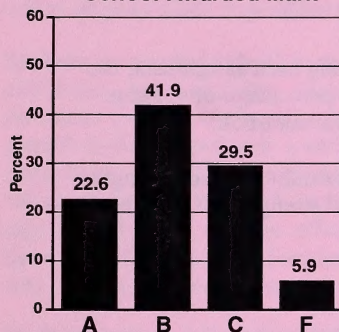


# English 30

## Diploma Examination Results Examiners' Report for June 1999

School-Awarded Mark

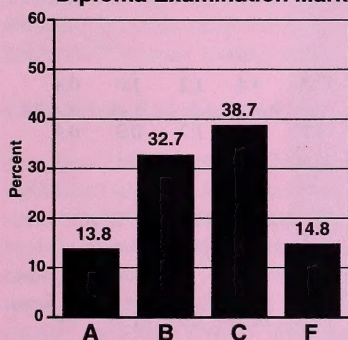


The summary information in this report provides teachers, school administrators, and students with an overview of results from the June 1999 administration of the English 30 Diploma Examination. This information is most helpful when used in conjunction with the detailed school and jurisdiction reports that are provided electronically to schools and school jurisdiction offices. A provincial report containing a detailed analysis of the combined January, April, June, and August results is made available annually.

### 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.

Diploma Examination Mark

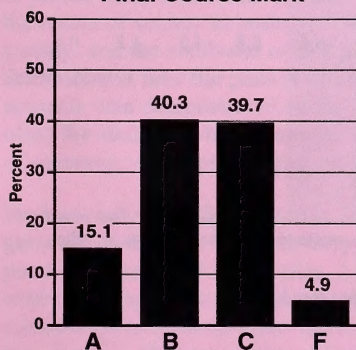


### Achievement of Standards

The information reported is based on the final course marks achieved by 12 882 students who wrote the June 1999 examination and received a school-awarded mark.

- 95.1% of the 12 882 students achieved the *acceptable standard* (a final course mark of 50% or higher).
- 15.1% of the 12 882 students achieved the *standard of excellence* (a final course mark of 80% or higher).

Final Course Mark



Of the students who wrote the June 1999 examination, 55.7% were female and 44.3% were male.

- 96.1% of the female students and 93.9% of the male students achieved the *acceptable standard*.
- 17.2% of the female students and 12.4% of the male students achieved the *standard of excellence*.

### Provincial Averages

- The average school-awarded mark was 68.6%.
- The average diploma examination mark was 63.8%.
- The average final course mark, representing an equal weighting of the school-awarded mark and the diploma examination mark, was 66.6%.



## 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 theme of a 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 **Satisfactory S/3** level. Such work exceeds the pass mark of 50%. The scoring guides that describe scoring criteria are in the 1998–99 *English 30 Information Bulletin* located on our web site at <http://ednet.edc.gov.ab.ca/studenteval/>.

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. In June 1999, the average raw score for Part A was 32.0 out of 50.

By comparing school and jurisdiction results to the provincial results, 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 Category	Proportion of Total Mark(%)	Percentage Distribution of Scores									
			Excellent 5 4.5		Proficient 4 3.5		Satisfactory 3 2.5		Limited 2 1.5		Poor 1 Ins*	
<b>Reader's Response to Literature Assignment</b> The student is required to respond personally and thoughtfully to literature, and to communicate clearly and effectively in writing.	Thought and Detail	7.5	3.9	3.7	18.0	14.3	35.6	12.5	9.4	1.2	1.0	0.4
	Writing Skills	7.5	4.0	4.0	19.6	14.9	38.0	9.8	7.2	1.2	0.9	0.4
<b>Literature Composition Assignment</b> 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	5.9	3.9	16.1	11.3	26.7	15.2	16.5	2.6	1.5	0.4
	Organization	7.5	5.1	4.1	16.7	13.0	35.2	13.9	9.8	1.1	0.7	0.4
	Matters of Choice	7.5	6.3	4.0	17.7	12.7	39.9	10.4	7.0	1.0	0.7	0.4
	Matters of Correctness	7.5	7.0	4.6	18.9	13.8	33.3	10.6	8.8	1.5	1.2	0.4

\*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 did not address the topic.

**Note:** The shaded portion represents the percentage of students who achieved or exceeded the *acceptable standard*.

Of this group, students with scores of 4, 4.5, and/or 5 have achieved the *standard of excellence*.



### **Reader's Response to Literature Assignment**

This assignment directs students, as readers, to respond to a selection in the context of a given theme. The students may extend or develop their responses by referring to personal experience; however, responses must be clearly focused on the given selection and the theme. In June 1999, the Reader's Response to Literature Assignment required students to focus on what the poem "The Demon at the Walls of Time" suggested to them about pursuing an ideal. The task engaged students; most were able to respond to the rich imagery in the poem, which inspired some impressive writing.

Students interpreted "ideal" to mean a variety of things including journey, challenge, goal, belief, concept, philosophy, quest and idea. Many interpreted the demon's goal or ideal as a positive influence, although others perceived the demon's quest as hopeless or doomed to failure. A wide range of writers recognized the wall as a metaphor and responded in a variety of ways such as: "there is always more wall to climb, and more difficult obstacles to conquer"; "the poet approaches the challenge with explosive energy and confidence as he almost 'laughs to find the barrier'"; and "pursuing a dream in earnestness and scaling the ultimate challenge: time." To support their ideas, students effectively used both direct and indirect references to the poem and/or personal anecdote: "I decided that I wanted to start running and training to run a marathon this summer with my brother. I was 'fresh and fuelled' prepared to take on any challenges, overcome any barrier."

Students scoring at **Excellent E/5** or **Proficient Pf/4** gave well-considered responses that explored ideas purposefully and supported their ideas with precise and thoughtfully selected details from the poem or various personal experiences. Often, insightful ideas were effectively conveyed in a confident voice and style. **Satisfactory S/3** responses demonstrated an appropriate understanding of the poem and supported ideas in a straight-forward, matter-of-fact manner. Students who did not achieve the acceptable standard were often hampered by weak writing and/or reading skills.

### **Literature Composition Assignment**

The June 1999 Literature Composition Assignment required students to discuss the pursuit and the significance of individual ideals in literature that they had studied. The energetic tone of the "The Demon at the Walls of Time" seemed to have served as an effective warm-up for students' entry into this major assignment. As with past examinations, students drew from a wide range of literature for this assignment; however, relatively few used multiple selections. Most students were conscientious about maintaining the focus of their response, and as a result sometimes redefined "ideal" as quest, dream, goal, etc. in the course of discussion. Many papers were long, usually reflecting student involvement in the literature and topic.

Many students achieving **Excellent E/5** or **Proficient Pf/4** distinguished between the choices an individual makes to pursue an ideal and the value of the ideal itself: "People in society are quite often forced to follow or pursue the ideals of society in order to feel accepted by others. These ideals form the image of perfection in the eye of society, and the attributes of this perfection are quite often unattainable. The play 'Death of a Salesman' demonstrates how the pursuit of ideals often creates a false sense of identity in an individual's mind." The students who demonstrated an internalized appreciation of the literature they chose to discuss were also most often the students who demonstrated confident choices of diction and syntactical structures, and confident control of sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics.

Students achieving **Satisfactory S/3** demonstrated their understanding of the topic and assignment in a more generalized manner: "Just as the poem 'The Demon at the Walls of Time' by Edwin Morgan takes [talks] about pursuing ideals so does the play *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams. Two characters in this play overcome many obstacles and do nearly anything in order to succeed in their ideals. In order for these character [characters] to achieve these ideals they had [to] overcome barriers, put on acts and even lie to the people whom they loved." Student writing at this level was appropriately organized, clearly written, and generally correct.

Overall, students would benefit from stronger vocabulary skills that would enable them to express their ideas more effectively.



## Question-by-Question Results

Question	Key	Difficulty*
1	D	82.8
2	C	61.1
3	B	65.0
4	C	80.8
5	A	61.3
6	B	70.3
7	C	74.4
8	D	65.5
9	B	81.6
10	D	39.5
11	A	57.5
12	C	61.3
13	C	65.8
14	D	83.4
15	A	76.1
16	B	35.7
17	D	47.9
18	D	49.7
19	C	56.3
20	C	68.1
21	A	75.6
22	B	70.7
23	D	53.5
24	D	62.5
25	D	80.2
26	A	69.5
27	C	73.4
28	B	46.5
29	C	42.4
30	C	55.0
31	A	66.4
32	A	58.4
33	A	70.3
34	D	70.8
35	A	77.3
36	B	54.3
37	B	57.8
38	C	80.2
39	B	62.7
40	A	60.9
41	C	43.0
42	D	63.5
43	C	53.1
44	B	66.0
45	D	52.9
46	A	59.3
47	B	75.1
48	A	51.4
49	D	60.6
50	C	67.6
51	A	58.3
52	A	43.1
53	D	47.9
54	B	61.7
55	D	59.2
56	B	73.7
57	C	86.5
58	A	64.0
59	A	68.4
60	D	71.1
61	B	68.9
62	C	63.9
63	D	46.8
64	B	61.9
65	B	53.4
66	C	77.3
67	D	75.6
68	A	52.1
69	A	75.4
70	B	61.6

\*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 alternative. 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

*Part B: Reading* has a value of 70 marks. Each question is classified in two ways: by the curricular content area being tested and by the thinking (process) skill required to answer the question. The examination blueprint illustrates the distribution of questions in June 1999 according to these classifications.

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

### Subtest Results\*

Results are reported in average raw scores.

Total Part B: 44.4 out of 70

#### Course Content

- Meanings: 19.1 out of 31
- Critical Response: 15.6 out of 24
- Human Experience and Values: 9.7 out of 15

\* 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 subtest results.



## Examiners' Comments

The following table gives the results for ten multiple-choice questions selected from the June 1999 Part B examination. These ten questions are based on Virginia Woolfe's "The Man Who Loved His Kind," a non-contemporary text with complex syntax and unusual diction. In addition, this piece has a subtle, ironic tone and shifting narrative voice. To successfully answer questions on such a challenging passage near the end of an examination requires that students be able to read accurately for sustained periods—a skill that will serve them well in any post-secondary program. The questions in this set distinguish well between students who understand the narrator's subtle criticism of the character and those who do not.

*Percentage of Students Correctly Answering Selected Multiple-Choice Questions*

Student Group	Question Number									
	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
All Students	58.3	43.1	47.9	61.7	59.2	73.7	86.5	64.0	68.4	71.1
Students achieving the <i>standard of excellence</i> (80% or higher, or A) on the whole examination	76.8	75.0	54.1	84.3	89.2	92.1	96.7	85.9	83.8	87.0
Students achieving the <i>acceptable standard</i> who received between 65% and 79%, or B, on the whole examination	65.6	54.0	53.3	71.0	72.8	81.6	92.5	74.2	76.8	79.6
Students achieving the <i>acceptable standard</i> who received between 50% and 64%, or C, on the whole examination	52.4	31.9	45.5	53.1	49.1	69.2	84.7	56.1	65.1	66.5
Students who have not achieved the acceptable standard (49% or less) on the whole examination	40.9	18.6	36.3	42.4	27.5	50.5	68.7	41.8	44.4	49.5

51. The description of the glance exchanged between Prickett Ellis and Richard Dalloway (lines 1 to 4) serves to

- \*A. show a common human experience
- B. convey the starkness of the setting
- C. explain their happiness
- D. establish their ages

**Question 51:** The opening question of the set was of medium difficulty. Students who read the whole passage and were able to consider the glance exchanged between Prickett Ellis and Richard Dalloway in context would have seen alternative A as an obvious answer. They also would have been able to choose alternative A through a process of elimination: the setting is not stark, the characters are not happy, and their ages are not established nor are they important to the story. The 25.4% of students who chose alternative C may have over-generalized the detail about the woman outside the gates (lines 75 to 80) by reading the passage literally.



52. Richard's parenthetical remark in lines 7 to 8 serves to convey his

- \*A. desire to put Prickett Ellis at ease
- B. confusion at meeting Prickett Ellis
- C. awareness that he shares similar tastes with Prickett Ellis
- D. embarrassment at not having advanced beyond Prickett Ellis

53. In the context of this excerpt, Prickett Ellis' perceptions in lines 21 to 32 suggest **primarily** that he is

- A. snobbish
- B. bad tempered
- C. bored and indignant
- \*D. insecure and defensive

54. Prickett Ellis's straightening himself in line 53 reflects

- A. his discomfort in being forced to stand so long
- \*B. the self-consciousness of his perceptions
- C. the awkwardness of the social gathering
- D. his humility in the midst of greatness

55. In his reverie in lines 47 to 56, Prickett Ellis sees himself as

- A. foolish
- B. a charlatan
- C. resourceful
- \*D. an unsung hero

**Question 52:** Students found this question the most difficult of the set. In order to answer it correctly, they needed to be aware of the shifting narrative voice in the first paragraph. Students selecting from the incorrect alternatives may have depended upon their own perceptions about the characters as the selection provides no evidence for confusion on Richard's part (alternative B), and although it is unclear whether or not he has advanced beyond Ellis, there is no evidence to suggest that he is embarrassed (alternative D). Choosing alternative C is a clear misreading of the passage as Richard refers to Prickett Ellis as a "queer chap" (line 11), negating the possibility that they share similar tastes—a fact borne out by the passage as a whole.

**Question 53:** This was another challenging question in the set. Students who chose alternative C missed the fact that boredom is not evident and that any indignation results from Prickett Ellis' insecurities. These students did not heed the direction to consider Ellis' perception in lines 21 to 32 in the context of the excerpt to ascertain the underlying reasons for his responses at the party. In the paragraph following lines 21 to 32, Ellis glares and compares "these fine ladies and gentlemen" to "the Brunners" to elevate his own sense of stature, described in line 52 as "a perfectly plain unsophisticated man" who, when forced to introspection, finds himself "grow more . . . shocking every instant" (line 58).

**Question 54:** Students who answered this question correctly understood Prickett Ellis' physical act of straightening himself to be a manifestation of his internal strife. Students who chose alternative A have taken a literal interpretation of the story and failed to appreciate Ellis' internal conflict. Students drawn to alternative C have chosen a generalization about the whole social gathering instead of focusing on Prickett Ellis' perception. Students who chose alternative D may not have known the meaning of humility or, having missed the ironic tone, misread the passage.

**Question 55:** This question of medium difficulty discriminates well between students achieving the *acceptable standard* or better and those not achieving the acceptable standard. Although the word "reverie" may have presented a challenge, its meaning and Prickett Ellis' perception of himself are available in context. A careful reader would have recognized in lines 47 to 56 not only the writer's interjection of her view of Ellis as a foolish individual, but also ascertained that her view differs from Ellis' self-perception. Students who chose alternative A missed the author's ironic tone—she presents him as foolish but his self-image is a grandiose one.



56. Richard Dalloway's introduction of Miss O'Keefe (line 71) is pivotal to this story in that

- A. Richard Dalloway abuses the trust of his guests
- \*B. Miss O'Keefe's character mirrors that of Prickett Ellis
- C. Richard Dalloway shocks Prickett Ellis into recognizing his own inadequacies
- D. Miss O'Keefe realizes that the age difference between herself and Prickett Ellis is insurmountable

57. When Miss O'Keefe says to herself "The whole force of the world can't do it" (lines 78–79 and 80) she means that

- A. she loves humanity
- B. she disdains shallow partygoers
- \*C. it is impossible to change social class barriers
- D. the current phenomenon of poverty is widespread

58. Context reveals that Miss O'Keefe's demand for an ice (line 82) is actually a reflection of her

- \*A. frustration
- B. pomposity
- C. rudeness
- D. shyness

59. This excerpt illustrates both major characters' failure **mainly** to

- \*A. confront their own pre-judgements and risk vulnerability
- B. become acquainted with the harshness of the world
- C. acknowledge the good deeds of others
- D. achieve a sophisticated lifestyle

**Question 56:** Successful students demonstrated an awareness of narrative technique on this moderately easy question. The 73.7% who chose alternative B understood the purpose of juxtaposition and character foil. Even many students who may have missed the ironic tone of the passage knew that the introduction of a new character signals a contrast or mirroring of traits (50.5% of students below the acceptable standard chose the correct answer). Those students who chose alternative C either misunderstood Ellis as he leaves the party or applied an expectation—that Ellis will change as a result of his interaction with Miss O'Keefe—that is not true in this case.

**Question 57:** This was the easiest question of the set and, interestingly, one that is not dependent upon context, understanding the ironic tone, or Prickett Ellis' misperception. Students who chose alternative C are aware that Miss O'Keefe is referring to the powerful force of social class barriers when she admits that "The whole force of the world" can't change the situation for the woman at the gate. Those students who chose alternative D have generalized beyond the details in the excerpt, bringing information to the selection rather than reading carefully for evidence in the passage. Those who chose alternative A have the gist of the tone but have not read carefully enough to appreciate its subtlety.

**Question 58:** This question discriminated well between students who read carefully and paid attention to specific details and those who did not. Of students achieving the *standard of excellence* on the exam, 85% chose alternative A as the correct answer, perceiving that the incident recalled by Miss O'Keefe was very frustrating for her. It was one that set "her indignation boiling," one that "The whole force of the world" could not rectify. It is because of this frustration that she demanded an ice—not because of her pomposity (alternative B), her rudeness (alternative C) or her shyness (alternative D). Students who chose B, the second most popular alternative, had an accurate understanding of Miss O'Keefe's character, but failed to place her in the context of this specific situation.

**Question 59:** Of medium difficulty, this question tests the students' ability to discern the hierarchical nature of alternatives in evaluative questions. On some level, each of the alternatives has some truth. In this instance, in a superficial interpretation, it is true that neither character acknowledges any good deeds (alternative C), nor are they comfortable with the sophisticated lifestyles of their counterparts (alternative D). That they have failed to become acquainted with the harshness of the world is also somewhat true (alternative B), although this generalization ventures beyond the passage and presupposes an external conflict. Alternative A is clearly the main failing of both characters and should have been readily evident as the best answer to students who identified internal conflict as the focus of this passage.



60. The central irony of this excerpt is **most clearly** expressed in

- A. "it would have eased him greatly to go on to say that he was a plain man, who happened to have a liking for ordinary people" (lines 86–87)
- B. "You can have it for nothing. Beauty." (line 99)
- C. "Miss O'Keefe was muddled and annoyed: she was muddy instead of clear" (lines 129–130)
- \*D. "Hating each other, hating the whole house full of people who had given them this painful, this disillusioning evening, these two lovers of their kind got up, and without a word parted for ever" (lines 134–136)

**Question 60:** This question clearly discriminates between students who have a basic understanding of the subtleties of the passage and those who do not. In choosing alternative D, students demonstrate a general understanding of irony and the ability to appreciate the central irony of a complex piece. Alternative D is the clearest example of the central irony because it acknowledges both characters and the internal conflict that is the passage's underlying focus.

### 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 as separate examinations, it is interesting to compare the distribution of scores on the two parts of the examination.

	Part A	Part B
A	16.0	18.1
B	41.0	32.0
C	29.4	28.9
F	13.6	21.0

As the discussions on pages 5 to 8 of this report have noted, student success on Part B: Reading is directly related to success on the examination as a whole (Parts A and B.)

As the table at the side shows, this close relationship is dramatically apparent at the *standard of excellence*. It is also apparent in the group that did not achieve the acceptable standard in Parts A and B.

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*Examples of Students' Writing* from the January 1999 administration of English 30 are posted on the Alberta Learning extranet site. The examples and the accompanying rationales illustrate the standards for written response.

You can access the extranet by using your school's access number. Every principal has this information. Should you experience any difficulty with access or with finding material on the extranet, please call the Help Desk at (780) 427-1111.

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