.* Some details are not developed and others are irrelevant: *Nobody is perfect...*

Organization – 2: The writing is somewhat organized with a vague introduction: *Don't you think people of different ages can learn from each-other?* The conclusion is also vague: *People of different ages can teach each other. People of different ages live differently with different device and in different ways.* The writing begins with a question, a good organization technique. However, the writing does not answer the question in a logical, sequential order. Ideas are repetitive. The last paragraph does not answer the opening question and does not provide a satisfactory conclusion.

Language Use – 2: The language used contributes to vague and mechanical writing: *...like in olden days, people use to think that earth is in middle of the solar system....; As a new generation, we learned that sun is in middle of the solar system....* The word *different* is repeated frequently.

Conventions – 2: Errors in conventions are noticeable. Articles are missing and there are errors in verb tense: *they didn't had; ...within different of 10-15 min.*

Persuasive Writing Student sample 6

How do you think that different ages can learn from each other? Is it the maturity of the age group of the children or is it just the beautiful minds. Well I'm going to talk about how it works, and why I agree to different ages can learn from each other.

Students who are between the ages 5-12 are some what able to teach, others younger than them because they have gone through the same work as those students are going through now. Student's who are older that teach the younger children, the children's grade and work ethic improves substansibly.

I agree with the statement that different ages can learn from each other, because our minds are growing every time we are learning something new. The fact that, that is happening is why different ages are able to learn from other ages is because the older ages have a stronger mind then the younger. So the older ages kids are able to make the younger kids mind stronger.

I think now that me and you have a pretty good understand how different ages can learn from each other now that your older child can teach a younger child.

ANNOTATION

Ideas – 2: A main idea is evident: *Well I'm going to talk about how it works, and why I agree to different ages can learn from each other* and is somewhat developed through details: *Students who are between the ages 5-12 are some what able to teach, others younger than them because they have gone through the same work as those students are going through now.* Some details are irrelevant: *...or is it just the beautiful minds.*

Organization – 2: The writing is somewhat organized with vague and mechanical transitions: *How do you think...; Well I'm going to talk about...; I agree with the statement that...; I think now that me and you....* It begins with a question, an organizational technique, but does not answer it in a logical, sequential order. The last paragraph does not answer the question and does not provide a satisfactory conclusion. Ideas are repetitive and are not logically ordered.

Language Use – 2: The use of language contributes to vague and mechanical writing. Ideas are present but often vaguely expressed: *Our minds are growing everytime we are learning something new. The fact that, that is happening is why different ages are able to learn from other ages is because the older ages have a stronger mind then the younger.* Tone and voice are inconsistent with a conversational tone at the beginning (*How do you think that...*) and at the end (*now that me and you...*) but which is not sustained throughout.

Conventions – 2: Errors in conventions are noticeable: *Beautiful; some what; ...me and you have a pretty good understand....* Syntax is incorrect and awkward at times: *Student's who are older that teach the younger children, the children's grade and work ethic improves substansibly.*

Persuasive Writing Student Writing Sample 7

This persuasive writing is about people from different ages can learn from each other which is true the older the wiser.

This is vary true conseduring older pople have all ready lived there life there for they can teach life lesions and younger can teach the older people new things that way each generation can learn new and some times even old uesfull things like hystory economics the goverment electronics and the way of life all togarather.

This is why it's true that each ganoration has something to teach and they don't even need to be teachers.

ANNOTATION

Ideas – 1: The main idea is not developed with details and adheres weakly to the prompt: *This is vary true conseduring older pople have already lived there life there for they can teach life lesions and younger can teach the older people new things that way each generation can learn new and some times even old uesfull things.* Four examples provided are stated but not explained nor are they clearly connected to the main idea: *... like hystory economics the goverment electronics and the way of life all togarather.*

Organization – 1: The writing shows little evidence of transitions. The writing is a series of sentences with little evidence of connections: *This persuasive writing is about people from different ages can learn from each other witch is true the older the wiser; This is why it's true that each ganoratoin has something to teach and they dont even need to be teachers.*

Language Use – 1: The use of language contributes to confusing writing: *the way of life all togarather; they dont even need to be teachers.*

Conventions – 1: Errors in conventions contribute to confusing communication (punctuation and spelling): *uesfull things Like hystory economics the goverment electronic and the way of life all togarather.*

Appendix O: Transitions for organizing your writing

The lists below show transitional words and phrases used in student writing from Nova Scotia Assessments and Examinations. In the scoring rubric, “transitions” also include the way a piece of writing is organized and flows from one idea to the next.

Grade 3

- | | | |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| - First | - I will tell you | - Or as I say |
| - ...two...three | - To start off | - Oh! And I almost forgot |
| - So that’s my | - So now I’m realizing | - Whenever I |
| - I think | - Now we have | - But my |
| - This is how | - Did you know | - They are my favourite |
| - First you... you keep doing this | - Suddenly, we felt | - People will see and |
| - Does the exact same thing | - Some people say | - Just to |
| - And that’s how | - One day | - Then when |
| - I love that | - At that moment | - Others may not |
| - Take... then... next... now | - When I finally | - At least I |
| - If there are | - I always wanted | - Mostly because |
| - If you | - Most of the time | - If I don’t |
| - And then, right after | - They are also | - So |
| - We also have | - After that we | - When I |
| - The thing is | - Also, I would be able to | - I will be |
| - That is why | - So, in the | - I am going to |
| - It would also | - You can | - I hope I can be |
| - I thought it would | - The main point is | - Like this |
| - That is everything you should know about | - But there is | - If it doesn’t work |
| | - It is important too | - I also want to |

Grade 6

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| - By this time | - While at the | - If you are still |
| - Once inside | - Do you know why | - In conclusion |
| - After successfully | - It’s because | - I think this because |
| - Finally | - There are many reasons why | - Also |
| - I have been...since | - For one | - Don’t you think |
| - If we were to | - These will also | - By now |
| - Before we would | - If that’s not enough | - Just to add |
| - An hour later | - If we don’t...we won’t | - It all started when |
| - As we | - I also think | - Just as |
| - When | - I have heard about | - After I... then |
| - In the end | - When people... they... because | - She turned and |
| - If I... I would | - Some ideas could be | - He thought for a moment then |
| - The first thing | - That is why | - So what are we |
| - To end our | - And most of all | - Once they |
| - Next | - They should, however, only | - Next |
| - But of course | - First of all...second... | - One of the |
| - Firstly, secondly, thirdly etc. | - Lastly | - I wouldn’t want |
| - The next thing | - As well as | - The first...then... |
| - That night | | |
| - So after | | |

Grade 8

- But these only worked because...
- It is my opinion that...
- Instead of going to..., we can go....
- I think...because...
- And with that kind of access to..., we can...
- Also
- Another thing...
- In the past, ... Now...
- If it were a long time ago, ...
- Not only does..., it allows...
- Just yesterday, I
- First off
- Next
- So in the following I will tell you about...
- To start...
- In fact...
- Such as
- So why...
- By..., we can...
- This means...
- All in all
- The last issue
- Because
- Finally
- But
- So, as you can see...
- I highly think that...
- How much...
- The first one I am going to talk about is...
- The reason why...
- The 2nd topic on the list is...
- For example
- This could lead to...
- What I mean about...is...
- So if you ever...
- So these are the three reasons why I think...
- I am sure...but
- In my opinion, I think...
- For teenagers,...
- If we can..., maybe there will be...
- It even helps you...
- Not only for teenagers, but for parents too
- In conclusion, I think...
- That's my opinion...
- I finally finished...
- At first nothing happened, but then...
- An hour later...
- Then realizing what had happened, ...
- After a minute or two of silence, ...
- While
- As intriguing as...
- When suddenly...
- A few seconds later...
- All of a sudden,...
- Now it is time...
- One day after...
- I started to..., and then
- I slowly sat up to see...
- Could this really be happening?
- I started to wonder if...until I saw...
- The answer for many is clear:...
- This requirement would provide...
- If none of the above tickles your fancy, this will – ...
- Perhaps this has enlightened you with...
- Either way, ...
- There are pros and cons to this idea, but in my opinion...
- Sure, it's still...
- Despite all of the previously listed negative outcomes...
- Even if...
- So, yes, I definitely think...
- However, if I think further...
- Well for one thing...
- I believe that...
- It doesn't matter

Grade 10

- Ultimately
- Essentially
- Based on how
- Unique to
- As the
- Also serves as
- First of all... second
- In conclusion
- Often
- Every... every... will have
- Although
- So
- Have you ever
- Whether it be... or
- Every day there are
- It gives
- Everyone wants
- All of these
- It makes
- Or
- Some form of
- Though not always
- Sometimes
- We are more... than
- Is one strong example
- After reading
- When I think about
- But how does
- It is helped by
- Overall
- It generally
- It implies
- She points out that
- It will cause
- As well as
- Also as
- Is not the only but is the most
- What if
- When reading
- Even though
- As long as
- This I find
- To think
- It was supposed
- A lot can change
- Nothing in the world is
- Whether it is... or
- You know those times when... and
- I think by now
- It applies to
- And I noted that
- Have you ever...then
- Many...may not be...but
- Have you ever...but then
- I have my doubts
- I would look for
- Sometimes things can be
- While the
- This shows
- Just because
- Because of
- As... we often
- Quite frequently we
- One of the main reasons...another
- We often assume that
- To conclude
- In saying that though
- Which means that
- Mainly by
- Mainly
- Other times
- If you were to
- Yet
- So many times
- Although nothing will be able to
- But it's so much
- Not only could
- And no, it isn't always... but
- Whenever
- My first argument...
- The last and strongest argument
- Without this
- As stated above
- And arguably
- Even if not
- And ultimately
- In the very same way that
- Have you ever
- If a
- Say that
- No matter how
- Be it
- Because they offer
- How can
- Is it
- Go on then...take
- Aforementioned
- In addition
- After ... of some kind
- They may seem...but
- Once you
- If you do...then. If you don't...then
- Simply
- Such
- All you have to do is
- Well then
- But in the end
- Most of
- But is it really
- Without this...would
- So, be it your
- Such as
- It isn't just
- This is just as
- I do believe
- So far
- An even bigger
- All I need
- An excellent example
- If people want
- The most
- We can...by doing
- In order to
- So all in all
- This can be proven
- As the last... suggested
- Overall it can be said
- On the other hand

Appendix P: Identifying elements of a writer's voice

The following excerpts from short stories by Don Aker are taken from *Teaching in Action 10–12*. They can be used as mentor texts to help students learn to recognize, identify, and ultimately apply in their own writing elements of voice.

This look-and-notice approach can be taken with any text. It should initially be modeled by the teacher and later practiced by students with gradual release of responsibility.

The eel¹ smashed² the water when it surfaced, twisting² furiously³ around the line, looping² over itself in the air as his father swung² it into the boat. Adam had shrieked² again but this time in fear, and even his father had drawn back when it slapped² the fiberglass bottom¹. Adam scrambled² away from the creature¹ writhing² at his feet, tying and untying itself like wet ribbon⁴, and he'd begged² his father to toss¹ it back. Grim-faced³, his father had gripped the coiling¹ body and tried to remove the hook, but the eel had swallowed it whole. He reached behind him for the dip net¹, held its metal handle like a hammer⁴ as he whacked² the creature with it. Once. Twice. The eel stopped squirming², and his father cut the line with his jackknife¹ and tossed it overboard¹. It was only when the creature was gone that Adam crept² close to his father, crawled² into the safety of his big arms³.

My father bought old vehicles and bullied them back to life³, cannibalizing² parts from dump wrecks and infusing them and a strange mechanical spirit³ into the automobiles that ended up in our yard. I had none of this skill. I stood on the outside of these dinosaurs³, in awe that they could run after their oily guts had been torn out and transplanted³, and I watched. Sometimes I got tools for him, always having to ask if the Robertson screwdriver¹ was the one with the square or the cross. Sometimes I held trouble-lights¹ or steadied the block-and-tackle¹ when a motor hung in transition³. Sometimes I turned the ignition while he tinkered² coaxed³, manipulated³, coerced³, threatened³ tired³ parts back into operation¹. But mostly I watched.

- 1 Word choice: topic appropriate vocabulary
- 2 Strong verb use
- 3 Figurative language: imagery and/or metaphor
- 4 Figurative language: simile

Questions for discussion:

1. How would you describe the writer's style?
2. Which elements of this style could you incorporate into your own writing?
3. What similarities and differences do you notice between this writer's style and other writers' styles?

Activity

Write a short paragraph about a personal experience using this writer's style.

Appendix Q: Performance levels in reading

The following descriptors provide a general overview of students' reading behaviours at each level. These descriptors are more detailed than, though not essentially different from, the descriptors used on the Individual Student Reports. These more detailed descriptors are intended to help teachers interpret the meaning of each level. Through classroom observation and assessment teachers can further identify individual strengths and areas of need.

Level 1 (below the expectation)
The student reading grade-level texts generally: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• locates explicitly stated details in the text.• connects explicitly stated ideas and details. (For example, students can connect similar information from two places in the text as long as it is clearly stated in both places.)• shows an understanding of stated conclusions in the text.• makes straightforward text-based inferences clearly suggested by the text. (For example, students can recognize that a smiling face indicates happiness.)
Level 2 (approaching the expectation)
The student reading grade-level texts generally: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• locates explicitly stated and implicit details in the text.• connects details to determine main ideas and/or draw conclusions.• uses straightforward text features like headings, pictures, and different kinds of print to gain meaning.• interprets some abstract/figurative language from the text. (For example, students can understand that a person who feels "blue" is sad.)• develops text-based inferences about details and/or purposes. (For example, students can determine a main character's feelings from her actions.)
Level 3 (at the expectation)
The student reading grade-level texts generally: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• interprets and combines information from within and across the text.• compares and evaluates parts of the text and/or ideas across the text to draw conclusions.• uses elements of style and a variety of text features to gain meaning.• interprets abstract/figurative language from within and across the text.• uses text-based inferences to indicate understanding of relationships among details and/or purposes. (For example, students can determine a character's motives or the author's message.)
Level 4 (above the expectation)
The student reading grade-level texts generally: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• interprets and combines complex information from within and across a text.• makes complex connections between (synthesizes) several explicit and implicit elements of text to draw conclusions.• interprets and analyzes the relationships among complex elements of text and is able to evaluate the text based on that interpretation and analysis.• interprets complex abstract/figurative language from within and across the text.• uses subtle text-based inferences to indicate understanding of complex relationships among details and/or purposes. (For example, students can infer consequences of a character's actions or the relationship between events.)

Appendix R: Key messages in instruction and assessment

The following key messages should be considered when using this document to inform classroom instruction and assessment.

- Instruction and assessment practices should be culturally responsive. Culturally responsive pedagogy is teaching that connects a student’s social, cultural, family, or language background to what the student is learning; it nurtures cultural uniqueness and responds by creating conditions in which the student’s learning is enhanced. It is critical that learning opportunities are relevant and meaningful to students, so they are responsive to students’ learning needs. The content within this document may be adapted, as needed, in order to respond to students’ various cultural and life contexts.
- The workshop framework is a highly effective approach for literacy instruction. Literacy lessons should be planned to include the following: explicit instruction and modeling, time for student practice, and time for sharing. These lessons can be designed for the whole class and for smaller groups of students or individual students depending on needs identified during ongoing assessment for learning. The workshop approach encourages balanced and developmentally appropriate instruction, while scaffolding student learning.
- Another highly effective approach is instruction in various comprehension strategies. This instruction can take place in targeted mini-lessons in groups and in individual conferences. Explicit instruction of comprehension strategies is most effective when it is embedded within the context of discussions. In order to support students in deepening their reading comprehension, they need exposure to a variety of thought provoking texts followed by opportunities to engage in discussion. During this discussion students must be encouraged to ask and respond to deeper level questions about the text they are reading.
- Many of the instructional suggestions in this document show how reading and writing are reciprocal processes. Reading and writing instruction is strengthened when teachers make explicit connections between the two. For example, if the learning goal is for students to consistently use the future tense correctly in their writing, it helps to teach a mini-lesson on how to identify the use of the future tense in the published texts that students are reading.

If the learning goal is for students to be able to write a clear main idea and develop that main idea through relevant details that support the main idea, it is helpful to have them read a variety of texts to identify and discuss the main idea and details that support it. In doing so students begin to understand various text features the author used, the word choices the author made, and any other characteristics that were used to connect the details to the main idea. Again, when students begin to identify these characteristics while reading, they are more likely to attend to them in their writing. This helps students enhance their comprehension of the text and, at the same time, better understand how to organize their writing.

- Ongoing assessment for learning (formative assessment) is essential to effective teaching and learning. Assessment for learning can and should happen every day as part of classroom instruction. It involves the teacher focusing on how learning is progressing during instruction, determining where improvements can be made, and identifying the next steps. “Such assessment becomes ‘formative assessment’ when the evidence is actually used to adapt the teaching work to meet learning needs” (Black et al, *Working Inside the Black Box: Assessment for Learning in the Classroom*, 2004, p.2). Effective strategies of assessment for learning during a lesson include: strategic questioning, observing, conversing (conferring with students to “hear their thinking”), analyzing student’s work (products), engaging students in reviewing their progress, as well as providing opportunities for peer feedback and self-assessment.

- Assessment of learning (summative assessment) should also occur periodically. Assessment of learning involves the process of collecting and interpreting evidence for the purpose of summarizing learning at a given point in time and making judgments about the quality of student learning on the basis of established criteria. The information gathered may be used to communicate the student's achievement to students, parents, and others. It occurs at or near the end of a learning cycle.
- It is important to note that the difference between formative and summative assessment is in how the evidence is used. For example, rubric scores in writing can be used formatively to show students what they need to work on as they learn more about writing. The same rubric can be used at the end of a period of learning to provide a summative score or mark that counts towards a final grade.