

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND CRITERIA

THE FRAMEWORK

The following statement was provided to principals, teachers, and students in the Handbook for Schools, 2002, which was provided for the administration of the assessment.

Writing takes place within a specified context or situation. Therefore, the situation, purpose, and intended audience form the framework that governs how all writing elements function within the text. This SAIP assessment will consider the writer's skill in integrating such elements as development of ideas, organization, language conventions and usage, and stylistic features employed in carrying out a purpose.

Writing is socially situated in that it is meant to be read. This social dimension calls for particular qualities such as clarity of communication and correctness of language. In this assessment, consideration will be given to the overall effectiveness of communication.

Writing is also social in the sense that it is intended for specific discourse communities such as the academic milieu or the workplace. In curricular practices across the Canadian education community, writing serves as a means of generating and communicating thought and understanding across all subject areas. In this SAIP assessment, the instrument will take the writing task beyond the language classroom to reinforce an increasing awareness that writing is a general competency that supports learning across the curriculum and, for that matter, for life. The assessment attempts to link school writing demands to writing demands beyond the classroom.

Writing is a complex process that includes drawing on prior knowledge and experience; developing and organizing ideas; choosing and shaping the form of presentation associated with a specific purpose; selecting the words, syntax, and stylistic devices; and applying the rules of language accurately and purposefully. Students need sufficient time during assessments to apply these strategies in order to demonstrate their abilities effectively. In this assessment, students will be provided with a resource booklet of readings so as to ensure equal access to sufficient background knowledge pertinent to the task. They will have the opportunity to take the readings home. The assessment will take place over two sessions within a two- to five-day period in order to allow students time to reflect and prepare.

Writing is a means of generating ideas and information as well as a medium of communication: it is a way of creating, exploring, and refining ideas. Just as there are divergent learning styles, there are preferential modes of expression. This test design will allow students to respond in either an analytic or a narrative mode. Both modes require integration of the common writing elements, and both will allow students to demonstrate their ability to assimilate, interpret, and convey ideas and information. Moreover, both analytic and narrative modes offer a wide variety of options for writing such as stories, opinion pieces, accounts of personal or imaginary experiences, magazine or news articles, speeches, and scripts.

WRITING ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Level 1

The writing demonstrates an elementary and uncertain grasp of fundamental elements of writing relative to purpose. Integration of those elements is not evident. The writing conveys simplistic and/or partial and/or fragmented meaning.

- The overall idea(s) and development are rudimentary and may not be clear.
- Tone/Voice/Stance are discernible but may be ambiguous, inappropriate, and/or unclear.
- Lack of control of syntax and the rules of language obscures communication.
- The writing demonstrates little or no evidence of addressing the demands of the task.

Level 2

The writing demonstrates an uneven and/or uncertain control of the elements of writing relative to purpose. Integration of some of the elements is apparent, but development is sketchy and/or inconsistently maintained. The writing conveys a simple and/or uneven meaning.

- The overall idea(s) and development are limited but discernible.
- Tone/Voice/Stance are discernible but may be inconsistent or uneven.
- Control of syntax and the rules of language is clearly limited. Errors are distracting and interfere with communication.
- The writing demonstrates some evidence of addressing the demands of the task.

Level 3

The writing demonstrates a control of the elements of writing appropriate to purpose. The writing is generally integrated, and development is generalized, functional, and usually maintained throughout. The writing conveys a clear perspective.

- The overall idea(s) and development are straightforward and clear but may be more general than specific.
- Tone/Voice/Stance are clear and appropriate.
- Control of conventional stylistic features, syntax, and the rules of language is evident. Errors do not interfere with communication.
- The writing addresses the demands of the task.

Level 4

The writing demonstrates an effective control of the elements of writing appropriate to purpose. The writing is integrated and clearly and fully developed, and it comes together as a secure whole. The writing conveys a thoughtful perspective.

- The overall idea(s) and development are thoughtful, clear, and purposeful.
- Tone/Voice/Stance are assured and appropriate.
- A solid control of stylistic features, syntax, and the rules of language is evident and effective. Errors are minimal.
- The writing fulfills the demands of the task.

Level 5

The writing demonstrates an effective and confident command of the elements of writing appropriate to purpose. The writing is thoroughly integrated and precisely and fully developed, and the elements enhance one another. The writing conveys an insightful and sophisticated perspective.

- The overall idea(s) and development are thoughtful and well considered.
- Tone/Voice/Stance are confident and enhance the impact of the writing.
- Command and control of stylistic features, syntax, and the rules of language effectively enhance communication. Errors are minimal.
- The writing clearly fulfills the demands of the task.

Introduction

The examples of student work presented here are one of each of the two anchors for each level selected during a week of study and discussion by the table leaders prior to the scoring session. These were also the exemplars provided for illustration to the expectations-setting committees in Western, Central, and Eastern Canada. This particular set contains mainly expository pieces except for the work at level 5, which is a news story. Nevertheless, it is important to note that student responses were written in a very wide range of writing forms including narratives such as fables, short stories, personal narrative, news stories, and narrative essays, as well as expository pieces such as formal speeches, editorials, magazine information articles, debate, public announcements or decrees, political treatises, and personal essays. Few students wrote less than a page, and many students wrote three or more pages in response to the demands of the prompt. However, length is not a descriptor of the criteria nor is it a factor in determining a level of performance.

Level 1 Criterion

The writing demonstrates an elementary and uncertain grasp of fundamental elements of writing relative to purpose. Integration of those elements is not evident. The writing conveys simplistic and/or partial and/or fragmented meaning.

People of Canada be aware that Max is
Snake emergence Month and please help them cross
the highways don't do this for me do it for
the sake of the snakes and remember there
are about 15000 of them and there garter snakes
so the not poisonis. Your not going to be payed
though do it for the love of the snakes and
please if you don't like snakes do it anyway
so they dont get squashed by cars and please
be gentle with them they have feeling you
know. I can't think of anything else but I know
Some of you don't like snakes but please help
them. There will be a night shift and a
day shift so come sign up for what shift you
want to do and its not my fault if you
don't have enough money to pay bills so if
you get a job where you get payed and also
help the snakes.

Rationale

There is an elementary and uncertain grasp of fundamental elements of writing. While the student writes a series of complete simplistic observations, there is little sense of how to order these thoughts for clear meaning. As well, these thoughts are run together with little sense of how to use punctuation to assist the reader. The voice is discernible but ambiguous with comments such as “I can’t think of anything else,” or “and it’s not my fault,” as editorial interruptions. A significant number of errors of syntax and basic grammatical construction obscure meaning, such as the conclusion (which contradicts an earlier statement) “so I you get a job where you get payed and also help the snakes.”

Level 2 Criterion

The writing demonstrates an uneven and/or uncertain control of the elements of writing relative to purpose. Integration of some of the elements is apparent, but development is sketchy and/or inconsistently maintained. The writing conveys a simple and/or uneven meaning.

Good Copy

Many people, in today's society, are not aware that thousands of snakes are being killed.

Snakes today, have had to cross the Trans Canada, in order to get their breeding grounds.

Drivers, are not aware of this situation and just simply drive, not knowing if they ran over any snakes. Signs should be placed on trees, poles, house doors, roads and parks.

I think the highway speed should be reduced by 80 to 30 km/h.

Why we should do this is to make the

Student Writing Booklet B, page 5

the drivers more attentive to the roads.

Another issue is a big one, Cell phones. People driving using cell phones is very dangerous. Think of this, with the speed limit down to 20 to 30 km/h, and no cell phones, the drivers will be more focused on the road. Less animals will be killed, and don't forget less humans will be injured or killed because there will be less car accidents.

On the Trans Canada, I would put signs up warning people about the snakes and put pictures of them crossing the roads.

Student Writing Booklet B, page 6

Rationale

The text demonstrates an uncertain and uneven control of the elements of writing. For example, there is no paragraph development but rather a series of one or two sentence observations. The details are sketchy and very generalized. The writer diverges with a comment on the dangers of cell phones and driving. There is some integration of the elements. There is a highly generalized introduction. Two simple solutions are presented (posting signs and reducing highway speed with limited explanation), and the conclusion repeats the two points expressed. However, the writing conveys a simple and uneven meaning.

Level 3 Criterion

The writing demonstrates a control of the elements of writing appropriate to purpose. The writing is generally integrated, and development is generalized, functional, and usually maintained throughout. The writing conveys a clear perspective.

Snakes vs. Humans

We all live in our own community. In each, we communicate with other people. We live, learn, and grow together. So why do we forget about the wild animals that are so near, living in our backyards and in our community. Ask yourself this question. It seems that most people just don't care what happens to wild animals as long as they are not bothering them. Only then is when we take notice that those "pesky" creatures are in the way.

The month of May for people of Manitoba is when they notice the snakes. The garter snakes that come out from the underground dens and go out to breed. Most of them, however, do not make it very far.

In their winter dens there can be over 15,000 snakes together. In spring when the snakes come out, some see it as an amazing sight to see the snakes emerging. Others see it as a disturbance and if they get in their way will try to kill them.

As snakes travel on their migration routes to their breeding grounds they have to cross a trans-canada ~~high~~ highway. Few make it across, being killed by the fast moving traffic. If they don't make it across then they breed, decreasing the snake population.

When these snakes give birth they usually have 10-30 in a litter. That is a lot of snakes that are not going to be born because their "potential" mother or father was killed trying to reach the breeding grounds.

A lot of people do not care about this issue. They figure that there are enough snakes in the world that a few deaths won't hurt. How unfair is that? I'm sure if you placed the word people in that sentence instead of snakes they would feel a lot differently.

Obviously it's going to take serious thinking to find a resolution. People also have to care a little too though. If we could get everyone working together maybe a way could be found to resolve the problem.

It's not a reasonable solution to take out the trans-Canada highway to save the snakes. We also have to think of the people. But shouldn't there be a compromise? Snakes are living creatures too. We should be able to find a way to help the snakes yet keep the people happy.

Even if you still don't care about the snakes, think about the circle of life. If these snakes keep continuing to die eventually down the road they might become extinct or endangered. True, snakes feed on worms, frogs, mice, slugs, and snails and sure they will be happy they are gone. But what if there then becomes an overwhelming amount of frogs and mice? We need them but we don't need to be overpopulated by them.

You could be thinking oh that will never happen but I bet that others said the exact same thing before let's say these 3 types of birds became extinct.

It's all about putting off issues that you don't think concern your everyday life. If your life's going okay and nothing has happened to the one's you love you tell yourself it is not your problem and forget about it.

Just think for a minute what could happen if we all worked together we are willing to on humanity issues so why can't we with animals

If you are still not convinced after reading this article I wish you would look more into the habitat of snakes and how our new technology is hurting so many different types of wildlife.

Animals and humans are alike. We are both living creatures created on this earth for a reason. We should all have the right to live life free and happy. We should all care about one another.

Rationale

The writing sustains a focus on the issue of humans and animals sharing living spaces. The problem is stated in a straightforward manner: "most people just don't care what happens to wild animals as long as they are not bothering them." There is some struggle for clarity in the fourth paragraph with comments such as "if they don't make it across then they breed, decreasing the snake population." The writing, however, is generally integrated with solutions suggested that are tentative and unspecific such as "we should be able to help the snakes" or "think about the circle of life." Functional and organized throughout, the writing presents an honest but general perspective: "It's all about putting off issues that you don't think concern your everyday life."

Level 4 Criterion

The writing demonstrates an effective control of the elements of writing appropriate to purpose. The writing is integrated and clearly and fully developed, and it comes together as a secure whole. The writing conveys a thoughtful perspective.

In today's society, the threat to the peaceful coexistence between man and nature is blamed solely on the ignorance ^{and naivety} of the human race, ~~are~~ Ironically, ~~this is not a lack of knowledge that~~ the problem lies not in a lack of knowledge, but in an overwhelming lack of appreciation. The spectacles of nature which we once held tightly to our hearts are now viewed as hinderances; obstacles, if you will, on our road to modernized success. Nature has fallen victim to our sterile view of the world - in particular, the snakes of Manitoba.

For ~~we~~ ^{us}, as humans, the world cannot go by fast enough. The trans-Canada highway ~~was~~ ~~was~~ built ~~for~~ ~~to~~ ~~improve~~ ~~our~~ ~~need~~ ~~to~~ ~~waste~~ ~~absolutely~~ ~~no~~ ~~time~~ ~~or~~ ~~energy~~ getting from point A to point B. What we consider an improvement in our lives ^{in fact causes} ~~does~~ considerable damage to the lives of the snakes in Manitoba. ~~was~~

Each winter, some snake dens contain over 15000 garter snakes. In spring the mass emergence of snakes creates an awesome natural spectacle. However, one of the migration routes to their breeding grounds crosses a major trans-Canada highway. (Student writing packet B, p. 2)

This is situation that must be taken care of immediately. ~~to~~

→ Although our lives seem to no longer be intertwined with ^{their} nature, excluding conflicts of space such as this, ~~therefore~~ ~~then~~ nature is as much a part of our lives as it ever was. No matter one's view of the world, goal in life or doctrine of beliefs, the ^{fact that the} existence of a species depends

on that of another ~~snake~~ ^{species, including humans} cannot be disregarded. Our survival relies on the peaceful coexistence we have with every ~~snake~~ ^{species, including humans} on the planet. The fact of the matter is if we kill them, we kill ourselves.

Despite its seeming insignificance, each and every snake in the writhing mass that makes its way across the highway every spring fulfills a ^{particular} ~~that~~ ^{like} niche that no other animal can. Although we may not see it now, our ⁱⁿ utter disregard for the lives and safety of the snakes will cause ~~disin~~ horrifying ramifications. The wheel will come full circle and we will, ^{as a species,} ~~pay~~ ^{undoubtedly} the price.

We have been brought up with the idea that we have the world at our disposal. However, the world was not created solely for "use and subsequent abuse." We stand a much better chance of survival if we accommodate ourselves to this planet, "not the other way around." When environmental issues such as this arise, we are often tempted to look the other way. We have places to go, ~~what~~ why should we bother with a few little snakes? What we fail to realize is that the snakes have places to go, ~~too~~.

Rationale

This piece of writing reveals a thoughtful perspective in which several important points are discussed: "The problem lies not in a lack of knowledge, but in an overwhelming lack of appreciation [for nature]." As part of the argument, the paper points out the human need for speed and convenience, both of which have an impact on the rest of nature. The writing is integrated and comes together as a secure whole, particularly through a careful choice of language ("we have a sterile view of the world) and yet with an essential clarity ("if we kill them, we kill ourselves"). Metaphor contributes to both the ideas and the unity ("on our road to modernized success"). In the conclusion, we read "What we fail to realize is that the snakes have places to go too." This is a clever insertion of a comment from one of the resource poems, effectively integrated into the argument along with other quotations. The entire piece is a well-integrated, solid whole in which thought and language mesh. ("The world was not created solely for our use and subsequent abuse.")

Level 5 Criterion

The writing demonstrates an effective and confident command of the elements of writing appropriate to purpose. The writing is thoroughly integrated and precisely and fully developed, and the elements enhance one another. The writing conveys an insightful and sophisticated perspective.

The Daily Sun May 3, 2002

Guarding the Garters

It is "Snake Emergence Month" in Manitoba, but this year our slithering friends are going to hit some heavy traffic.

Dens containing over 15,000 garter snakes, will be emerging to begin their migration routes to breeding grounds. However, one migration route crosses a major trans-Canadian highway, and that means big trouble for these small herptiles.

As one may imagine, the chances these snakes have of making it alive across these busy roads, is slim to none. Year by year as traffic increases, so does the problem of the garter snakes, though this year it is worse, due to the addition of two extra lanes on the highway.

According to Nature Now (environmental agency) president, Alleena Coperfeld, "Action must be made now." ^{NP} Coperfeld has been working with other organizations such as ARP (Animal Rescue Patrol) and CWF (Communities for wildlife), to find a solution to this growing concern.

"We have made a proposal to the local government on solving this issue, however right now the cost is a major hold back of taking any action," Coperfeld explained.

And a major hold back it is! The team of environmentalists proposed that a large tunnel be made to cut under the highway, and extend a width of one kilometer! The project total: approximately \$3 billion!

The proposal will be taken to Ottawa next week, where it will be accepted or rejected by the federal government. If accepted, the project is estimated to take several months before completion; too late for the breeding garters.

Along with the proposal of the highway tunnel, the environmental teams have been trying to raise awareness of the garter snake problem to the public.

"We want people to know that the garters will be out on the highways and roads during this time, and for them to take extra precaution when driving," Coperfeld added.

Colin Maxwell of the CWF told us, "If our proposal and advertising is successful, the garters will be ensured a safe migration route. With the tunnel, the snakes will be unable to get onto the highway, and 'forced' to take the ^{safe} path of the tunnel."

Glen Buchanan of WWI (Wildlife Ways and Ideas) has a different approach to the garter problem, "Instead of a tunnel, a wildlife bridge should be constructed. This would allow not only small garters, but also deer, coyotes, and even bears to cross the highway safely."

The wildlife bridge seems like an efficient proposal, especially with a cost of \$1.5 billion... half the cost of the tunnel! However, would the garters and other animals be able to adapt to the new concept of crossing a bridge?

"The wildlife bridges have proved to be successful in the past. Many states have constructed bridges in large animal populated areas, and the creatures have adapted nicely," Buchanan remarked.

The WWI proposes to suggest their idea to a special environmental council in Ottawa next week as well, following Coperfeld's team closely.

→ The question lies in which proposal is more practical, and which is going to provide ^{the most} security for the garters. Or, will the government choose no proposal, and leave the snakes to protect themselves?

Mayor Henri Bordeaux of Winnipeg suspects the government will dismiss the problem quickly, "How can the government consider a \$3 billion tunnel or \$1.5 billion wildlife bridge? There are much more important issues to take care of, for example health care and education. Tax payers are not going to be willing to pay for something that will save snakes, and that is the truth."

Both Coperfeld and Buchanan disagree with the mayors assumption.

"The government is so caught up in health care issues, what about the health and wellbeing of the creatures we share the world with? If the government has any respect for life, they will support the ideas of having a tunnel or even bridge for the wildlife," Coperfeld said.

"If the government does not comply with this request, they will have bigger problems later on," Buchanan added. "Environmental groups across Canada will be uproared, I'm sure."

"The issue of the garter snakes is only a small problem in the many ^{we} face with all wildlife. The public needs to be aware of the challenges these creatures encounter. They share the land with us, and in return we must respect them, and when possible, help them to survive in the unsafe world we have created for them," expressed Coperfeld.

•Tell us what you think about the issue of the garters! Should there be a tunnel, bridge, both, or none? Mail, fax, or email your thoughts and concerns at: The Daily Sun/concerns

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Rationale

This writing demonstrates a confident command of the elements appropriate to purpose. The writer adopts a journalistic form making relatively obvious solutions a major news story by providing an intriguing headline, effective quotes, presentation of both ecological and political sides of the issue, a consistent journalistic voice, and a call to action that fulfils the demands of the task. The voice is confident and enhances the impact of the writing with phrases such as “our slithering friends are going to hit some heavy traffic,” “And a major hold back it is!” “...too late for the breeding garters.” The sophisticated perspective is provided by the various opinions of the “experts” who echo current social and political attitudes one might see in any major story about ecological issues. Thorough integration is achieved through the accumulative effect of the connection between the “expert” quotations and the writer’s personal commentary in the narrative of events described.