Examples of the Standards for Students’ Writing 2012

English Language Arts Grade 9

• Functional Writing
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Email Address</th>
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<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Other Information**

Follow these steps for easy access to the Alberta Education website:
Step 1: Type education.alberta.ca
Step 2: Click on “Administrators”
Step 3: Under “Additional Programs and Services,” click on Provincial Testing
Step 4: Under “School and School Authority Results,” click on Achievement Tests

On the “Achievement Tests” web page, there is a specific link to Subject Bulletins. These bulletins provide students and teachers with information about the achievement tests scheduled for the current school year. Please share the contents of the Grade 9 English Language Arts Subject Bulletin with your students.

Also on this web page is a specific link to Examples of the Standards for Students’ Writing. These samples are intended to be used to enhance students’ writing and to assist teachers in assessing student writing relative to the standards embedded in the scoring criteria in the scoring guides.

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Acknowledgements

Publication of this document would not have been possible without the permission of the students whose writing is presented. The cooperation of these students has allowed Alberta Education both to continue defining the standards of writing performance expected in connection with achievement tests and to continue demonstrating approaches taken by students in their writing.

This document includes the valuable contributions of many educators. Sincere thanks and appreciation are extended to the following teachers who served as members of the respective working groups: Exemplar Selection—Ryan Anderson, Lori Bradford, Heather Gibson, Nicole Orr, Sharon Seward, Anna Wade, and David Whan; Exemplar Validation—Allison Critch, Melissa DeStefanis-King, Shantelle Gervais, Angie Hryhoryshyn-Snow, Cheryl-Lynne Ibbotson, Maureen Milne, and Jacquelyn Veinot Ticheler; and Standards Confirmation—Marylou Dickson, Matthew Dixon, Sharon MacFadyen, Nora MacGregor, Charl MacPherson, Derek Peddle, and Anna Wade.

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions made by members of the Achievement Testing Branch and the Document Design and Desktop Publishing Unit of the Assessment Sector, Alberta Education.
Introduction

The written responses in this document are examples of Grade 9 English Language Arts writing that meet or exceed the acceptable standard for student achievement. Along with the commentaries that accompany them, they should help teachers and students to understand the standards for the Grade 9 English Language Arts Part A: Writing Achievement Test in relation to the scoring criteria.

The purpose of the sample responses is to illustrate the standards that governed the 2012 marking session and that anchor the selection of similar sample responses for marking sessions in subsequent years. The sample papers and commentaries were used to train markers to apply the scoring criteria consistently and to justify their decisions about scores in terms of each student’s work and the scoring criteria.

The sample responses included in this document represent a very small sample of successful approaches to the Functional Writing Assignment.

Cautions

1. The commentaries are brief. The commentaries were written for groups of markers to discuss and apply during the marking session. Although brief, they provide a model for relating specific examples from student work to the details in a specific scoring criterion.

2. Neither the scoring guide nor the assignment is meant to limit students to a single organisational or rhetorical approach in completing any achievement test assignment. Students must be free to select and organize their material in a manner that they feel will enable them to best present their ideas. In fact, part of what is being assessed is the final effectiveness of the content, the form and structure, and the rhetorical choices that students make. The student writing in this document illustrates just a few of the many successful organizational and rhetorical strategies used by students. We strongly recommend that you caution your students that there is no preferred approach to an assignment except that which enables the student to communicate his or her own ideas about the topic effectively. We advise you not to draw any conclusions about common patterns of approach taken by students.

3. The sample papers presented in this document must not be used as models to be reiterated. Because these papers are only illustrations of sample responses to a set topic, students must be cautioned neither to memorize their content nor to use them when either completing classroom assignments or writing future achievement tests. The approaches taken by students at the standard of excellence, not their words or ideas, are what students being examined in the future should emulate. In fact, it is hoped that the variety of approaches presented here will inspire students to experiment with diction, syntax, and form and structure as a way of developing an individual voice and engaging the reader in ideas and forms that the student has considered. Examination markers and staff at Alberta Education take plagiarism and cheating seriously.
4. It is essential that each of these examples of student writing be considered in light of the constraints of the examination situation. Under examination conditions, students produce first-draft writing. Given more time, they would be expected to produce papers of considerably improved quality, particularly in the dimensions of Content Management.

5. For further information regarding student performance on Part A: Writing of the Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Test, access the Grade 9 English Language Arts 2012 Assessment Highlights document that is posted on the Alberta Education website.

Suggestions
To provide each paper with the most accurate and impartial judgment possible, use only the scoring criteria and the standards set by the Exemplars and Rationales. Each student is a person trying to do his or her very best. All students are completely reliant on your careful, professional consideration of their work.

Markers are responsible for
• reviewing and internalizing the scoring criteria and their application to student writing
• applying the scoring criteria impartially, independently, and consistently to all papers
• refraining from marking a response if personal biases—such as the student’s handwriting, development of topic, idiosyncrasies of voice, and/or political or religious preference—interfere with an impartial judgment of the response
• ensuring that every paper is scored
  – fairly
  – according to the scoring criteria
  – in accordance with the standards reflected in the Exemplars and Rationales

The scores awarded to students’ papers must be based solely on the scoring criteria with reference to the Exemplars and Rationales. Fairness to all students is the most important requirement of the marking process.

To facilitate fair and valid assessment of all student work during both local and central marking, teachers must not mark or write in student booklets. Teacher-created scoring sheets, which may be used during local marking, are not to be included in student test booklets.

Please feel free to contact Assessment Sector staff members to discuss any questions or concerns.
**Maintaining Consistent Standards**

For all achievement test scoring sessions, teacher working groups for Exemplar Selection, Exemplar Validation, and Standards Confirmation are used both to establish expectations for student work in relation to the scoring criteria and to ensure scoring consistency within and between marking sessions. These working groups are crucial to ensuring that marks are valid, reliable, and fair measures of student achievement.

**Exemplar Selection Working Group**

Exemplars are selections of student work, taken from field tests, that best illustrate the scoring criteria. The Exemplar Selection Working Group is composed of experienced teachers representing various regions of the province who read a large sample of students’ written responses. Working-group members select responses that best match the established standards in the Exemplars and Rationales from the previous marking session. The working group then writes Rationales that explain the relationship between each Exemplar and the scoring criteria in each scoring category. The same process also occurs at this time in the selection of Training Papers. These papers are selected to illustrate characteristics of student work that might not be covered in the Exemplars and that might lead to inconsistent judgments or marking difficulties. While Exemplars usually receive consistent scores across all categories, Training Papers may not. This is due to the reality that students rarely perform with equal ability in every scoring category, as well as to the necessity of evaluating each scoring category as a distinct skill area.

**Exemplar Validation Working Group**

The Exemplar Validation Working Group, another group of experienced teachers from various provincial regions, reviews and approves the Exemplars, Training Papers, and Rationales that have been prepared for markers. The working group ensures that the Rationales accurately reflect the standards embedded in the descriptors in the Scoring Guide while verifying that appropriate and accurate references have been made to student work. Working-group members also strive to ensure that there is clarity within the Rationales.

**Standards Confirmation Working Group**

Teachers from throughout the province who serve on the Standards Confirmation Working Group read a large sample of student responses to *Part A: Writing* to confirm the appropriateness of the standards set by the test in relation to actual student work on the Achievement Test. The working group ensures that the Exemplars, Training Papers, and Rationales are appropriate for central marking. Working-group members also select student responses that are to be used for daily Reliability Reviews. Once a day, all markers score a copy of the same student paper for inter-rater reliability. Reliability Reviews confirm that all markers are consistently awarding scores that accurately reflect the standards embedded in the scoring criteria.

Working groups for Exemplar Selection, Exemplar Validation, and Standards Confirmation are part of a complex set of processes that have evolved over the years of Achievement Test administration. These teacher working groups are crucial to ensuring that standards are consistently and fairly applied to student work.
Local Marking

Classroom teachers are encouraged to assess students’ writing, using the Scoring Guides, Exemplars, and Rationales that are sent to the schools along with the Part A: Writing tests, before returning the tests to Alberta Education. All papers are scored centrally in Edmonton in July.

Scores awarded locally can be submitted to Alberta Education, where they will be used as the first reading of a student’s response. Local markers are to use the “For Teacher Use Only” section on the back of each Part A: Writing test booklet to record their scores by filling in the appropriate circles. The “School Code” and “Accommodations Used” sections should also be completed (see accommodations in the General Information Bulletin for information). If a teacher wants to know how his or her locally awarded scores compare with the scores that the tests received when scored centrally, then he or she must create a three-digit identification number and enter it in the section labelled “ID No.” on the back of each student booklet. No two teachers from the same school should create and use the same ID number. No other marks are to be made in the test booklet by the teacher.

Tests are to be returned to Alberta Education according to the scheduling information in the online General Information Bulletin. The tests will then be scored centrally by Alberta Education as the second reading. Both sets of scores are used when calculating each student’s final mark. In the case of a discrepancy between these two sets of scores, papers will receive a third reading, which will determine the final scores that a paper is awarded. In this way, valid and reliable individual and group results can be reported. Papers that are not assessed locally by teachers will be scored centrally only once.

After central marking has been completed and school reports have been sent to the schools, teachers who submitted their scores with an ID number will receive a confidential report on their marking. This report is called the Local Marker Report and includes the locally awarded scores, centrally awarded scores, third-read scores if applicable, and the final scores assigned.

Teachers may make photocopies of student writing from only the English Language Arts Part A: Writing tests for inclusion in portfolios of the year’s work. Copies can be made for parents who request them.

The levels of student achievement in the scoring guides are identified by specific words to describe student achievement in each scoring category. Classroom teachers are encouraged to discuss and use the scoring criteria with their students during the year.

To determine a student’s mark, convert the word descriptors to the following numeric values: Excellent = 5, Proficient = 4, Satisfactory = 3, Limited = 2, Poor = 1.
A total score for a student’s written response may be calculated by a teacher using the following procedure. For the **Narrative / Essay Writing Assignment**, assign a score of 1 to 5 for each of **Content**, **Organization**, **Sentence Structure**, **Vocabulary**, and **Conventions**. Then, multiply the scores for **Content** and **Organization** by 2 as these categories are worth twice as much as the other categories. The maximum score possible for Narrative / Essay Writing is 35. For the **Functional Writing Assignment**, assign a score of 1 to 5 for each of **Content** and **Content Management**. Then, multiply these scores by 2. The maximum score possible for Functional Writing is 20.

To calculate the **Total Part A: Writing Score**, add the Narrative / Essay Writing and Functional Writing scores as follows: **Narrative / Essay Writing __/35 (63.6%) + Functional Writing __/20 (36.4%) = Total Score __/55 (100%)**. The mark for **Part A: Writing** is worth 50% of the total mark for the Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Test.

Because students’ responses to the **Narrative / Essay Writing Assignment** vary widely—from philosophical discussions to personal narratives to creative approaches—assessment of the **Narrative / Essay Writing Assignment** on the achievement test will be in the context of Louise Rosenblatt’s suggestion that “the evaluation of the answers would be in terms of the amount of evidence that the youngster has actually read something and thought about it, not a question of whether, necessarily, he has thought about it the way an adult would, or given an adult’s ‘correct’ answer.”


Consider also Grant P. Wiggins’ suggestion to assess students’ writing “with the tact of Socrates: tact to respect the student’s ideas enough to enter them fully—even more fully than the thinker sometimes—and thus the tact to accept apt but unanticipatable or unique responses.”


To assess locally those students with special test-writing needs, specifically a scribed response (test accommodation 5) or a taped response (test accommodation 10), teachers are to refrain from scoring **Conventions** for **Assignment I: Narrative / Essay Writing** as well as **Content Management** for **Assignment II: Functional Writing**.
Scoring Guide: Functional Writing Assignment

Content

When marking Content appropriate for the Grade 9 Functional Writing Assignment, the marker should consider the extent to which

- ideas and development of the topic are effective
- the purpose of the assignment is fulfilled with complete and relevant information
- the tone is appropriate for a business letter, and awareness of audience is evident

Cross-Reference to Outcomes in the Program of Studies for Grade 9 English Language Arts: 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1, 3.3, 4.1, 4.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>E</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The ideas are perceptive, and development of the topic is clear and effective.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pertinent information is presented, and this information is enhanced by precise details that effectively fulfill the purpose of the assignment.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• A tone appropriate for the addressee is skillfully maintained.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Pf</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The ideas are thoughtful, and development of the topic is generally effective.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Significant information is presented, and this information is substantiated by specific details that fulfill the purpose of the assignment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A tone appropriate for the addressee is clearly maintained.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>S</th>
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<tr>
<td>• The ideas are appropriate, and development of the topic is adequate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relevant information is presented, and this information is supported by enough detail to fulfill the purpose of the assignment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A tone appropriate for the addressee is generally maintained.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limited</th>
<th>L</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The ideas are superficial and/or flawed, and development of the topic is inadequate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information presented is imprecise and/or undiscerning. Supporting details are insignificant and/or lacking. The purpose of the assignment is only partially fulfilled.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• A tone appropriate for the addressee is evident but not maintained.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>P</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The ideas are overgeneralized and/or misconstrued, and development of the topic is ineffective.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information is irrelevant and/or missing. Supporting details are obscure and/or absent. The purpose of the assignment is not fulfilled.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Little awareness of a tone appropriate for the addressee is evident.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Insufficient</th>
<th>INS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The marker can discern no evidence of an attempt to address the task presented in the assignment, or the student has written so little that it is not possible to assess Content.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Content and Content Management are equally weighted.

Student work must address the task presented in the assignment. Letters that are completely unrelated to the context established in the assignment will be awarded a score of Insufficient.
When marking **Content Management** appropriate for the Grade 9 Functional Writing Assignment, the marker should consider the extent to which

- words and expressions are used accurately and effectively
- sentence structure, usage, and mechanics (spelling, punctuation, etc.) are controlled
- the formats of an envelope and a business letter are consistently applied

**Proportion of error to length and complexity of response must be considered.**

Cross-Reference to Outcomes in the Program of Studies for Grade 9 English Language Arts: 4.1, 4.2

| Excellent | • Words and expressions used are consistently accurate and effective.  
|           | • The writing demonstrates confident and consistent control of correct sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. Errors that may be present do not impede meaning.  
|           | • The envelope and letter are essentially free from format errors and/or omissions. |
| Proficient| • Words and expressions used are usually accurate and effective.  
|           | • The writing demonstrates competent and generally consistent control of correct sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. Errors that are present rarely impede meaning.  
|           | • The envelope and letter contain few format errors and/or omissions. |
| Satisfactory| • Words and expressions used are generally accurate and occasionally effective.  
|           | • The writing demonstrates basic control of correct sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. Errors may occasionally impede meaning.  
|           | • The envelope and letter contain occasional format errors and/or omissions. |
| Limited | • Words and expressions used are frequently vague and/or inexact.  
|          | • The writing demonstrates faltering control of correct sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. Errors frequently impede meaning.  
|          | • The envelope and letter contain frequent format errors and/or omissions. |
| Poor | • Words and expressions used are inaccurate and/or misused.  
|      | • The writing demonstrates a lack of control of correct sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. Errors severely impede meaning.  
|      | • The envelope and letter contain numerous and glaring format errors and/or omissions. |
| Insufficient | • The writing has been awarded an **INS** for **Content**. |

*Note: Content and Content Management are equally weighted.*
Addressing an Envelope

1. Return Address

The return address is the name and address of the person sending the letter. The return address appears in the top left corner of the envelope and consists of your name, post office box number (if applicable), apartment or unit number followed by a hyphen (if applicable), street address (if applicable), city or town, province, and postal code.

JEAN BROWN
PO BOX 8207
TORONTO ON  L2R 3V6

JEAN BROWN
905-12963 61 ST
TORONTO ON  L2R 3V6

2. Mailing Address

The mailing address is the name and address to which the letter is being sent. It always appears in the centre of the envelope. In a business letter, the address on the envelope is the same as the inside address of the letter. There may be separate lines for the title of the addressee (Editor, Director, President), the division or department in which the person works, and the name of his or her company, business, or organization.

SAM HUNT
DIRECTOR
THE KNITTING MILL
1409 3 AVE
TORONTO ON  L3V 7O1

Envelope Format

1. Addresses should be typed or written in upper-case or block letters.

2. All lines of the addresses must be formatted with a uniform left margin.

3. Punctuation marks (such as commas and periods) should not be used unless they are part of a place name (e.g., ST. JOHN’S).

4. The postal code should always appear on the same line as the municipality and province or territory name, and should be separated from the province by two spaces.

5. The two-letter abbreviation for the province name should be used wherever possible (see next page); abbreviations for street (ST), avenue (AVE), and boulevard (BLVD) should also be used.

6. The return address should be formatted in the same way as the main address.

For more information, refer to the “Addressing Guidelines” in the Canada Postal Guide at www.canadapost.ca.
Format of a Business Letter

There are three basic business-letter formats. Any of these formats is appropriate and acceptable for the test. What is most important is that students choose one format and use it consistently so that the overall appearance of the letter is attractive. Note: Students should double-space word-processed work in order to make revisions more easily. This should be applied only to the body of the letter and not to the other parts.

Parts of the Business Letter
(see illustrations on next page)

1. Heading
The heading consists of your address and the date.
PO Box 8207
Toronto ON L2R 3V6
May 14, 2012
905-12963 61 St
Toronto ON L2R 3V6
May 14, 2012

2. Inside Address
The inside address consists of the name and address of the person to whom you are writing. It usually appears four lines below the heading if a word processor is used or one line below if it is handwritten.
Sam Hunt, Director
The Knitting Mill
1409 3 Ave
Toronto ON L3V 7O1

3. Salutation
The most traditional salutation or greeting for a business letter is Dear followed by Mr., Ms., Mrs., or Miss, and the person’s last name, followed by a colon.
Dear Mr. Smith:  Dear Mrs. Brown:
Dear Ms. Black:  Dear Miss Green:

4. Body
The body is the main part of the letter in which you write what you have to say to the addressee. Skip one line after the salutation.
• Be concise. Ensure that sufficient information is given so that your purpose is clearly understood and your request is well received.
• Business letters are usually formal, so the language that you use should also be formal.

5. Closing
The closing is the ending to your letter. It appears at the bottom of the letter, directly under the body. Only the first word in the closing should be capitalized. It is always followed by a comma.
Yours truly,
Sincerely,

6. Signature
The signature is your full name signed. Your signature should appear directly below the closing. It should always be written in ink.

7. Your Name Printed

8. Commonly Used Abbreviations for Provinces and Territories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province/Territory</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>AB</td>
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<td>British Columbia</td>
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<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>SK</td>
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<td>Yukon Territory</td>
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**Business Letter Formats**

**The block format.** In this format, all parts of the letter run along the left side of the page (margin). No paragraphs in the body are indented.

**The modified block format.** In this format, the heading, the closing, and the signature run along the right margin. All the other parts run along the left margin.

**The semi-block format.** This format is the same as the block format, except that the paragraphs in the body are indented.
Part A: Writing – Description and Instructions

Grade 9 Achievement Test

English Language Arts

Part A: Writing

Description

Part A: Writing contributes 50% of the total Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Test mark and consists of two assignments:

• Assignment I:
  Narrative / Essay Writing
  This assignment contains some material for you to consider. You must then respond in writing to the topic presented in the assignment. You should take about 70 minutes to complete Assignment I.
  Value: Approximately 65% of the total Part A: Writing test mark

• Assignment II:
  Functional Writing
  This assignment describes a situation to which you must respond in the format of a business letter. You should take about 40 minutes to complete Assignment II.
  Value: Approximately 35% of the total Part A: Writing test mark

Instructions

• You may use the following print references:
  – a dictionary (English and/or bilingual)
  – a thesaurus

• Complete both assignments.

• Record your ideas and/or make a plan before you write. Do this on the Planning pages.

• Write in pencil, or blue or black ink, on the lined pages provided.

• You are to do only one handwritten copy of your writing.

Additional Instructions for Students Using Word Processors

• Format your work using an easy-to-read 12-point or larger font, such as Times.

• Double-space your final printed copy. For the Functional Writing assignment, this should be applied to the body of the business letter but not to the other parts.

• Staple your printed work to the page indicated for word-processed work for each assignment. Hand in all work.

• Indicate in the space provided on the back cover that you have attached word-processed pages.

• You may make handwritten corrections and revisions directly on your printed work.

Before beginning to write, you will have 10 minutes to talk with your classmates (in groups of two to four) about both writing assignments or to think about them alone. During this time, you may record your ideas on the Planning pages provided.

This test was developed to be completed in two hours; however, you may take an additional 30 minutes to complete the test.

Do not write your name anywhere in this booklet. You may make corrections and revisions directly on your written work.

2012
Assignment II: Functional Writing

(suggested time—40 minutes)

Read the situation below and complete the assignment that follows.

Situation

You are Jamie Gardner, a grade nine student who attends Inspiration School in Newson, Alberta. Along with many other students, you believe there is a need to establish a policy regarding the amount of daily homework students are assigned. This policy would promote the development of consistent expectations among students, teachers, and parents regarding homework throughout all schools in the Carver School Division.

While recognizing that homework provides students with opportunities to reinforce classroom learning, you and your classmates see the need for a homework policy that includes the following guidelines:

• cooperation among teachers so that the amount of homework assigned is manageable
• time spent on daily homework increases by 10 minutes with each grade, starting in grade one
• no homework on non-school days
• homework assigned each day is relevant and meaningful
• allows teachers and schools flexibility to accommodate the needs of all students

You have decided to write a letter to the chairperson of the Carver School Board, Mrs. Helen Westminster, to explain why this homework policy is needed. In your letter, be sure to highlight the expected benefits of this policy and consider how any potential problems could be addressed.

Assignment

Write a business letter to Mrs. Helen Westminster, chairperson of the Carver School Board. In your letter, present your ideas regarding the need to establish this homework policy. Provide enough information to convince Mrs. Westminster and members of the school board of the benefits of implementing this policy.

When writing, be sure to

• identify the purpose of the letter
• explain the details of the situation and request
• organize your thoughts appropriately in sentences and paragraphs
• use vocabulary that is appropriate and effective
• sign your letter Jamie Gardner—do not sign your own name
• address the envelope on page 14
Address Information

Use the following information for your letter and to address the envelope below.

Mrs. Helen Westminster

Mrs. Helen Westminster is the chairperson of the Carver School Board. The board office is located in the city of Carrington, Alberta. The board’s post office box number is 5140, and the postal code is T2A 4S7.

Jamie Gardner

Jamie Gardner resides in the town of Newsome, Alberta. The postal code is T6Y 0W8. Jamie’s home is located at 14522 on 187 Avenue.

Envelope
Observations from Standards Confirmation and Central Marking 2012:
General Impressions

Throughout the 2012 marking session, markers were reminded to reward student strengths where evident rather than to critique what was missing or speculate on what a student should have added or included. When marking a response, markers were encouraged to conscientiously return to the “Focus” section of the scoring categories to consider the extent to which the student had demonstrated competence in the criteria listed. There are several scoring descriptors in each scoring scale to be assessed in order to arrive at judgments regarding the qualities of a response. Markers were asked to review—at the start of each marking day—each assignment and the prompt materials provided in the test booklet with the expectation that many students’ ideas regarding the task were informed by details in the contextual information presented in the assignment. Occasionally, markers may have needed to re-read a response to appreciate what a student had attempted and accomplished. All markers acknowledged that student responses were first drafts written under timed test writing conditions.

In the Functional Writing Assignment, most students were able to connect the context provided in the “Situation” to their own experiences in school. From the viewpoint of “Jamie Gardner, a grade nine student who attends Inspiration School,” students advocated for the “need to establish a policy regarding the amount of daily homework students are assigned.” In most responses, students referenced or listed the suggested guidelines provided, such as “the development of consistent expectations among students, teachers, and parents,” “cooperation among teachers,” increasing daily homework by “10 minutes with each grade,” having “no homework on non-school days,” being given homework that is “relevant and meaningful,” and striving to “accommodate the needs of all students.” However, the extent to which these guidelines were analyzed and particularized to achieve the student’s purpose in the “Assignment”—to “Write a business letter to Mrs. Helen Westminster, chairperson of the Carver School Board,” to “present your ideas regarding the need to establish this homework policy” and to “Provide enough information to convince Mrs. Westminster and members of the school board of the benefits of implementing this policy”—was significant in determining the quality of student responses.

Most students were able to recognize the merits of “having a homework policy” and presented arguments in favour of its implementation “so that students don’t do bad on their tests and do better in school,” have a “sense of accomplishment,” or “gain confidence in their abilities.” Many students acknowledged that homework “provides students with opportunities to reinforce classroom learning” but stipulated that guidelines are necessary to “make sure that students can do what is expected of them.” Some students contended that, in the absence of a homework policy, what is assigned is unfair or pointless” or that students will rebel by refusing to complete “unreasonable amounts of homework.” Other students stated that a homework policy would make teachers “consider how much homework they are assigning” so that homework is more meaningful to students and “not feel like a punishment.”

Many students demonstrated a pronounced reliance upon the guidelines of the homework policy provided, possibly a result of the seemingly prescriptive specification in the “Assignment” of the importance of establishing “this homework policy.” Thus, markers needed to recognize that, although many students adhered closely to the information provided, doing so was acceptable given the manner in which the assignment was framed. In some responses, students elaborated upon how a homework policy would “help kids stay on track, “give them a feeling of empowerment,” or contribute to “the well being of students at Newsome School.” Other students ruminated on the long-term benefits of a homework policy in teaching “valuable time-
management skills” that would benefit students when they “go to university” or “get a job.” In some cases, students provided suggestions with regard to “how any potential problems could be addressed” such as establishing a “rewards program” that could include offering students “one school night homework free per week.” In many responses, students provided information regarding how the addressee could contact the sender should she wish to do so, but this was not a requirement of the assignment.

As in other years, markers were to acknowledge that there is no prescribed length for responses to the Functional Writing Assignment. While some students concisely fulfilled the requirements of the task, others elaborated more fully upon ideas presented. Such brevity or embellishment was neither beneficial nor detrimental in and of itself, and markers were to take into account the overall effectiveness of each response when assessing its quality. With regard to envelope and letter format, recommendations are provided in the guidelines of Canada Post. Other formats/styles are to be considered equally acceptable and markers should assess the extent to which a student has been consistent in applying a chosen format to both the envelope and letter rather than “deduct marks” for deviations from the Canada Post guidelines. There were a number of student responses in which there were varying amounts of white space between the heading, inside address, and salutation in the letter and some students single-spaced the body of the letter while others used double-spacing. These issues specifically were not to be viewed as detrimental to the quality of student work and were not to be penalized in the assessment of “Content Management.”

Members of the Standards Confirmation Working Group concluded that most students succeeded in meeting the achievement standards expected of Grade 9 English Language Arts students on the 2012 Achievement Test. Compared with previous years, the Functional Writing Assignment provided students with myriad opportunities to successfully demonstrate their attainment of text creation outcomes in the Program of Studies.
Students whose responses demonstrated qualities characteristic of “Poor” or “Limited” scores in “Content” sometimes relied exclusively on verbatim reiteration of information presented in the assignment with little of their own thinking or development. Other students misconstrued the role of the writer of the letter to be that of the school board chairperson, the principal of Inspiration School, or a concerned parent advocating the need for a homework policy. In some instances, students mistakenly argued against having a homework policy or contended that the homework policy stipulated “10 minutes of homework per nite in grade 9,” that “uncompleted homework will be done on weekends,” or that “kids are sick and tired of homework and will blow it off no matter what we do.” In other responses, students asserted that “I don’t go to school 6 hrs a day just to do 6 hrs of homework at night,” that “home work shood be assinged by a students attitude,” or that there could be “problems like student protests or strikes.” To be persuasive, some students inappropriately asserted that “only an idiot woodnt see how this is a grate polcy” or that “You must lissen to this letter and give more homework.”

Ideas such as these are shown in the following excerpts from student responses that received “Poor” or “Limited” scores:

• “More and more kids at our school are failing and flunking school because teachers just give kids assignments whenever this has to stop! I for one am fed up with getting in trouble all the time for doing my home work.”

• “Ther are problems with the school and the homes of students about the lack of homework not being done, what we need is a homework club afterschool hours and then we can catch up of the extra assignments and their studies.”

• “It is time to see greater change in schools. Its is reasonable to give home work each day, to ensure that it is proper and done by the students properly other wise it will be a deseratost with no work being done and will bring down the schools grade point average lower.”

• “The program has more upsides than downsides, the ups being happier teachers and students and more homework, and the downs being homework all the time.”

• “Only haveing a bit of home work each night will help kids focus on the home work for a short minutes and then students can enjoy the rest of their evening witch is effective be caus it is an agreement with teachers and the kids they teach.”

• “What if your in grade 2 and get 5 hrs of Home work and what if your in grade 11 and get only 15 minutes of home work. I know that this is not fair because some times you just dont want to do home work and want free time a better rule would be to not have 5 hours of home work when you should only be getting 2. You should think about what I said and make this decision.”

• “Most students are tired cause we stay up to late and dont not have time for homework. Due to tiredness students do not wanting to do the work at home. They want to stop doing all the work, Hanging out with friends helps but they could start doing bad inclass. Teachers need to get along these are my big reasons why you should take the time to take my plans into consideration.”

• “We need to establish of a homework policy. I have tired this establishment on myself for the past year and it seemed to work, this will, make weekends homework free. Kids and teachers need free week ends and holidays, I would like homework only on weekdays, so we can have free week ends and holidays. If you aprove of this letter by the end of may. And then I would like to know if my request is put into schools and kids will have free week ends and holidays.”
• “As principle of this school, we need this homework policy so that our school can improve its grades. The students of Inspiration School in Newsome need guidelines to help students learn and make sure they have enough homework. Teachers and I work together to make sure homework is worth students to do.”

• “In elementary, kids think homework is fun, to keep it fun students will get older they will still be interested in school and like it. Starting only at Junior high we would like to have a minimum of 5 minutes and a maximum of 25 minutes per subject every night or 20 minutes and a maximum of 45 minutes per subject at night you have to be prepared for the real world where homework takes along time to do for at least a half hour.”

In student writing scored “Poor” or “Limited” in “Content,” as illustrated in these excerpts, ideas were superficial, flawed, overgeneralized, and/or misconstrued and development of the topic was inadequate or ineffective. Information presented was imprecise, undiscerning, irrelevant, and/or missing. Supporting details were insignificant, lacking, obscure, and/or absent, and the purpose of the assignment was only partially fulfilled or not fulfilled. A tone appropriate for the addressee was either evident but not maintained or not evident. In responses scored “Poor” or “Limited” in “Content Management,” words and expressions used are frequently vague and/or inexact or inaccurate and/or misused. The writing demonstrates either faltering control or a lack of control of correct sentence structure, usage, and mechanics and errors that are present frequently or severely impede meaning. The envelope and letter contain frequent or numerous and glaring format errors and/or omissions.
Students whose responses received a score of “Satisfactory” in “Content” typically recognized how a homework policy could “give students extra practice,” “prepare students for high school,” or “guarantee completed assignments and a healthier lifestyle.” As well, most students acknowledged that “we need a homework policy to even out what students have to do” because “if there is too much homework it could cause poor effort” and that “teachers will be willing to work together” because doing so is in the “best interests” of students. Among the advantages of a homework policy cited by many students were “more effort from the students,” “teachers working with students,” and “students having free time.” Some students speculated that students at the school would “welcome the policy” whereas other students were concerned with the indifference of some students at the school. Still others provided suggestions for “gaining support for the policy” that included “conducting information sessions with students and parents,” “gift certificates for students who always have their homework done,” and “giving the class with the best performance a field trip.”

Qualities of student writing awarded “Satisfactory” scores are evident in the following excerpts from student responses:

• “I am writing to you today to discuss a homework policy. I believe this policy is needed to ensure constant learning and achieving in children and young adults. This policy would expect a certain amount of work done by students every school day and will ensure that every student get the amount of homework they need to do their best in school and have time management skills.”

• “I am a student at the Inspiration School in Newsome and I am writing this letter to explain why establishing a policy that will provide guidelines on the amount of homework students are assigned is a change for the better. … This policy will give students much needed time to do sports, or any thing else after school. It will also encourage more collaboration among teachers so homework will be doable.”

• “Right now we sometimes get hardly any homework on some days and on other days we get several hours worth. If teachers collaborated homework could be more spread out. Having a homework policy that says students should do 10 minutes of homework each night starting in grade 1 and increasing by 10 minutes in each grade would make homework more manageable. Students should not have to do homework on nonschool days … A homework policy would definately lead to an increase in students grades.”

• “Right now, student think they have too much homework, and we need to fix this. We understand that numerous students take part in after school activites, so we need to make a time for all grades that is good for all students. I, feel very strongly that there should be set homework guidelines for all students and ensure that all students will get equal amounts of homework on each night on school days.”

• “I think a homework policy that says the amount of time students should spend on homework each day increases by 10 minutes each grade, starting from grade 1 should be put in place. So the homework assigned is reasonable. If this is done students won’t have homework on holidays. This will make sure homework can get done and provide break times from learning to enjoy activities and spending time with friends. I hope you will consider this policy to help students succeed if properly implemented.”

• “I am Jamie Gardner and along with other students we believe that a homework policy needs to be established. Firstly, students will get higher, more persistent marks if this policy is in effect. … Secondly, this policy also includes a no homework detail on days out of school activity
with no homework on weekends or holidays. … Thirdly, a daily homework routine is manageable for students leading to less stress on the mind. … A homework policy will make sure that we all work together in all schools in the Carver School Division.”

• “I feel that its best to give homework based on age and grade. Every year you will gain ten minutes as you pass each grade starting from grade 1. This will be fair and students would be more willing to do it more students would get better grades. Teachers will work together to give a certain amount of homework and nothing more. This way, students will have free time and be more fresh to learn when they go back to school again.”

• “Students should be getting the right amount of homework per grade. They will learn more and stay caught up, and teachers should cooperate to make sure only a certain amount is assigned so students have less stress. Weekends and holidays should be free of homework so students can relax and enjoy life. School spirit will grow and students will learn better. … Please think of these benefits when making your decision.”

• “I think Inspiration school is a great school but just like any other school there are problem’s. I have seen that there are uneven amounts of homework given out and students are frustrated. To help with this, we could have a homework policy that would promote ten minutes of homework with each passing grade and so on. Kids would find this more helpful that they will have more time to study and do better in school. This policy will have no homework on nonschool days and make homework manageable for students and for the teachers, making them more responsible for their own learning.”

• “I believe that establishing a homework policy that increases the amount of homework by 10 minutes each grade would be a first step in upgradeing all schools in our district. To begin, I feel that participation in a homework policy would improve student marks because the amounts of homework would be manageable. Also, the set homework policy would apply on school nights only so students stress levels would be reduced. Finally, this policy would make time management a snap for students who can plan their time better. … I look forward to your decision on putting the new policy in effect.”

In responses scored “Satisfactory” in “Content,” as illustrated in these excerpts, students presented appropriate ideas and adequately developed the topic. Relevant information was presented and supported by enough detail to fulfill the purpose of the assignment. A tone appropriate for the addressee was generally maintained. In responses scored “Satisfactory” in “Content Management,” words and expressions used were generally accurate and occasionally effective. The writing demonstrated basic control of correct sentence structure, usage, and mechanics and contained errors that may have occasionally impeded meaning. The envelope and letter contained occasional format errors and/or omissions.
Student Exemplar – Satisfactory

Address Information

Use the following information for your letter and to address the envelope below.

Mrs. Helen Westminster

Mrs. Helen Westminster is the chairperson of the Carver School Board. The board office is located in the city of Carrington, Alberta. The board’s post office box number is 5140, and the postal code is T2A 4S7.

Jamie Gardner

Jamie Gardner resides in the town of Newsome, Alberta. The postal code is T6Y 0W8. Jamie’s home is located at 14522 on 187 Avenue.

Envelope

Jamie Gardner
14522 187 Avenue
Newsome, Alberta T6Y 0W8

Mrs. Helen Westminster
PO Box 5140
Carrington, Alberta T2A 4S7
Assignment II: Planning

Use this page to plan in whatever way you choose.
14532 187 Avenue
Newsome, Alberta T6Y 0W8

Mrs. Helen Westminster
PO Box 5140
Carrington, Alberta T2A 4S7

May 14, 2012

Dear Mrs. Westminster,

My name is Jamie Gardner and I attend Inspiration School in Newsome, Alberta. I’m writing to you today to inform you of a wonderful idea for a homework policy that majority of students and I wish to be instated.

The time that students spend on homework increases by 10 minutes with each passing grade. (This
Policy starts at the grade 7 level. Also, students should be free from any homework on days without school such as holidays and weekends.

This policy would be a huge step in the right direction for the Carver School Board and schools of the area. The policy ensures that each day homework will be completed because the quantity and amount of time is very manageable. Students wouldn't be as stressed out about school and homework. They could also reserve time and plan ahead as they exactly how long it will take them.

Homework can be very overwhelming for students, and by implementing this policy, you will be helping students everywhere.

Sincerely,

Jamie Gardner

Jamie Gardner
Rationale for Student Exemplar – Satisfactory

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<td>• The <strong>ideas</strong> are <strong>appropriate</strong>—as seen in the conception that “because the quantity and amount of time is very manageable,” students “could also reserve time and plan ahead”—and <strong>development</strong> of the topic—in the argument that “This policy would be a huge step in the right direction for the Carver School Board and schools of the area” because it “ensures that each day, homework will be completed”—is <strong>adequate</strong>.</td>
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<td>• <strong>Relevant information</strong> is presented regarding why “Students wouldn’t be as stressed out about school and homework” if the homework policy were to be implemented, and this information is <strong>supported</strong> by <strong>enough detail</strong> in the documentation of how “The time that students spend on homework increases by 10 minutes with each passing grade. (This policy starts at the grade 1 level)” and how “students should be free from any homework on days without school such as holidays and weekends” to <strong>fulfill the purpose</strong> of the assignment.</td>
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<td>• A <strong>tone appropriate</strong> for the addressee is <strong>generally maintained</strong>, as illustrated in expressions such as “I’m writing to you today to inform you,” “a homework policy that majority of students and I wish to be instated,” and “by implementing this policy, you will be helping students everywhere.”</td>
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<td>Content Management</td>
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<td>• <strong>Words</strong> and <strong>expressions</strong> used such as “a wonderful idea,” “starts at the grade 1 level,” “free from any homework,” “The policy ensures that,” and “Homework can be very overwhelming for students” are <strong>generally accurate</strong> and <strong>occasionally effective</strong>.</td>
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<td>• The writing demonstrates <strong>basic control</strong> of correct <strong>sentence structure</strong> (as in “My name is Jamie Gardner and I attend Inspiration School in Newsome, Alberta”), <strong>usage</strong> (as in “This policy would be a huge step in the right direction for the Carver School Board and schools of the area”), and <strong>mechanics</strong> (as in “Students wouldn’t be as stressed out about school and homework”). <strong>Errors</strong> such as in “as they exactly how long it will take them” occasionally <strong>impede</strong> meaning.</td>
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<td>• <strong>Occasional format errors</strong> and <strong>omissions</strong> are contained in the <strong>envelope</strong> and <strong>letter</strong>—in the omission of the recipient’s title and organization in the mailing address and inside address, the misplacement of the date beneath the inside address, the use of a comma in the salutation, and the placement of the signature beneath the printed name “Jamie Garder.”</td>
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**Proportion of error to length and complexity of response has been considered.**
Observations from Standards Confirmation and Central Marking 2012: Qualities of Student Writing that Met the Standard of Excellence

In responses awarded scores of “Proficient” or “Excellent” in “Content,” students often personalized the topic by including first-hand experience with the challenges of “balancing school work with outside of school activities” and the wisdom of encouraging students to “become accountable” for their time. In some responses, students effectively conceded that homework is beneficial in “reinforcing concepts that are being studied” and presented arguments related to how, with a homework policy in place, “marks will actually be based on ability rather than homework completed” and “overall student achievement” is likely to increase. Some students contended that “if students have prepared for class by completing their homework, teachers waste less time reviewing what has been covered” and that “if punishments are set up for students that don’t comply, such as detentions or calling home, the policy will work.” In some cases, students adopted a tone of indignation with regard to the detriments of not having a homework policy in attempting to convince Mrs. Westminster of the need for its establishment. As well, students sometimes recommended how members of the Carver School Board could act as “guest speakers who could visit the schools to show how students could benefit” from the establishment of a homework policy.

The excerpts below are taken from student responses that received “Proficient” or “Excellent” scores:

- “Homework is an important way to reinforce student learning and, if assigned in manageable amounts can be extremely beneficial in raising student’s grades. The best way to achieve this goal is to implement a homework policy. Starting in grade 1, students should get no more than 10 minutes of homework each day, with the amount increasing by 10 minutes each grade. When necessary, teachers will coordinate what they assign. Homework would be meaningful for students and they could manage their out of school time better. With weekends and other nonschool days being homework free students can participate in activities without sacrificing school work.”

- “I am writing to you today regarding the prospect of having a homework policy through Carver schools. The guidelines underlining this policy are reasonably simply. To have planned and consistent amounts of homework each school night, the homework policy states that there will be no more than 10 minutes of homework for students in grade one, with 10 minutes added with each grade. Students could schedule extra curricular activities for times when no homework is assigned. This would be extremely beneficial and I believe this will not only allow students to finish their work on time, but their grades will likely increase.”

- “Having a homework policy would give students constancy in the homework they are assigned. Guidelines limiting homework to ten minutes per school day for grade one students and increasing that amount of time by ten minutes in each grade will make homework manageable for students. Knowing what is expected will help students manage their time efficiently and they will be likely to succeed in school. This will boost self confidence and with there being no homework on nonschool days, students can enjoy free time and be ready to learn when back at school. The benefits of this policy are many and I hope that you will take into consideration what I have proposed.”

- “Teachers could work together to coordinate assignments and students would feel less stress if they could manage their time more precisely in order to take part in recreational activities as well. By allowing for flexibility in its implementation, this homework policy emphasizes the need to focus on the individual needs of students to help them to succeed. Students will
become accountable for their individual achievements and this will be evident in their increasing grades.”

• “Having a homework policy would reinforce the success of the students in a positive way throughout their school years. Students will achieve higher scores but will also gain self discipline through budgeting their time efficiently after school hours. Above all, school morale will be enhanced if teachers collaborate and work together to accommodate the needs of the students.”

• “Many students are involved in a variety of sports, music lessons, and other activities. Some students simply don’t have time to complete all assignments to the best of their ability all the time. If we introduce a homework policy, starting with ten minutes per day for grade one, students will receive ten additional minutes of homework with each successive grade. I believe that students would then be able to finish their homework. If students have time off from homework during weekends, breaks, and holidays they would be more ready to learn during school hours.”

• “Although homework helps students learn, a limitation should be placed on the amount of homework assigned each school day. Beginning with 10 minutes a day in grade one, homework could increase by 10 minutes with each grade. This would provide enough time on homework each night to reinforce learning, while allowing students to take part in other activities as well on weekends, spring break, summer vacation, and holidays when homework will not be assigned. Teachers would work together to make sure that what they are given is meaningful. Of course, flexibility is needed but working together, students and teachers can share the success achieved.”

• “A policy that enforces a certain amount of homework for each grade level and eliminates homework on non-school days will benefit students. There would be more cooperation among teachers and parents regarding what is expected of students. With predictability in homework assigned, students can schedule activities so that anxiety and frustration can be avoided. Students can become more responsible and will likely improve upon their academic performance.”

• “Many of the students at my school and I would like to propose that a homework policy be developed for schools in the Carver School Division. The policy would consist of a minutes per grade system in which students in each grade would receive 10 more minutes of daily homework than in the previous year. Students would have homework-free days including weekends, breaks, and holidays, providing free time to spend with friends and family.”

• “By implementing this policy, students will be accountable for setting aside time to get their homework done. They would see that homework is manageable. They can take advantage of time available such as weekends, holidays, and vacations to participate in and enjoy personal interests. Studies have proven that students with diverse interests like playing piano or competitive sports in school succeed later on in life.”

Student writing scored “Proficient” or “Excellent” in “Content,” as illustrated in these excerpts, was characterized by ideas that were thoughtful or perceptive and development of the topic that was generally effective or clear and effective. Significant or pertinent information was presented, and this information was substantiated or enhanced by specific or precise details that fulfilled the purpose of the assignment. A tone appropriate for the addressee was clearly or skillfully maintained. In responses scored “Proficient” or “Excellent” in “Content Management,” words and expressions used were usually or consistently accurate and effective. The writing demonstrated either competent and generally consistent or confident and consistent control of correct sentence structure, usage, and mechanics and errors that may have been present rarely or did not impede meaning. The envelope and letter contained few, if any, format errors and/or omissions.
Student Exemplar – Proficient

Address Information

Use the following information for your letter and to address the envelope below.

Mrs. Helen Westminster

Mrs. Helen Westminster is the chairperson of the Carver School Board. The board office is located in the city of Carrington, Alberta. The board’s post office box number is 5140, and the postal code is T2A 4S7.

Jamie Gardner

Jamie Gardner resides in the town of Newsome, Alberta. The postal code is T6Y 0W8. Jamie’s home is located at 14522 on 187 Avenue.

Envelope

Jamie Gardner
14522 187 Avenue
Newsome AB T6Y 0W8

Mrs. Helen Westminster
Carver School Board
Box 5140
Carrington AB T2A 4S7
Assignment II: Planning

Use this page to plan in whatever way you choose.
14522 187 Avenue  
Newsome AB  T6Y 0W8  
May 14, 2012  

Mrs. Helen Westminster, chairperson  
Carver School Board  
Box 5140  
Carrington AB  T2A 4S7  

Dear Mrs. Westminster:  

I attend Inspiration school in Newsome AB where there are great teachers and many extracurricular activities that benefit students and teachers. It is a great place to be and I have the privilege of being a part of it. However, I feel a policy that will provide specific guidelines about homework and how much should be given needs to be put in place. This will benefit both students and teachers and give everyone the understanding they need to succeed greatly when it comes to homework.  

A policy like this should be introduced to the school as it will clarify homework for everyone. The policy will be to ensure that the homework assigned is relevant, meaningful and manageable for students. In order to do this, the policy needs to specify what homework and how much of it should be given out. Although the teachers and schools will have some flexibility within the issue, the policy will be there to benefit this change for the better. We as students understand that homework is needed to help us succeed in school and life, and to become better students overall. Students in my class, including myself, believe that there is a need for this collaboration to unite the teachers and ourselves. This policy would also include that students shall be free of homework on non-school days such as weekends and spring breaks. Our school’s students feel this will help us; the future generation and the teachers become strongly united together. We will be able to improve our school one homework assignment at a time.
On behalf of myself and the students of Inspiration School I would like to thank you for taking time out of your busy day to read this letter. I hope you will consider this policy and think it over. If you have any questions surrounding this you can contact me at happyhomework@hotmail.com or by phone at 555-1217.

Sincerely,

Jamie Gardner

Jamie Gardner
## Rationale for Student Exemplar – Proficient

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<td>• The <strong>ideas</strong> pertaining to the benefits of the homework policy for “both students and teachers” in giving “everyone the understanding they need to succeed greatly when it comes to homework” and helping students to “succeed in school and life, and to become better students overall” are <strong>thoughtful</strong>. Development of the topic in arguing that “a policy that will provide specific guidelines about homework and how much should be given needs to be put in place” so that “the future generation and the teachers become strongly united together” is <strong>generally effective</strong>.</td>
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<td><strong>Significant information</strong> (citing the need “to specify what homework and how much of it should be given out”) is presented, and this information is <strong>substantiated</strong> by <strong>specific details</strong> (in references to homework being “relevant, meaningful and manageable for students,” “teachers and schools” having “some flexibility,” “collaboration to unite the teachers” with students, and students being “free of homework on non-school days such as weekends and spring breaks”) that <strong>fulfill the purpose</strong> of the assignment.</td>
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<td>Pf</td>
<td>• As is evident in “It is a great place to be and I have the privilege of being a part of it,” “A policy like this should be introduced to the school as it will clarify homework for everyone,” “We will be able to improve our school one homework assignment at a time,” and “On behalf of myself and the students of Inspiration School I would like to thank you for taking time out of your busy day to read this letter,” a <strong>tone appropriate</strong> for the addressee is <strong>clearly maintained</strong>.</td>
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| Pf    | **Content Management**<br>• As illustrated in “a great place to be and I have the privilege of being a part of it,” “However, I feel,” “In order to do this, the policy needs to specify,” “this change for the better,” “We as students understand that homework is needed,” and “Students in my class, including myself, believe that,” **words and expressions** used are **usually accurate** and **effective**.  

**Pf**<br>• The writing demonstrates **competent** and **generally consistent control** of correct **sentence structure, usage, and mechanics**—as seen in “I attend Inspiration school in Newsome AB where there are great teachers and many extracurricular activities that benefit students and teachers” and “If you have any questions surrounding this you can contact me at happyhomework@hotmail.com or by phone at 555-1217.” **Errors** that are present—such as in “have some flexibility within the issue” and “This policy would also include that students shall be”—**rarely impede** meaning  

**Pf**<br>• The **envelope and letter** contain **few format errors** and **omissions** (such as in the lack of abbreviation of the word **avenue** in both the return address and heading, the omission of the recipient’s title in the mailing address, and the presentation of “Mrs. Helen Westminster, chairperson” in the inside address).<br><br>**Proportion of error to length and complexity of response has been considered.**
**Student Exemplar – Excellent**

**Address Information**

Use the following information for your letter and to address the envelope below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mrs. Helen Westminster</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Helen Westminster is the chairperson of the Carver School Board. The board office is located in the city of Carrington, Alberta. The board’s post office box number is 5140, and the postal code is T2A 4S7.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jamie Gardner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jamie Gardner resides in the town of Newsome, Alberta. The postal code is T6Y 0W8. Jamie’s home is located at 14522 on 187 Avenue.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Envelope**

- **Jamie Gardner**
  - 14522 187 Avenue
  - Newsome AB T6Y 0W8

- **Helen Westminster**
  - Chairperson
  - Carver School Board
  - PO Box 5140
  - Carrington AB T2A 4S7
Assignment II: Planning

Use this page to plan in whatever way you choose.

Introduction
- on behalf of Inspiration School
- program aiming to ensure homework is relevant, meaningful
- program will improve behaviour, learning environment
- improve intelligence

Paragraph one
- explain program in more detail

Paragraph two
- reasons why program will benefit (improve behaviour, learning environment).

Paragraph three
- reasons why program will benefit (improve intelligence).

Conclusion
- summarize key points
14522 187 Avenue
Newsome AB  T6Y 0W8
May 14, 2012

Mrs. Helen Westminster, Chairperson
Carver School Board
PO Box 5140
Carrington AB  T2A 4S7

Dear Mrs. Westminster:

I am a student who attends Inspiration School in Newsome, Alberta. Recently, many of my classmates and I have been concerned about the amount of homework that we are given. Some nights we have very little and other nights we have more than we are able to do. Sometimes a lot of our weekend is spent on homework. We recognize that homework is valuable and can help us learn but would like to propose that a homework policy be established by the school board in all schools in the Carver School Division.

The homework policy will establish consistent expectations for what students are required to do. Teachers will cooperate with regard to what they assign each day so that the homework assigned will be more meaningful and less overwhelming. We recommend that a maximum of 10 minutes of daily homework be given in grade one and then increasing the maximum amount of time by 10 minutes in each grade after that. It is also important that there should be no homework given on non-school days, such as weekends, holidays, spring break, or summer holidays. If students know how much homework they have they can more effectively make plans and manage their time.
If students are able to get their homework done they will be more motivated in their classes. In a more positive learning environment classroom behaviour will improve. Students will be encouraged to take responsibility for their actions by being rewarded for completing homework instead of being punished or receiving a failing grade for not getting it done. Students who are in extra-curricular activities after school or have a part-time job would benefit immensely. Students will gain confidence and self-esteem if the amount of homework they are expected to do is reasonable.

Student achievement will increase as a result of having this homework policy. If students complete their homework they will increase their intelligence and have a better understanding of what they are studying. For example, if a student gets better at reading by doing language arts homework, they could improve their grades in other subjects because they have better comprehension skills. The long-term benefits of doing well in school include scholarships to colleges or universities and being able to choose a career that is rewarding.

I ask that you and members of the school board consider the ideas that I have presented. My classmates and I firmly believe that implementing this policy will increase our ability to meet the expectations of our parents and our teachers. I eagerly look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Jamie Gardner

Jamie Gardner
### Rationale for Student Exemplar – Excellent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>E</strong></td>
<td>Content</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The <strong>ideas</strong> (in the reasoning that “a homework policy [should] be established by the school board in all schools in the Carver School Division” so that there will be “consistent expectations for what students are required to do,” “classroom behaviour will improve,” and students will “have a better understanding of what they are studying”) are <strong>perceptive, and development</strong> of the topic (in arguing that “If students know how much homework they have they can more effectively make plans and manage their time,” “Students will gain confidence and self-esteem if the amount of homework they are expected to do is reasonable,” and “If students complete their homework they will increase their intelligence” and in concluding that “implementing this policy will increase our ability to meet the expectations of our parents and our teachers”) is <strong>clear and effective</strong>.</td>
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<td><strong>E</strong></td>
<td>• <strong>Pertinent information</strong> is presented—regarding how the homework policy will ensure that “homework assigned will be more meaningful and less overwhelming,” students “will be more motivated in their classes,” and “Student achievement will increase”—and this information is <strong>enhanced</strong> by the incorporation of <strong>precise details</strong> stipulating features of the policy—that “Teachers will cooperate with regard to what they assign each day,” that “a maximum of 10 minutes of daily homework [should] be given in grade one and then increasing the maximum amount of time by 10 minutes in each grade after that,” and that “there should be no homework given on non-school days, such as weekends, holidays, spring break, or summer holidays”—and its benefits for “Students who are in extra-curricular activities after school or have a part-time job” and “The long-term benefits of doing well in school [that] include scholarships to colleges or universities and being able to choose a career that is rewarding”—that <strong>effectively fulfill the purpose</strong> of the assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E</strong></td>
<td>• As demonstrated in “Recently, many of my classmates and I have been concerned about the amount of homework that we are given,” “We recognize that homework is valuable and can help us learn but would like to propose that,” “We recommend,” “It is also important that,” “Students will be encouraged to take responsibility for their actions by being rewarded for completing homework instead of being punished or receiving a failing grade for not getting it done,” “For example, if a student,” and “I ask that you and members of the school board consider the ideas that I have presented,” a <strong>tone appropriate</strong> for the addressee is <strong>skillfully maintained</strong>.</td>
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<td>Reporting Category</td>
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</table>
| E     | **Content Management**  
|       | • **Words and expressions** used—such as in “Some nights we have very little and other nights we have more than we are able to do,” “The homework policy will establish,” “a more positive learning environment,” “being rewarded for completing homework instead of being punished or receiving a failing grade for not getting it done,” “would benefit immensely,” “as a result of having this homework policy,” “improve their grades in other subjects because they have better comprehension skills,” and “My classmates and I firmly believe that”—are **consistently accurate** and **effective**.  
|       | • The writing demonstrates **confident** and **consistent control** of correct **sentence structure** (as seen in “I am a student who attends Inspiration School in Newsome, Alberta”), **usage** (as seen in “If students are able to get their homework done they will be more motivated in their classes”), and **mechanics** (as seen in “I eagerly look forward to your response”). **Errors** such as in “valueable,” “consistant,” “responsibilty,” “self-esteem,” and “if a student gets better at reading by doing language arts homework, they could” **do not impede** meaning.  
| E     | • The **envelope** and **letter** are **essentially free** from **format errors** and **omissions**, with the only exception being the lack of abbreviation of the word **avenue** in the return address and heading.  
|       | **Proportion of error to length and complexity of response has been considered.** |
Appendix: Marker Training Papers

The Marker Training Papers are intended to provide markers with an opportunity to

- apply the standards embedded in the scoring criteria and illustrated in the Exemplars and Rationales
- grapple with some of the more complex decisions that markers face
- read and score the Training Papers according to the scoring criteria
- compare individually awarded scores with those awarded in each scoring category

Reminders for marking:

- When a student’s work exhibits characteristics of two scoring criteria, a marker must use professional judgment to apply the scoring criterion that most accurately and appropriately describes the features of the paper. Usually, the appropriate criterion is the one from which there are the most descriptors that “fit” the student’s work.

- Be objective in your marking. Mark according to the Scoring Guide and Exemplars ONLY.

- Before marking each scoring category, read the focus information to help you to focus on the key words and phrases of each reporting category that help to distinguish differences among scoring levels.

- Student work must be related to the assignment. An INSUFFICIENT paper demonstrates no evidence of an attempt to address the task presented in the assignment, or the student has written so little that it is not possible to assess Content. A NO RESPONSE paper has absolutely nothing written, drawn, or highlighted.

- Information provided by a student on the planning page can be used to inform a marker’s judgments but is not directly scored.

- Do not be misled by the physical appearance of the paper. Poorly handwritten/word-processed responses are not necessarily poorly constructed, just as neatly handwritten/word-processed responses are not necessarily of quality and substance.

- Score each bullet within each reporting category separately, and then assign an overall score for that category. For example, if two of the three bullets in a scoring category are scored as “Pf” and the third bullet as “S,” assign an overall score of “Pf” in this scoring category. You will encounter papers that, according to the scoring guide, are at the high end or low end of the range of a given scoring level; nonetheless, a single score must be awarded for each scoring category.

- A student response does not have to be perfect to receive a score of Excellent in any one or all of the scoring categories.
Marker Training Paper A

Address Information

Use the following information for your letter and to address the envelope below.

Mrs. Helen Westminster

Mrs. Helen Westminster is the chairperson of the Carver School Board. The board office is located in the city of Carrington, Alberta. The board’s post office box number is 5140, and the postal code is T2A 4S7.

Jamie Gardner

Jamie Gardner resides in the town of Newsome, Alberta. The postal code is T6Y 0W8. Jamie’s home is located at 14522 on 187 Avenue.

Envelope

```
JAMIE GARDNER
14522 187 AVE
NEWSOME AB T6Y 0W8

HELEN WESTMINSTER
CHAIRPERSON
CARVER SCHOOL BOARD
BOX 5140
CARRINGTON AB T2A 4S7
```
Assignment II: Planning

Use this page to plan in whatever way you choose.

R - Jane Goodner
A - Helen Westminster
F - Building letter
T - Homework policy
S -
Helen Westminster, Chairperson  
Carver School Board  
Box 5140  
Carrington AB T2A 4S7  

Dear Mrs. Westminster:  

I attend Inspiration School in Newsome, Alberta. Some fellow students and I have developed a new homework policy which we believe would benefit students in the region. The new policy would include specific guidelines about the amount of homework students receive. The policy would involve specific guidelines about how much time the homework should take. This means that with each grade that is passed the amount of time recommended to complete homework would be increased by 10 minutes. For example a first grade student would receive 10 minutes of homework while a sixth grade student would receive 60 minutes of homework and so forth.  

The problem with the current homework structure is that there is no communication between teachers about the amount of homework they are assigning. Students receive large amounts of homework on some days and miniscule amounts the next. If the policy is implemented then there would be a consistent, yet manageable flow of homework every day. Another problem with the current homework policy is that there is often homework assigned on holidays and weekends. These days are given to students to relax from a stressful week at school. If students are given homework they cannot relax and become stressed making them less manageable for the next week at school. If the new policy is to be integrated into the school system there will be no
homework on holidays and weekends. The consistent flow of homework during the week will make sure that the students do not fall behind.

My fellow students and I feel that the policy needs to be put into a trial stage before being implemented throughout the entire school board. We have decided that it should be trialed at our school, Inspiration School, because if we find any flaws in the policy we can easily locate them and repair them. Thank you for taking your time to read my letter. I hope that you can get back to me on a verdict of whether or not to try the new policy.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Jamie Gardner
### Rationale for Marker Training Paper A

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<tr>
<td>Pf</td>
<td>Content</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The ideas regarding a “new policy [that] would include specific guidelines about the amount of homework students receive” and provide “a consistent, yet manageable flow of homework every day” are thoughtful and development of the topic—in the critique of “the current homework structure” (wherein “there is no communication between teachers about the amount of homework they are assigning. Students receive large amounts of homework on some days and miniscule amounts the next” and “there is often homework assigned on holidays and weekends”)—is generally effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Pertinent information pertaining to how “The policy would involve specific guidelines about how much time the homework should take,” how “The consistent flow of homework during the week will make sure that the students do not fall behind,” and how “the policy needs to be put into a trial stage before being implemented throughout the entire school board” is presented, and this information is enhanced by precise details (such as those documenting “that with each grade that is passed the amount of time recommended to complete homework would be increased by 10 minutes” and that students will be able to “relax from a stressful week at school … If the new policy is to be integrated into the school system [because] there will be no homework on holidays and weekends”) that effectively fulfill the purpose of the assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pf</td>
<td>A tone appropriate for the addressee is clearly maintained through the use of expressions such as “Some fellow students and I have developed a new homework policy which we believe would benefit students in the region,” “Another problem with the current homework policy,” and “Thank you for taking your time to read my letter. I hope that you can get back to me on a verdict of whether or not to try the new policy.”</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>Content Management</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <strong>Words</strong> and <strong>expressions</strong> used (such as in “I attend Inspiration School in Newsome, Alberta. Some fellow students and I have developed a new homework policy,” “large amounts of homework on some days and miniscule amounts the next,” “If the policy is implemented then there would be,” “These days are given to students,” and “My fellow students and I feel that the policy needs to be put into a trial stage”) are <strong>consistently accurate</strong> and <strong>effective</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>• The writing demonstrates <strong>confident</strong> and <strong>consistent control</strong> of correct <strong>sentence structure</strong>, <strong>usage</strong>, and <strong>mechanics</strong>—as seen in “For example a first grade student would receive 10 minutes of homework while a sixth grade student would receive 60 minutes of homework and so forth” and “We have decided that it should be trialed at our school, Inspiration School, because if we find any flaws in the policy we can easily locate them and repair them.” <strong>Errors</strong> such as in “If students are given homework they cannot relax and become stressed making them less manageable for the next week at school” <strong>do not impede</strong> meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>• The <strong>envelope</strong> and <strong>letter</strong> are <strong>essentially free</strong> from <strong>format errors</strong> and <strong>omissions</strong>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proportion of error to length and complexity of response has been considered.
Marker Training Paper B

Address Information

Use the following information for your letter and to address the envelope below.

Mrs. Helen Westminster

Mrs. Helen Westminster is the chairperson of the Carver School Board. The board office is located in the city of Carrington, Alberta. The board’s post office box number is 5140, and the postal code is T2A 4S7.

Jamie Gardner

Jamie Gardner resides in the town of Newsome, Alberta. The postal code is T6Y 0W8. Jamie’s home is located at 14522 on 187 Avenue.

Envelope
Assignment II: Planning

Use this page to plan in whatever way you choose.
14 522 187 Avenue  
Neusome AB T6Y 0W8  
May 14, 2012

Helen Westminster, Chairperson  
Carver School Board  
P.O. Box 5140  
Carrington AB T2A 4S7

Dear Mrs. Westminster:

My name is Jamie Gardner and I attend Inspiration School in Neusome Alberta. I am writing to you today because I would like to talk to you about a homework policy. The policy that I would like to establish would be a wonderful system for the amount of homework given out. The policy would help teachers give out only a certain amount of homework per night that is coordinated with their grade. In each grade, the amount of time would increase by ten
minutes each new school year. Also homework would never be assigned on weekends, holidays, spring or summer breaks.

I, personally do not think that this policy would cause any problems. This policy has a sufficient amount of time and work per day to have happy teachers and students. I have also already talked and gone over this policy with some of my teachers and they enjoyed my presentation and gave me excellent feedback. I thank you for your time and patience. Please notify me of your decision addressed to address above.

Sincerely,

Jamie Gardner

Jamie Gardner
### Rationale for Marker Training Paper B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Reporting Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>• The ideas (related to “a wonderful system for the amount of homework given out” wherein “teachers give out only a certain amount of homework per night that is coordinated with their grade”) are <strong>appropriate</strong>, and <strong>development</strong> of the topic (such as in “I have also already talked and gone over this policy with some of my teachers and they enjoyed my presentation and gave me excellent feedback”) is <strong>adequate</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>• <strong>Relevant information</strong> regarding how “This policy has a sufficient amount of time and work per day to have happy teachers and students” is presented, and this information is <strong>supported</strong> by <strong>enough detail</strong>—such as how “In each grade, the amount of time would increase by ten minutes each new school year” and how “homework would never be assigned on weekends, holidays, spring or summer breaks”—to fulfills the purpose of the assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>• A <strong>tone appropriate</strong> for the addressee is <strong>generally maintained</strong>, as is evident in “I am writing to you today because I would like to talk to you about a homework policy,” “I, personally do not think that this policy would cause any problems,” and “I thank you for your time and patience.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Content Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>• <strong>Words</strong> and <strong>expressions</strong> used such as “My name is Jamie Gardner and I attend Inspiration School,” “The policy would help,” “only a certain amount of homework per night that is coordinated with their grade,” “Also homework would never be,” and “Please notify me of your decision” are <strong>generally accurate</strong> and occasionally effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pf</td>
<td>• The writing demonstrates <strong>competent</strong> and <strong>generally consistent control</strong> of correct <strong>sentence structure</strong> (as seen in “The policy that I would like to establish would be a wonderful system for the amount of homework given out”), <strong>usage</strong> (as seen in “In each grade, the amount of time would increase by ten minutes each new school year”), and <strong>mechanics</strong> (as seen in “This policy has a sufficient amount of time and work per day to have happy teachers and students”). <strong>Errors</strong> that are present such as in “Newsome Alberta,” “assigned,” “excellent feedback,” and “addressed to address above” <strong>rarely impede</strong> meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pf</td>
<td>• The <strong>envelope</strong> and <strong>letter</strong> contain <strong>few format errors</strong>—such as the lack of abbreviation of the word <strong>avenue</strong> in the return address and heading, the inclusion of punctuation in “P.O.” in the mailing address and inside address, and the presentation of “14 522” in the heading.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Proportion of error to length and complexity of response has been considered.**