

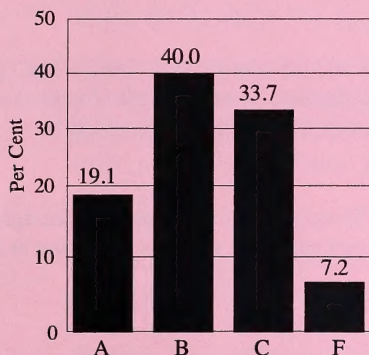
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English 30

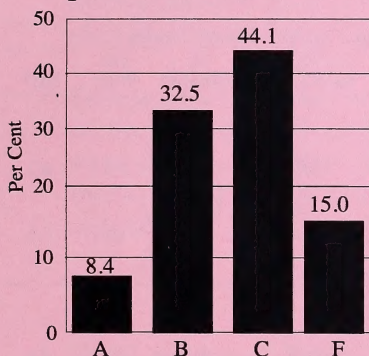
Diploma Examination Results

Examiners' Report for June 1993

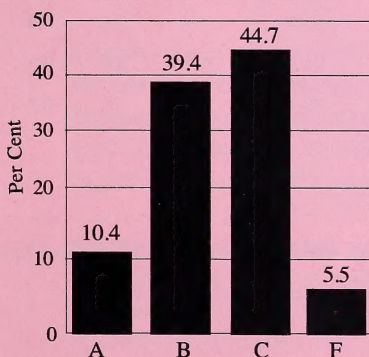
School-Awarded Mark



Diploma Examination Mark



Final Course Mark



The summary information in this report provides teachers, school administrators, students, and the general public with an overview of results from the June 1993 administration of the English 30 Diploma Examination. This information is most helpful when used in conjunction with the detailed school and jurisdiction reports that have been mailed to schools and school and jurisdiction offices. An annual provincial report containing a detailed analysis of the combined January, June, and August results is published each year.

Description of the Examination

The English 30 Diploma Examination consists of two parts: a written-response section and a reading section. Each part is worth 50% of the total examination mark.

Achievement of Standards

The information reported is based on the final course marks achieved by 14 473 students who wrote the June 1993 examination.

- 94.5% of these students achieved the acceptable standard (a final course mark of 50% or higher).
- 10.4% of these students achieved the standard of excellence (a final course mark of 80% or higher).

The competence of students achieving the standard of excellence in writing was impressive. However, the skills students at the acceptable standard demonstrated tended to be uneven; students showed ability on occasion to use language well, but this was not always sustained.

Provincial Averages

- The average school-awarded mark was 67.0%.
- The average diploma examination mark was 61.9%.
- The average final course mark, representing an equal weighting of the school-awarded mark and the diploma examination mark, was 64.9%.

Part A: Written Response

Part A: Written Response is written at a different time from *Part B: Reading*. Students are required to complete two writing assignments related to the same piece of literature. Both assignments assess a variety of reading, writing and thinking skills.

Readers will find the results most meaningful in the context of the assignments and the scoring descriptors. The most useful starting place for reviewing these results is at the **(3) Satisfactory** level. Such work exceeds the pass mark of 50%. The scoring criteria are in the *English 30 Diploma Examination Information Bulletin for 1993*, which is available in all schools.

The table below outlines the requirements for each assignment, the categories for scoring each assignment, the amount each category contributes to the total mark (parts A and B combined), and the percentage of students achieving at the various levels.

Examination Blueprint and Percentage Distribution of Scores

			Percentage Distribution of Scores					
Description of the Writing Assignment	Scoring Category	Proportion of Total Mark (%)	(5) Excellent	(4) Proficient	(3) Satisfactory	(2) Limited	(1) Poor	Ins*
Minor Assignment								
The student is required to write a personal response to the reading selection provided in the examination.	Thought and Detail	7.5	2.2	26.4	58.9	11.4	0.8	0.3
	Writing Skills	7.5	2.3	27.2	58.4	10.7	1.0	0.3
Major Assignment								
The major assignment maintains a thematic connection to the minor assignment. The student is required to demonstrate an appreciation of literary works studied in class by discussing theme and the literary techniques that the author uses to support that theme. The student is also required to synthesize thoughts clearly and correctly in writing.	Total Impression	5.0	2.6	17.5	56.8	21.5	1.3	0.3
	Thought and Detail	12.5	2.6	19.0	48.3	27.8	2.0	0.3
	Organization	7.5	2.4	18.2	60.2	17.8	1.1	0.3
	Matters of Choice	5.0	2.9	22.6	60.5	12.7	0.9	0.3
	Matters of Convention	5.0	3.9	26.8	52.4	15.0	1.6	0.3

*Ins (Insufficient) is a special category that includes students who did not attempt the assignment, who wrote too little to evaluate, or who wrote answers that were completely off topic.

Note: The shaded portion represents the percentage of students who achieved or exceeded a **(3) Satisfactory** level of performance.

Examiners' Comments

Minor Assignment: Personal Response to Literature

In the literature selection, the poem *Love, we must part now: do not let it be*, by Philip Larkin, the speaker acknowledges both the painful aspects of parting and the positive aspects of being free to pursue a new direction: a dilemma. Students appeared to have no difficulty in relating their own experiences to ideas in the poem. They defined “dilemma” in the full range of meaning: choice, predicament, problem, conflict.

Students responded to the assignment in a variety of ways: focusing on the poem, focusing on personal experience, reflecting on the topic generally, or reflecting on some specific aspect of the topic.

Students achieving overall scores of **(3) Satisfactory** chose appropriate details that provided general support in their writing. Many students responded to the idea “There is regret” (line 10) as an accompaniment to any difficult choice. Students writing at the **(3) Satisfactory** level produced clear and generally straightforward writing.

Students achieving overall scores of **(4) Proficient** and **(5) Excellent** tended to go beyond merely setting out the dilemma. These writers examined the process involved in resolving a dilemma, or explored the consequences of resolving a dilemma. Many of these students philosophized on the nature of dilemma as choice between two equally undesirable alternatives. Student writing at this level was both competent and confident.

Major Assignment: Literature Composition

Students presented various interpretations of dilemma, some more challenging to develop than others.

Students achieving overall scores of **(3) Satisfactory** tended to select literature that provided an illustration of dilemma/choice/predicament/problem/conflict. They usually presented a straightforward discussion supported by appropriate evidence. Students writing at this level frequently suggested, explicitly or implicitly, that the author’s purpose was to illustrate that dilemmas are difficult, but must be “solved.” These students produced clear and generally straightforward writing.

Students achieving overall scores of **(4) Proficient** and **(5) Excellent** tended to appreciate the significance rather than merely the presence of details of plot. Plot details were linked directly to the writer’s ideas and were chosen carefully and selectively. Student writing at this level reflected perceptive understanding and internalized appreciation of literature.

Question	Key	Difficulty*
1	D	55.3
2	D	57.5
3	D	65.3
4	A	85.3
5	B	68.7
6	C	74.0
7	C	85.6
8	B	91.9
9	D	62.8
10	D	44.9
11	C	68.7
12	A	64.1
13	A	92.3
14	D	60.2
15	D	75.7
16	B	67.9
17	D	72.7
18	A	58.6
19	C	77.6
20	C	82.9
21	A	70.2
22	B	71.6
23	D	85.0
24	D	65.6
25	A	66.3
26	A	58.0
27	A	57.4
28	B	83.8
29	A	58.1
30	C	68.1
31	C	71.2
32	B	45.4
33	C	49.2
34	B	42.7
35	A	71.3
36	B	57.4
37	C	58.1
38	D	51.9
39	A	58.7
40	A	68.6
41	A	58.3
42	B	73.5
43	A	58.0
44	C	53.5
45	C	46.3
46	D	65.1
47	C	36.1
48	D	43.5
49	B	66.5
50	B	54.6
51	—	—
52	A	63.1
53	B	41.0
54	D	33.0
55	C	35.5
56	A	47.2
57	C	54.3
58	B	68.1
59	C	51.6
60	D	65.6
61	B	42.9
62	A	72.4
63	B	54.4
64	C	50.9
65	C	75.5
66	B	44.7
67	A	73.5
68	B	77.0
69	D	60.6
70	D	48.3

* Difficulty — percentage of students answering the question correctly.

The table at the left shows question-by-question results and the keyed answers. Parallel tables in the school and jurisdiction reports show the percentage of students who selected each alternative. From this table, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students relative to the province as a whole and, consequently, areas of strength and weakness in their programs.

Examination Blueprint

Part B: Reading has a value of 70 marks,* one for each multiple-choice question. Each question is classified in two ways: according to the curricular content area being tested and according to the thinking (process) skill demanded by the question. The examination blueprint illustrates the distribution of questions in June 1993 according to these classifications.

Classification by Thinking Skills				
Course Content	Literar Understanding	Inference and Application	Evaluation	Total
Meanings	4, 19, 39	5, 6, 11, 13, 20, 22, 24, 25, 31, 34, 40, 42, 47, 50, 56, 62, 66, 67	1, 3, 9, 18, 23, 30, 33, 48	29 Items (21%)
Critical Response	16	2, 10, 12, 14, 28, 32, 35, 36, 38, 43, 44, 53, 54, 58, 59, 61, 64, 69	15, 17, 26, 37, 45, 57, 65	26 Items (19%)
Human Experience and Values	8	21, 27, 41, 46, 49, 51*, 55, 60, 63, 68	7, 29, 52, 70	15 Items (10%)
Total	5 Items (3%)	46 Items (33%)	19 Items (14%)	70 Items (50%)

* Question 51 was dropped from the examination before calculations. The total mark possible, therefore, was 69.

Subtest Results**

Results are in average raw scores.

Total Part B: 42.9 out of 69

Course Content

- Meanings: 18.8 out of 29
- Critical Response: 15.0 out of 26
- Human Experience and Values: 9.0 out of 14

** Readers are cautioned **not** to compare subtest results because the subtests are not of equal difficulty. Instead, readers should compare these provincial subtest results with their own school subtest results.

Examiners' Comments

Standards

During the marking session a committee of 10 classroom teachers of English 30 reviewed Part B to determine whether the standards embedded in the readings and questions were appropriate and fair. Committee members agreed that no one passage or question exceeded reasonable expectations for English 30 students. They also concluded that the combination of writings by Margaret Atwood, Peter Carey, and E. B. White, as well as the long poem *The Silkworms* by Douglas Stewart were very demanding in a two-hour examination.

Some committee members expressed concern about the reading difficulty of the exam as a whole. They suggested that several questions, although not particularly difficult, required that students re-read lengthy portions of the text. In fact 15 questions did require students to re-read a passage of five or more lines. The data suggest, however, that almost all students were able to complete the examination in the time available (e.g. there was no significant increase in the number of blanks, and no evidence of guessing in the last two item sets).

Some committee members thought that the final reading selection from *The Ring of Time* presented an experience to which few English 30 students could relate. Whether students could relate to the passage or not, they appeared to manage the questions quite readily. The average difficulty for this set of questions, 62–70, was 63.1%, slightly higher than the overall exam average.

Deleted Question

Question 51 was dropped from Part B. Question analysis and committee comments indicated that alternatives B and D were equally attractive to students.

Detailed Discussion

The following tables give results for four multiple-choice questions. For each question, statistics are provided for three student groups. The comments following the table discuss some of the decisions that students may have made and some of the skills they may have used to answer these questions correctly. The four questions are based on the poem “The Ides of March.”

Percentage of Students Correctly Answering Selected Multiple-Choice Questions

Student Group	Question Number			
	32	33	34	38
All Students	45.4	49.2	42.7	51.9
Students achieving the standard of excellence (80% or higher, or A) on the whole examination	80.1	70.5	85.2	81.1
Students achieving the acceptable standard who received between 50% and 64%, or C, on the whole examination	35.5	44.6	30.8	44.1

32. The phrase that confirms that the speaker is using the life of Julius Caesar as a metaphor is

- A. "a famous man" (line 7)
 - B. "some Artemidorus" (line 10)
 - C. " 'Read this at once' " (line 12)
 - D. "the Senate / itself" (lines 17-18)
-

Question 32 required students to recognize and respond to textual details, including those in the footnotes. 45.4% of all students managed to establish correctly the relationship among the details that the life of Julius Caesar is being used as a metaphor, the title of the poem, and the footnotes explaining that Julius Caesar was a powerful man who ignored a warning. These students also had appreciation for the way that metaphor "works" in recognizing that "some Artemidorus" suggests a more generalized consideration than "a famous man" (alternative A, incorrectly selected by 44% of the students). Of those students who achieved the standard of excellence on the examination (parts A and B), 80.1% answered this question correctly. Of students who achieved the acceptable standard on the whole examination (parts A and B), only 35.5% answered this question correctly.

33. The MAJOR implication of lines 6 to 19 is that powerful figures are

- A. characterized by impatience
 - B. easily influenced by the masses
 - C. obliged to interpret all signals of alarm
 - D. imperfect vehicles of universal progress
-

Question 33 required students to re-read the second stanza of the poem, and to reconsider the information provided in the footnotes. Students who correctly chose alternative C responded to the details that implied the presence of danger, for example "take heed," "grave matters of concern," "do not fail to stop." The powerful figure is urged to "get to know / the grave writings," or interpret them. Of those students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination (parts A and B), 70.5% answered this question correctly. Of those students who achieved the acceptance standard, 44.6% answered correctly.

34. The second stanza provides a specific example of the connection made in the first stanza between

- A. hesitation and death
 - B. grandeur and danger
 - C. ambition and despair
 - D. precaution and distress
-

Question 34: Students who correctly chose alternative B were likely those students who took the time to re-read both the stanzas of the poem, first to determine the connection being established in the first stanza, and then to verify the example in the second stanza. Of those students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination (parts A and B) 85.2% correctly answered this question. Of those students achieving the acceptable standard, 30.8% correctly answered this question. Students who achieved less than 50% on the whole examination (parts A and B) appear to have guessed at the answer

38. The speaker refers to an historical incident for the purpose of

- A. glorifying the nature of tragedy
 - B. justifying political assassination
 - C. informing the reader of important events in the past
 - D. exploiting the emotional impact of a well-known event
-

Question 38 proved to be a difficult question with only 51.9% of all students correctly choosing alternative D. Many students may not have been familiar with the use of the word "exploiting" in this context. Many students may not have realized that the assassination of Julius Caesar was a well-known event, especially if they had not read the footnotes carefully. Students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination (parts A and B) revealed their appreciation of the writer's purpose and textual richness. These students were responsive to the emotional impact that is inherent in most poetry. 81.1% of this group answered the question correctly, while 44.1% of students who achieved the acceptable standard answered correctly.

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