

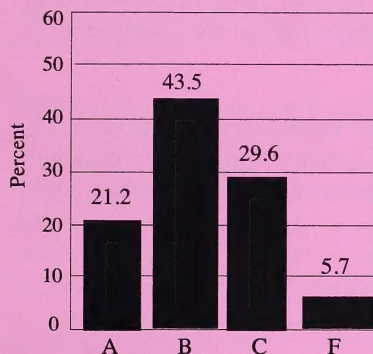
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English 30

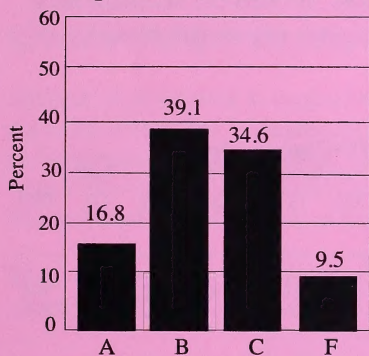
Diploma Examination Results

Examiners' Report for June 1996

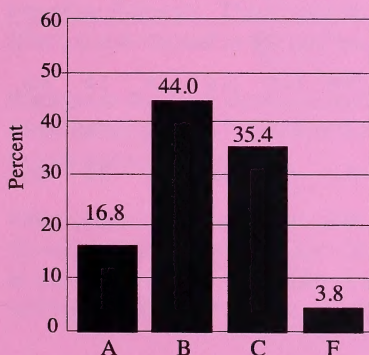
School-Awarded Mark



Diploma Examination Mark



Final Course Mark



The summary information in this report provides teachers, school administrators, students, and the public with an overview of results from the June 1996 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 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 section is worth 50% of the total examination mark.

Achievement of Standards

The information reported is based on the final course marks achieved by 12 675 students who wrote the June 1996 examination.

- 96.2% of these students achieved the acceptable standard (a final course mark of 50% or higher).
- 16.8% of these students achieved the standard of excellence (a final course mark of 80% or higher).

Students who achieved the standard of excellence (80% or higher, or A) on the diploma examination demonstrated impressive competence in their writing. Students who achieved the acceptable standard (50% to 64%, or C) showed often that they were able to use language well, but did not always sustain this ability.

Provincial Averages

- The average school-awarded mark was 68.4%.
- The average diploma examination mark was 66.4%.
- The average final course mark, representing an equal weighting of the school-awarded mark and the diploma examination mark, was 67.8%

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 the results is at the **(3) Satisfactory** level. Such work exceeds the pass mark of 50%. The scoring criteria are provided in the *English 30 Information Bulletin, Diploma Examination Program*, for the 1996–97 school year, which is available in all schools.

In January 1995, the single scoring category formerly used to mark the minor assignment was expanded into Thought and Detail, and Writing Skills. Also in January 1995, the two-marker system was adopted for marking Part A, which means that it is now possible for students to be awarded marks that are midway between scoring scales. (See the following table.)

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.

By comparing school and jurisdiction results with provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

Examination Blueprint and Percentage Distribution of Scores

Description of the Writing Assignment	Scoring of Category Mark(%)	Proportion Total	Percentage Distribution of Scores									
			Excellent (5)	(4.5)	Proficient (4)	(3.5)	Satisfactory (3)	(2.5)	Limited (2)	(1.5)	Poor (1)	Ins*
Minor Assignment The student is required to respond personally and thoughtfully to literature, and to communicate clearly and effectively in writing.	Thought and Detail	7.5	4.7	4.6	20.1	16.7	31.6	11.5	8.4	1.3	0.8	0.4
	Writing Skills	7.5	4.8	4.3	21.5	16.7	36.4	8.6	5.7	0.9	0.7	0.4
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.	Thought and Detail	12.5	7.3	4.3	18.5	12.9	29.0	13.5	11.4	1.8	1.0	0.3
	Organization	7.5	5.9	4.5	18.2	15.3	34.4	12.4	7.5	0.9	0.6	0.3
	Matters of Choice	7.5	6.8	4.8	18.5	13.6	38.0	9.9	6.8	0.8	0.6	0.3
	Matters of Correctness	7.5	8.2	5.4	20.8	16.3	30.1	9.5	7.4	1.1	0.9	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 the acceptable standard on each scoring category.

Reader's Response to Literature Assignment

This assignment is intended to focus the student as a reader on his or her own response to a text and a theme that are provided.

The selection, "The Conflict," is a challenging poem for students to digest and relate to the topic within a limited time. The assignment required students (readers) to respond to the poem in terms of the speaker's response to living in the midst of conflicting forces. Students were to use detail from the poem to support this response.

Students responded to the task in a variety of ways: They presented a sequential commentary on stanzas or details. They presented a general explanation of the poem and drew a conclusion. They presented a selective commentary on specific detail, sometimes with personal support. They focused on the symbolic significance of details. They presented interpretation and discussion of images. Students demonstrated a conscientious effort to address the topic, the speaker's point, and the poetic form. The marks (see page 2) show that 29.4% of the students achieved the standard of excellence (80% or higher) for Thought and Detail on this assignment (89.2% achieved at or above the acceptable standard).

Students achieving scores of **(4) Proficient** and **(4.5 and 5) Excellent** were perceptive and focused in their personal response to the poem.

Literature Composition Assignment

Students were required to respond to the question: "What idea does the author develop regarding the individual in the midst of conflict?" Students dealt with the concept of conflict on different levels. They discussed conflict as a personal threat to the individual. They discussed the individual caught between conflicting forces. Most students were able to present a firm thesis and develop that thesis by selectively working through details of the literature. Many student writers referred to literature from the new list of texts.

There were many very good papers—focused, thoughtful essays that reflected a grasp of the literature and attention to the requirements of the assignment.

Students who achieved overall scores of **(4) Proficient** and **(4.5 and 5) Excellent** often recognized that conflict is an intrinsic part of the human condition and that conflicting forces serve authors in the process of presenting and revealing character. These students were often very astute in their observations of the way that characters are affected and respond to the subtlest manifestation of conflict.

Students at this level showed confidence in their use of language as well as in their ability to interpret the literature insightfully. Their discussions were effectively structured; their supporting evidence was carefully chosen and appropriate.

Students who achieved overall scores of **(3) Satisfactory** had no difficulty in selecting literature that applied to the topic. Often, these students felt free to give advice to characters facing conflict. Often, they identified conflict or conflicting forces, but did not discuss the author's idea in shaping the literature for thematic purposes. Student writing at this level was appropriately organized, clearly written, and generally correct.

Question-by-Question Results

Question	Key	Difficulty*
1	B	91.5
2	C	45.2
3	D	73.9
4	A	86.4
5	D	83.8
6	D	71.7
7	A	75.7
8	B	69.7
9	D	68.8
10	C	78.6
11	C	59.4
12	D	69.3
13	A	72.2
14	C	72.6
15	A	85.5
16	B	70.4
17	D	56.9
18	A	44.0
19	B	73.0
20	B	68.2
21	C	86.2
22	B	85.7
23	A	73.3
24	B	65.6
25	C	71.5
26	C	68.1
27	D	61.1
28	C	82.5
29	C	75.6
30	D	38.2
31	A	41.8
32	B	81.3
33	C	63.9
34	A	40.0
35	D	30.8
36	D	61.3
37	C	46.2
38	D	55.1
39	B	73.0
40	D	66.5
41	C	72.8
42	B	72.3
43	C	76.6
44	C	66.0
45	B	85.4
46	C	72.8
47	A	83.1
48	A	44.0
49	A	64.7
50	B	78.9
51	A	76.0
52	B	56.1
53	B	45.7
54	D	62.7
55	C	72.0
56	C	47.3
57	C	71.7
58	A	69.6
59	D	52.1
60	D	51.1
61	B	52.8
62	D	76.3
63	B	68.7
64	D	72.4
65	A	56.2
66	A	69.9
67	B	67.3
68	A	69.8
69	D	62.9
70	A	73.0

*Difficulty—percentage of students answering the question correctly

Part B: Reading

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 correct alternative. By comparing school and jurisdiction results to provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential 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: by the curricular content being tested and by the thinking (process) skill demanded by the question. The examination blueprint illustrates the distribution of questions in June 1996 according to these classifications.

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

Subtest Results*

Results are in average raw scores.

Total Part B: 47.2 out of 68

Course Content

- Meanings: 20.0 out of 30
- Critical Response: 17.9 out of 26
- Human Experience and Values: 8.8 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

The committee members commented that the Part B readings are challenging but appropriate for English 30 students. They were in agreement that Reading III, "At the Tourist Centre in Boston," a poem by Margaret Atwood, would be very difficult for most students.

Detailed Discussion

The results of Part B: Reading indicate that English 30 students are generally very proficient in close reading. Of the 12922 students who wrote the Part B: Reading exam, 22.2% achieved the standard of excellence (A).

The following questions may be of interest in that they represent areas of difficulty as well as of proficiency for students.

Percentage of Students Correctly Answering Selected Multiple-Choice Questions

Student Group	Question Number			
	2	18	37	53
All Students	45.2	44.0	46.2	45.7
Students achieving the <i>standard of excellence</i> (80% or higher, or A) on the whole examination	69.8	62.5	66.9	69.9
Students achieving the <i>acceptable standard</i> who received between 50% and 64%, or C, on the whole examination	34.8	35.5	35.1	33.5

The first passage “How Well You Play the Waiting Games Says A Lot About Your Social Class” proved to be very easy for students. The average difficulty of 75.2% for questions 1 to 6 is 17% above the 58.3% estimated from field test results. That students managed to do so well is impressive. Question 1 was answered correctly by 91.3% of all students. Although the question is not difficult, students had to read and likely re-read the first five paragraphs to deduce the correct answer.

-
2. That Edward Banfield’s thesis was controversial (line 24) is **best** explained by the observation
- A. “someone who is addicted to immediate gratification of his appetites is defined as lower class, whatever his income” (lines 27–28)
 - B. “A student from a poor family who gets up early to study German as part of his plan to qualify for the PhD program in history at Stanford is a member of the upper class” (lines 32–34)
 - C. “Just talking about social class offends many people who are properly concerned that individuals not be ‘pigeon-holed’ and therefore oppressed by assumptions” (lines 51–53)
 - D. “But concern for the abuse of understanding about social class is no rationale for ignorance of its nature” (lines 55–56)
-

Question 2. After getting off to a flying start, many students were defeated by question 2. They were asked *why* Edward Banfield’s thesis was controversial. Only 45.2% of all students correctly chose alternative C, which explains that the thesis was controversial because many people object to the ascribing of behaviour to social class. Many students, 30.9%, chose alternative A. These students did not read the question closely enough to appreciate what they were being asked. They appear to have missed the word “explained” in the question.

Of those students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination (parts A and B), 69.8% chose the correct answer. Of those students who achieved the acceptable standard but not the standard of excellence on the whole examination, 34.8% selected the correct answer.

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18. As she views the representation of Canada at the tourist centre (lines 1 to 10), the speaker conveys that her attitude is
- A. sardonic
 - B. resentful
 - C. respectful
 - D. approving
-

Teacher reviewers frequently comment that Margaret Atwood’s poetry is too difficult for English 30 students. However, except for the first question in the set (18), students appeared to have little trouble with “At the Tourist Centre in Boston” by Atwood.

Question 18. Often students are confused by Atwood’s method of offering her message in a somewhat mocking or sardonic tone. Student responses to question 18 confirm this confusion. Of all students, who wrote the exam 31.9% chose alternative B. Although Atwood does not approve of the display at the Tourist Centre, she is mocking rather than resentful. Students who responded correctly likely understood that a “sardonic” attitude is somewhat gentler than a resentful attitude.

Of those students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination, 62.5% chose alternative B. It seems likely that students choosing B did not know the meaning of *sardonic*. Responses to the remainder of the questions in this set indicate that students generally were aware of the poet’s attitude to her subject. The average difficulty for this set was 70.9%.

Passage V from “A Summer Bird-Cage” proved to be slightly more difficult for male students than it was for female students, except for the first question in the set. Of all students who wrote the examination, 81.2% responded correctly to this vocabulary question, but male students were slightly (0.003%) more successful. For questions 33 to 42, female students scored an average of 5.9% higher than male students. On the whole of Part B: Reading, the mean raw score for female students was 47.2, while the mean raw score for male students was 46.2

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37. The narrator enjoys the interlude in the kitchen with Louise **mainly** because
- A. she sees that she is Louise's equal
 - B. she catches Louise in a state of disarray
 - C. Louise is uncharacteristically vulnerable
 - D. Louise talks about her approaching honeymoon
-

Question 37 was almost equally difficult for both males (45.6% were successful) and females (46.6% were successful.) Students choosing the correct response understood the nature of the relationship between the narrator and her sister Louise. The narrator is envious of Louise, who seems to “have it all,” but tries to mask her envy by being critical. When Louise is vulnerable, the narrator can love her freely.

Of those students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination, 66.9% chose the correct alternative. Of those students who achieved the acceptable standard on the whole examination, 35.1% chose the correct alternative. This group was also attracted to alternatives A and B. Students would have to be very attentive to detect ‘enjoyment’ in the narrator’s description of the interlude, since Sarah (the narrator) does not appear to be enjoying anything very much.

The excerpt from *Henry VI, Part I* proved more difficult for students than any of the other seven readings. The average difficulty of this set of questions was 60.9%; whereas, for all of Part B it was 66.6%.

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53. King Henry sends Talbot to Burgundy (lines 20–27) with orders to
- A. kill Burgundy
 - B. berate Burgundy
 - C. banish Burgundy
 - D. disinherit Burgundy
-

The difficulty in **question 53** may be mainly one of vocabulary. Students not knowing the meaning of *berate* (B) would not be able to recognize the word as a synonym for *chastise* (line 21).

Of those students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole examination, 69.9% chose the correct answer. Of those students who achieved the acceptable standard but not the standard of excellence on the whole examination, only 33.5% responded correctly.

Comparison of Students' Results on Parts A and B

While it is not intended that Parts A and B of the English 30 Diploma Examination be considered separate exams, it is interesting to compare the distribution of scores on the two parts of the examination.

	Part A	Part B
A	18.6%	22.4%
B	29.3%	35.6%
C	42.2%	28.5%
F	9.8%	13.5%

For further information, contact Gail Gates, Mary Lou Campbell, or Elana Scraba at the Student Evaluation Branch, 403-427-0010. To call toll-free from outside of Edmonton dial 310-0000.
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