Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment: Specifications

English Language Version

BRITISH COLUMBIA | Ministry of Education

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1 Grade 10 provincial graduation assessments

The Grade 10 provincial graduation assessments require students to apply their numeracy and literacy skills in realistic contexts. Standards and expectations are set with the educated citizen in mind – that is, we ask what we should expect a Grade 10 student to know, do, and understand in a variety of contexts that require the application of literacy and numeracy skills.

Rather than assess specific course curricula, the Grade 10 graduation assessments – like the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) – measure the application of numeracy and literacy skills to realistic situations, requiring students to employ the competencies considered to be essential for future success. The Grade 10 graduation assessments look at students' ability to apply their knowledge and skills and to analyze, reason, and communicate effectively as they examine, interpret, and solve problems. Like PISA, these assessments also emphasize the importance of the context in which students should be able to use their skills (e.g., home, employment, society).

The Grade 10 provincial assessments of literacy and numeracy provide part of the information that supports the certification of graduation:

- Along with acquiring 80 course credits for graduation, students are required to complete provincial assessments in numeracy at Grade 10 and in literacy at Grades 10 and 12.
- Students have opportunities to rewrite the graduation assessments to set goals for improving their proficiency levels.

Purpose of the graduation assessments

The purpose of the assessments is to measure the extent to which students are literate and numerate and to provide students with information about their proficiency.

Use of information from the graduation assessments

The assessment instruments are not defined as formative or summative in nature; rather, information from the new graduation assessments can be used both summatively and formatively. Formative assessment (assessment *for* learning) and summative assessment (assessment *of* learning) can work together to improve student learning. For example, making formative use of summative assessment results involves using information drawn from a summative assessment to improve future student performance.

> The terms 'formative,' 'diagnostic,' 'summative' and 'evaluative' are generally used as if they describe kinds of assessments, but of course the outcomes of the same assessment might be used to serve more than one function. These terms are therefore not descriptions of kinds of assessment but rather of *the use to which information arising from the assessments is put*.
>
> (Wiliam, 2000, 2, citing Wiliam and Black, 1996)

The Grade 10 graduation assessment results:

↳ can be used formatively or summatively to:

- support individual students by providing descriptive information for goal setting (i.e., using the information in the proficiency scale and the detailed student report to set new learning goals)

- provide additional information for educators, allowing them to identify areas of strength and weakness

- provide schools, districts, and the Ministry of Education with system-level information regarding the extent to which students are proficient in literacy and numeracy

- provide students with evidence of their literacy and numeracy skills for use after graduation

- describe the proficiency levels of subgroups of a population (e.g., Aboriginal students) for use by schools, districts, Ministry of Education, and key stakeholder groups

- help inform decision making at all levels of the educational system regarding performance in literacy and numeracy

- provide information for schools, districts, and the Ministry of Education regarding trends in performance over time

2 The Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment

The design and development of the Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment have been guided by advice received from the Advisory Group on Provincial Assessment (AGPA); recommendations from the Literacy 12 Assessment working group; consultation with educators from across British Columbia, post-secondary colleagues, and First Nations educators; and research on best practices in teaching and learning and large-scale assessment. The development teams of educators designing and reviewing the assessment come from a range of disciplines and perspectives, thereby representing the various contexts in which literacy is developed.

The Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment represents a fundamental shift in large-scale assessment, as it aligns with key changes taking place in the provincial education system, as shown in Table 1. This shift includes becoming more technology based, measuring new constructs, looking at deeper thinking, using provincial assessment information in a formative way to inform student learning, and attempting to improve learning by providing more effective reporting (Bennett, 2018).

Table 1: Education directions

Education Direction	Implications for the Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment
Core Competencies	The Core Competencies shape the design of and questions in the assessment, with particular emphasis on Communication, Creative Thinking, and Critical Thinking. The Personal and Social competencies are exemplified in questions requiring a written response and student self-reflection component of the assessment.
Personalization	The assessment offers students a choice of options for demonstrating their skills and abilities, thereby allowing them to better show what they know, understand, and are able to do, while maintaining rigorous provincial standards.
Deeper thinking	The assessment involves complex thinking and analysis skills. It looks at literacy skills through essential questions and asks students to comprehend and critically analyze a variety of reading materials, communicate their understanding, and make personal connections to these materials.
Student engagement	Assessment tasks, prompts, and stimuli are developed to be engaging and interactive in nature.
Cross-curricular skills	The assessment reflects the critical literacy skills acquired and applied across all areas of learning.
First Peoples	First Peoples content is contained in every assessment. The First Peoples Principles of Learning have helped shape the development of the assessment, and First Peoples texts are part of the assessment.
Collaboration	The assessment offers students an opportunity to interact with pre-assessment preparation materials and to collaborate with others.
Self-reflection	The assessment asks students to reflect on their performance on the assessment and to note particular aspects of their work.

The Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment reflects these changes in the education system. It provides a technically sound and rigorous measure of foundational aspects of learning, in a manner that is inclusive and personalized, while providing detailed and relevant information for students, parents, and educators. Shaped by the Core Competencies and the First Peoples Principles of Learning, the Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment measures the essential cross-curricular aspects of literacy – critically analyzing diverse texts and communicating with purpose and awareness – in an online interactive assessment.

There are two Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessments: one for the English program and one for the Francophone program. This document presents the Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment for the English program.

Defining literacy

In B.C., literacy is considered cross-curricular in nature, and it is applied in various contexts and situations. The curricular competencies from areas of learning have informed the definition of literacy and shaped the structure and contents of the assessment. Educators with a broad range of teaching experience across areas of learning designed and developed the Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment to reflect its cross-curricular nature.

The following definition of literacy is used to focus the Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment:

Literacy
Literacy is the ability to critically analyze and make meaning from diverse texts and to communicate and express oneself in a variety of modes and for a variety of purposes in relevant contexts.
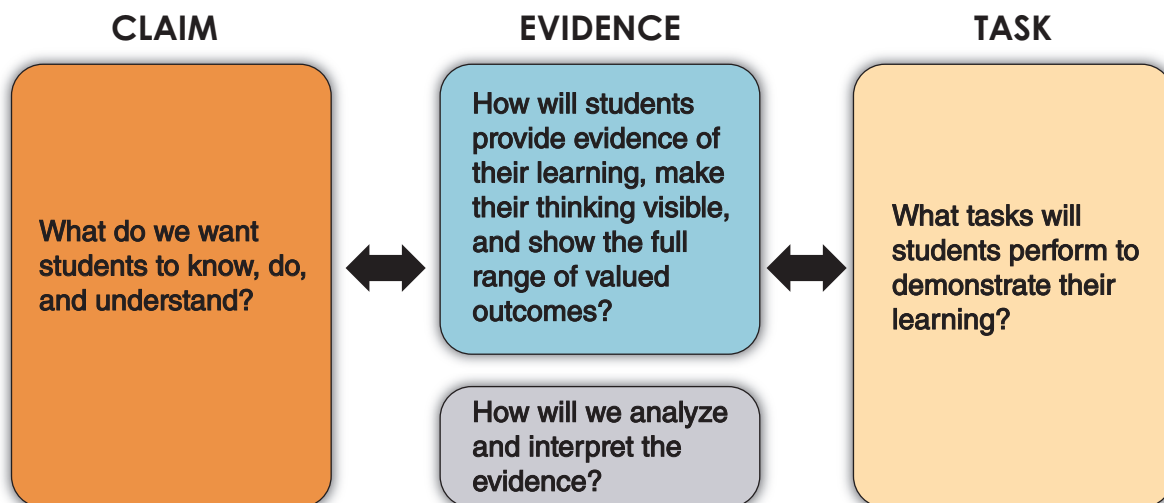
Design

The Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment uses an evidence-centred design (ECD). (For more detail on the design and structure of the graduation assessments, see the discussion paper *Graduation Assessments: Design Framework and Assessment Structure* at https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/graduation-assessments-design-framework.pdf) As shown in Figure 1, ECD focuses on:

making claims about student learning (what we want students to know, do, and understand) based on the purpose of the assessment

determining the evidence that needs to be demonstrated to provide support for the claims, and how this evidence will be analyzed and interpreted

writing task specifications to create tasks that will allow students to demonstrate the depth of their learning

Figure 1: Evidence-centred design

CLAIM	EVIDENCE	TASK
What do we want students to know, do, and understand?	How will students provide evidence of their learning, make their thinking visible, and show the full range of valued outcomes?	What tasks will students perform to demonstrate their learning?
	How will we analyze and interpret the evidence?	

(Adapted from Pellegrino, DiBello, & Brophy, 2014)

ECD strengthens the validity of assessments by:

- supporting the inclusion of tasks that elicit higher levels of cognitive processing
- enhancing score interpretation through the increasing comparability of assessment scores across multiple assessment forms (Lane & Iwatani, 2016; Riconscente, Mislevy & Corrigan, 2016)

Key features

Respecting the cross-curricular nature of literacy

All curriculum is designed to support the development of educated citizens, which includes developing literacy skills. These skills may include such diverse tasks as analyzing graphs or data typically found in Social Studies or Science contexts, interpreting statistics presented in an infographic, or responding critically to texts**.** Texts for the Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment are selected from a broad range of curricular areas and students will incorporate various areas of learning in their responses.

Essential question

In the Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment, an essential question provides a realistic context within which students apply their literacy skills. Examples of essential questions are:

- What role does diversity play in today's society?
- How can an individual make a difference in the world?

The essential question activates student thinking and links to the passages while mirroring good classroom practice.

The essential question will focus on **societal, scientific, or personal topics**. The topic of the essential question, along with other factors, guides the developers in the selection of texts included in the assessment.

Types of texts

By the time students are in Grade 10, they should be prepared to read and analyze many types of written, visual, and digital texts. To that end, the texts selected for use in the Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment will range in complexity, as they do in school and in life. Texts selected for assessments include newspaper and magazine articles, online opinion blogs, social media feeds, anecdotal testimonials, instructions, websites, brochures, maps, charts, graphs, tables, and infographics. Texts are both continuous and non-continuous in nature and include literary and informational texts.

As noted above, the essential question also influences the selection of texts. To respect the cross-curricular nature of literacy, the texts reflect broad areas of learning, such as Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, and Mathematics. Teachers from across the province representing different subject areas select texts according to pre-established guidelines. Assessments include texts written by and about First Peoples. Texts are screened by experts who analyze them for bias and other social considerations.

Assessment tasks

Students demonstrate their learning through two key tasks on the Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment: Analyzing and Making Meaning from Texts (Comprehend) and Communicating Understanding of Texts/Making Personal Connections (Communicate). For example, in Part A, after responding to a number of texts related to the essential question, students will respond to a writing prompt, such as, "To what extent do humans have control over the natural world?" Students will be asked to communicate their depth of insight into, or understanding of, the topic. They will support their argument with reference to the texts in the section and may also draw upon their own experiences and knowledge.

Types of questions

The assessment tasks will include a variety of selected- and constructed-response questions. Selected-response questions provide answer choices and are machine scored. Constructed-response questions require written communication and are marked by teachers using holistic scoring rubrics.

Table 2: Types of questions

Types of Questions	Description
Selected-response*	**... in which students:**
Hot spot	select the desired spot on the screen
Labelling	drag and drop the correct labels to graphs, maps, or graphics
Sequencing	arrange ideas in logical sequence by dragging them into place
Multiple-choice	select radio buttons, from several choices, for either single or multiple correct responses
Images	select the appropriate picture or illustration
Matching	drag and drop elements into a desired position, such as into a table
Drop-down menu	select responses from drop-down menus
Constructed-response	**... in which students:**
Graphic organizer	communicate their understanding of the texts through a graphic organizer that extends across the texts and requires that they critically analyze and synthesize the presented materials
Extended writing about texts	communicate in writing their critical reading and understanding of the texts as they relate to a specific facet of the essential question with defined purpose and in a relevant context
Extended writing to make personal connections	incorporate a personal connection, bringing their own knowledge, experiences, and creative notions to a piece of written communication that addresses an aspect of the essential question within the part of the assessment the student has selected

*The selected-response question types are examples only; additional question types may be included in the Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment.

Depth of Knowledge

The cognitive rigour of each of the questions on the Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment is described using Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK). Webb's DOK categorizes tasks into four levels, based on the complexity of thinking required. The assessment includes questions written to and classified across the first three DOK levels. (Level 4 is not used in the assessment, as it cannot be measured in the assessment's limited time frame.)

The questions on Analyzing and Making Meaning from Texts (Comprehend) range from DOK levels 1 to 3; questions on Communicating and Understanding of Texts/Making Personal Connections (Communicate) are at DOK level 3. Table 3 illustrates the types of questions found on the assessment across the three DOK levels.

Table 3: Types of questions across three DOK levels

	Level 1 The student is able to locate or retrieve information from the texts and record facts and ideas. (Student responses require literal understanding of text.)	**Level 2** The student shows initial comprehension, understands important concepts, begins to connect ideas using an organizational structure, and has some sense of purpose and context.	**Level 3** The student applies knowledge to go beyond the text to explain, generalize, and connect ideas to support thinking and make interpretations. Ideas are complex and demonstrate synthesis and analysis.
Texts ⇦ Critically Analyzing/Making Meaning ⇨ Communicating	• recall, recognize, or locate basic facts that are explicit in the texts • define terms • select appropriate words when intended meaning is clearly evident • describe/explain who, what, when, where, how • locate information in a graph • identify specific information contained in graphic representation or text features • order a sequence of events • match instructional steps to a given diagram • brainstorm ideas, concepts, problems, or perspectives related to a topic • select appropriate words when intended meaning is evident	• make basic inferences and predictions • summarize results, concepts, ideas • specify, explain, show relationships (e.g., why, cause-effect) • identify main ideas • make accurate generalizations of texts • interpret information from text features • distinguish relevant/irrelevant information, fact/opinion • apply organizational structures • categorize elements of a plan • make a recommendation based on the texts • predict an outcome based on the texts • organize, order, or interpret information from a simple graph	• explain, generalize, connect ideas using supporting evidence • make inferences about explicit or implicit themes • apply a concept in a new context • justify or critique conclusions • analyze interrelationships among concepts, issues, problems • use reason, planning, evidence to support inferences • cite evidence; develop logical argument for conjectures • integrate ideas and information to show understanding • describe, compare, contrast solution • synthesize information • verify reasonableness of results; develop an alternative solution • analyze or interpret author's craft (literary devices, viewpoint, or potential bias) to critique a text • determine the author's purpose and describe how it affects the interpretation of a reading selection

(Adapted from Hess, 2009, and Webb, 2002)

Specifications

The Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment requires students to demonstrate their abilities through two key literacy tasks: analyzing and making meaning from texts (Comprehend), and communicating their understanding of texts and making personal connections (Communicate). Table 4 identifies the proportion of these two task types.

Table 4: Key tasks

Comprehend: Analyzing and Making Meaning from Texts (*assessed with a diversity of online machine-scored selected-response questions*)	50%
Communicate: Understanding of Texts/Making Personal Connections (*assessed with teacher-scored online constructed-response questions*)	50%

Table 5 provides more detail on how the key aspects of literacy are reflected across the parts of the assessment and in relation to question types and DOK levels. It shows the two different parts of the assessment on which student performance is scored. All students are required to complete Part A. They analyze various texts and respond to two constructed-response questions, communicating their understanding of the texts. Part B invites students to select from one of two choices, based on their personal preference. Both choices in Part B provide unique texts related to the essential question and require students to respond in various ways to the texts. Students are then asked to communicate their own ideas, making personal connections with a topic directly linked to the essential question.

The specifications identify the number of points and percentages for each part of the assessment. Selected-response questions (which include a large variety of online machine-scored questions designed to be engaging) are used to assess the literacy skills of analyzing and making meaning from the texts. Constructed-response questions (online, teacher-marked, written-response questions) measure communication. The number of points in each section is shown across three Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels, with the constructed-response questions at DOK 3.

The structure of the Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment, described in the next section, provides additional detail on aspects of the assessment, the recommended time allocated for each part, and how the parts fit together.

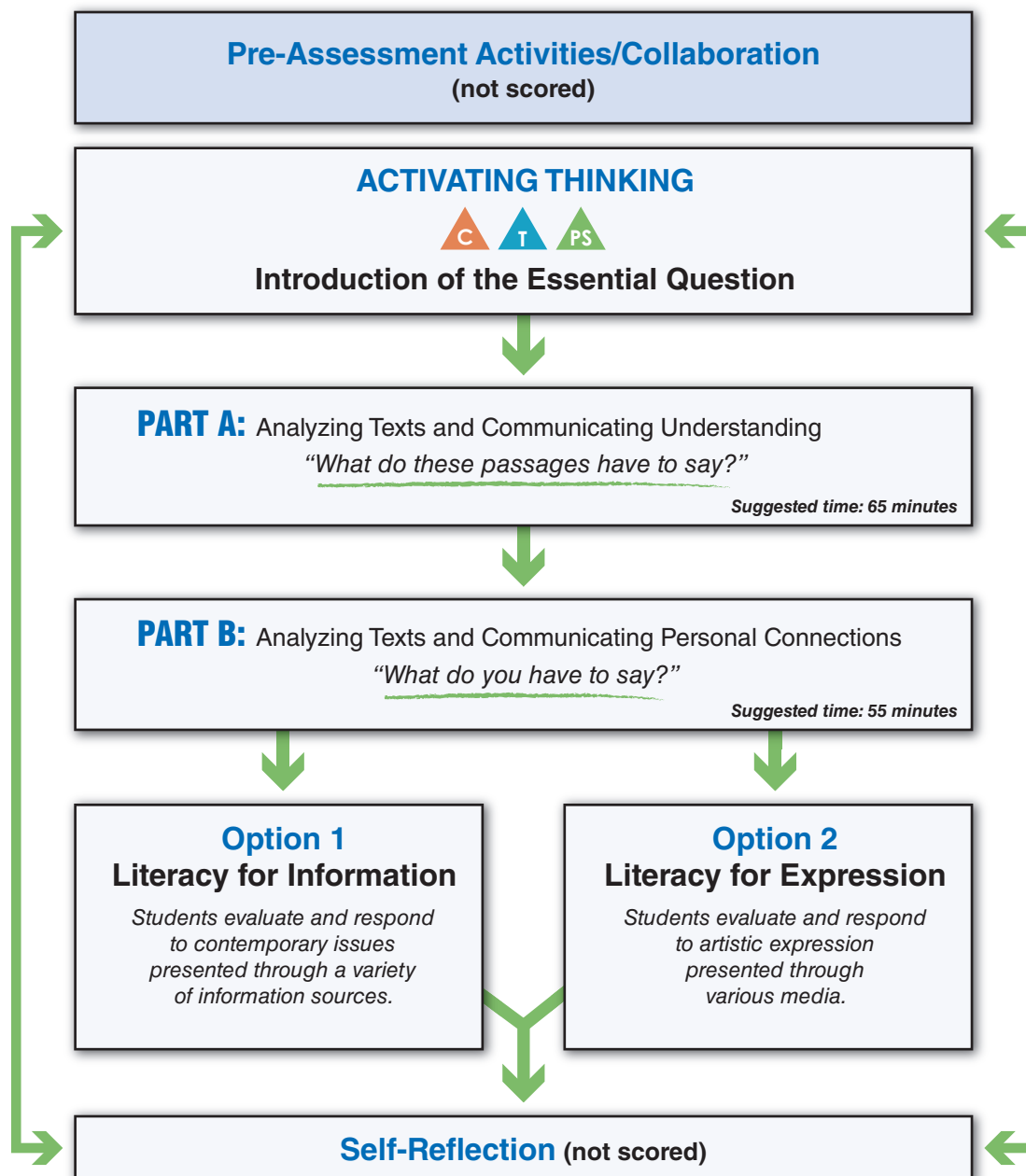**Table 5: Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment Table of Specifications**

		Depth of Knowledge 1	Depth of Knowledge 2	Depth of Knowledge 3	Value
PART A (*All students complete this part*)	*Analyzing and Making Meaning*	Selected response 5 points	Selected response 5 points	Selected response 5 points	**25%**
	Communicating Understanding of Texts			Constructed response (graphic organizer) 6 points	**10%**
				Constructed response (written response) 12 points	**20%**
PART B (*Students choose from two options*)	*Analyzing and Making Meaning*	Selected response 5 points	Selected response 5 points	Selected response 5 points	**25%**
	Communicating Personal Connections			Constructed response (written response) 12 points	**20%**

Structure

The structure of the Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment includes preparation activities, an essential question, a common component, a choice component, and a student self-reflection section. The structure is designed to mirror effective practices in learning, whereby students may prepare collaboratively, activate their thinking, exercise choice, and reflect on their learning.

As noted in Figure 2, the Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment is designed to be completed in approximately two hours, although some students may require additional time. Descriptions of each assessment component are provided after the figure.

Figure 2: Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment structure

Pre-Assessment Activities/Collaboration
(not scored)

ACTIVATING THINKING

C **T** **PS**

Introduction of the Essential Question

PART A: Analyzing Texts and Communicating Understanding

"What do these passages have to say?"

Suggested time: 65 minutes

PART B: Analyzing Texts and Communicating Personal Connections

"What do you have to say?"

Suggested time: 55 minutes

Option 1
Literacy for Information

Students evaluate and respond to contemporary issues presented through a variety of information sources.

Option 2
Literacy for Expression

Students evaluate and respond to artistic expression presented through various media.

Self-Reflection **(not scored)**

Students may move back and forth through the entire assessment at any time, but only through their chosen pathway.

Components

➡️ *Pre-assessment activities*

Purpose: The pre-assessment activities provide opportunities for students to collaborate or to work individually in preparing for the Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment.

Description: Activities include sample assessments, student exemplars, and instructional videos, designed to provide clarity of purpose and understanding of expectations.

Benefit: Familiarizes students with the structure of the assessment and the types of responses required.

➡️ *Essential question – Activating thinking*

Purpose: The essential question provides the context for the entire assessment and engages students' thinking as they proceed through Parts A and B.

Description: Students activate their thinking, guided by prompts and opportunities to consider the essential question, ideas related to it, and what it means to them.

Benefit: Activates students' prior knowledge and prepares them to think deeply and broadly as they begin the assessment.

➡️ *Part A – Analyzing Texts and Communicating Understanding*

Purpose: Part A assesses students' ability to analyze and demonstrate their understanding of texts.

Description: Students answer a series of selected-response questions related to the texts, respond to a graphic organizer question, and produce a piece of writing in response to the texts. The texts and questions relate to the essential question.

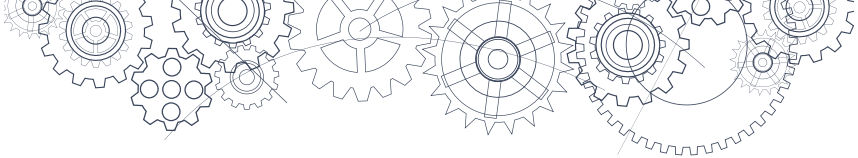**Benefit:** Engages students in critically analyzing and communicating their understanding of texts.

➡️ *Part B – Analyzing Texts and Communicating Personal Connections*

Purpose: Part B assesses students' ability to analyze and respond personally to texts.

Description: Students are offered a choice of texts. Each option is composed of comparable reading and communicating tasks, is equal in rigour, and relates to the essential question. Students are presented with specific descriptions of the required tasks in each option before they are asked to make their choice. In both options, students answer a series of selected-response questions to the texts before producing a piece of writing in which they make personal connections. Option 1 focuses on Literacy for Information and includes a variety of information-based texts. Option 2 focuses on Literacy for Expression and includes a variety of

texts emphasizing various forms of artistic expression. While these options afford students choice in the types of texts presented, both are equal in expectations and levels of difficulty and are scored with the same scoring rubric.

Benefit: Students can choose the texts that appeal to their interests or strengths.

→ *Self-reflection*

Purpose: Self-reflection encourages students to think about their work within the assessment.

Description: Questions guide students to reflect on:

- their strengths
- the processes they used to prepare for and complete the assessment
- the accuracy and comprehensiveness of their responses

Benefit: Students reflect on their work on the assessment and provide feedback to the assessment developers.

3 Reporting results

Provincial graduation assessments use a four-level proficiency scale for reporting student achievement results. Students receive an overall score based on all of their responses and these results placed in one of four levels of the Proficiency Scale (Figure 3). The standards (cut points) for the proficiency scale have been established through the professional judgment of educators and are set through detailed analysis of student responses by a standard-setting panel.

The Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment results will be reported on students' transcripts with a "requirement met" indicator only. The Grade 10 assessment results are intended to be used in a formative way leading to the Grade 12 Literacy Assessment. A student's proficiency level and detailed information will be available through the StudentTranscripts Service (STS). District and school-based administrators will access results through the School Secure Web (SSW).

Figure 3: Proficiency Scale

Proficiency Scale	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
	The student demonstrates an initial understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning.	The student demonstrates a partial understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning.	The student demonstrates a complete understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning.	The student demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning.

Individual student results accessed through the StudentTranscripts Service (STS) and the Secure School Web (SSW) provide more detailed feedback about student achievement on the Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment.

The results from the standard-setting panel informed the Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment Proficiency Scale in Figure 4. The panel consisted of educators from across the province who used field test data and student responses to create the descriptive information of what students can do at each level: "emerging," "developing," "proficient," or "extending" in relation to the assessment. This information allows students to see where they have progressed in their learning. Teachers and students can use this information to formulate plans for future learning.

Figure 4: Grade 10 Graduation Literacy Assessment Proficiency Scale

	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
Proficiency Scale	Student demonstrates an initial understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning. Specifically, they can do the following: • retrieve and attempt to apply information from texts • respond to texts in an attempt to make meaning • critically or creatively express ideas in a brief manner with little evidence • use some conventions of language; errors impede meaning	Student demonstrates a partial understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning. Specifically, they can do the following: • comprehend and apply information from texts • analyze texts in a literal or superficial way • critically or creatively express ideas in a limited manner with partial evidence • generally use conventions of language appropriate to audience and purpose; errors are distracting	Student demonstrates a complex understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning. Specifically, they can do the following: • critically analyze and synthesize information from texts • interpret texts to develop logical conclusions • critically or creatively express ideas in an organized and developed manner with relevant evidence • consistently use conventions of language appropriate to audience and purpose; some errors may be present	Student demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning. Specifically, they can do the following: • critically evaluate and synthesize information from texts • fully interpret texts to develop insightful conclusions • critically or creatively express ideas in a thoroughly developed manner with convincing evidence • skillfully use conventions of language appropriate to audience and purpose; need not be error free

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