

THE SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS PROGRAM (SAIP)

Writing Assessment III

Information for Parents and Students



Will the assessment be fair to all students?

The assessment has been field-tested across Canada. Educators from all provinces and territories have participated in the development and have reviewed the assessment materials to ensure that they are fair, appropriate, and free from cultural, gender, and stereotyping bias. Students were also given an opportunity to comment on the exercise. This assessment is designed to give all students an opportunity to demonstrate their writing skills.

A Personal Note to Students

Thank you, in advance, for your participation in SAIP Writing III.

The aim of this assessment is to improve education for students across Canada. Its success depends on your cooperation.

Please do your best!


Funds for the School Achievement Indicators Program have been provided by participating provinces and territories through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) and by the Government of Canada through Human Resources Development Canada.

© The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada.

Reproduction is permitted.




What is the School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP)?



Canadians have long been interested in how well their schools are meeting the needs of students and society. To provide information in this regard, the provinces and territories, through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, have developed SAIP, an assessment program in mathematics, reading, writing, and science.




What assessments have been conducted to date?



Mathematics assessments were administered in 1993, 1997, and 2001. Reading and writing assessments were administered in 1994 and 1998. Science assessments were administered in 1996 and 1999. A pan-Canadian assessment of writing will take place in 2002.



What is the purpose of SAIP assessments?




Each province and territory has its own system of education, and school programs differ from one part of the country to another. Nevertheless, all Canadian students learn reading, writing, mathematics, and science. Provinces and territories collect data on their own student achievement. SAIP provides a standard measure of academic achievement in these subjects areas for 13- and 16-year-old students across Canada.

In addition, the cyclical nature of SAIP allows the tracking of student achievement over time. Questionnaires that are included in the assessment generate valuable information about factors that influence student achievement. SAIP also provides a basis for determining whether students are meeting public expectations in terms of academic achievement.

Decision makers can use all of this information when making policy decisions that affect the education of Canadian students.




Who will participate in the writing assessment?



A random sample of Canadian students who were 13 or 16 years old as of August 31, 2001, will participate in the writing assessment.



What will participating students do?



Students will take part in two writing sessions. The first will be one hour long; students will respond in writing to a short text and will participate in a discussion of readings from a resource booklet. They will be encouraged to continue reading the resource booklet at home in preparation for the second writing session.


During the second session, students will write a longer piece and will answer a questionnaire asking for information related to their interests, attitudes, and classroom activities. This session will take approximately two hours and a half.

Students may use the resources normally available in their English Language Arts classroom such as dictionaries, thesauruses, and writing handbooks. They will not be permitted to use a computer to do their work.

Special-needs students will be accommodated as they would be in their regular school environment.




Do students need to prepare for this assessment?



Students are not required to study for this assessment as they would for a school test. They should, however, examine the resource booklet provided in the first session and reflect on its theme for the second writing session.



Will the results affect student marks?



The results will not affect an individual student's academic record in any way. Results will be reported for provinces and territories only, not for individual students, schools, or school jurisdictions.