ENGLISH LITERACY

DEFINITION OF THE DOMAIN

PLACEMENT TEST

Québec

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1 INTRODUCTION

This definition of the domain for the placement test describes and classifies the essential and representative elements of *A Guide to Customized Literacy Training*, specifically, for the section on *English*. It presents an overview of the program, but should by no means replace the program itself. The purpose of defining the domain is to ensure consistency between the overall program and the test that determines the level (Step 1, 2, 3 or 4) to which students are assigned.

The definition of the domain is used to prepare different versions of the placement test that are valid from one year to another and from one school board to another, taking into account the responsibilities shared by the ministère de l'Éducation and the school boards.

2   PROGRAM ORIENTATIONS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES FOR THE PLACEMENT TEST

Orientations	**Consequences**
Evaluation for placement purposes will take into account the students' knowledge and skills with respect to the material covered in each of the four steps in the program.	Students' knowledge and skills will be assessed for each step in the placement test to determine the level at which they should enter the program.
Students learn the basic concepts in English by means of functional and concrete situations designed to help them acquire the knowledge and skills suited to their needs.	The placement test will assess the students' knowledge and skills in English. Evaluation tasks must be related to themes or situations that reflect the students' needs.
The program enables students to acquire the mechanics and vocabulary related to reading, writing, listening and speaking.	The placement test will assess the students' knowledge of the mechanics and vocabulary related to reading, writing, listening and speaking at each step.
The program is intended to help students develop a better understanding of the concepts related to reading, writing, listening and speaking skills in order to communicate in various everyday situations.	The evaluation tasks in the placement test will assess the students' knowledge of the concepts related to reading, writing, listening and speaking skills and their ability to use these skills in everyday situations.

3 CONTENT AND SKILLS COVERED IN THE PROGRAM FOR PURPOSES OF THE PLACEMENT TEST

3.1 CONTENT

Writing

Spelling

- functional vocabulary
- basic high-frequency words
- homophones
- words used in social and work settings
- silent letters

Mechanics and Grammar

- capitalization
- punctuation
- abbreviations
- subject/pronoun agreement
- past tense /irregular verbs
- subject/object pronouns
- adjectives/adverbs
- subject/verb agreement
- active/passive voice
- alphabetical/sequential order

Written Production

- clear expression of ideas
- letter formation and word spacing
- spelling
- capitalization
- punctuation
- sentence structure
- organization of ideas
- adherence to instructions

3.2 SKILLS

- **Knowledge**

  The student will be able to spell basic functional and high-frequency words used in social and work settings.

- **Comprehension**

  The student will be able to understand certain elements of mechanics and grammar.

- **Application**

  The student will be able to express himself/herself clearly by writing in a specific mode, using correct letter formation and word spacing, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, syntax and organization in a written production.

4   TABLE OF DIMENSIONS

CONTENT	WRITING 100%			
	STEP 1	**STEP 2**	**STEP 3**	**STEP 4**
KNOWLEDGE **20%**	Spelling - functional vocabulary - basic high-frequency words **(1) 5%**	Spelling - high-frequency words - homophones **(3) 5%**	Spelling - functional words used in social and work settings - silent letters **(5) 5%**	Spelling - homophone pairs - functional words used in social and work settings **(7) 5%**
COMPREHENSION **40%**	Mechanics and Grammar - capitalization of proper nouns - commas in a series - end punctuation - abbreviations/days of the week - apostrophe in contractions **(2) 10%**	Mechanics and Grammar - capitals/provinces - apostrophe for plural possessives - past tense/irregular verbs - alphabetical/ sequential order **(4) 10%**	Mechanics and Grammar - capitals/businesses - apostrophe for irregular possessives - subject/object pronouns - misused adjectives and adverbs **(6) 10%**	Mechanics and Grammar - subject/verb agreement - active/passive voice - abbreviations **(8) 10%**
APPLICATION **40%**				Written Production - clearly expressed ideas - letter formation/word spacing - spelling - capitalization - punctuation - sentence structure - organization of ideas - adherence to instructions **(9) 40%**

5   OBSERVABLE BEHAVIOURS

Relative value of the items
↓

Box numbers in the table of dimensions
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Spelling (20%)

In a dictation of 20 words, the student will be able to spell:

5%   (1)   - five words including functional vocabulary words and basic high-frequency words,

5%   (3)   - five words including high-frequency words and homophones,

5%   (5)   - five words including functional words used in social and work settings and words with silent letters,

5%   (7)   - five words including homophone pairs and functional words used in social and work settings.

Mechanics and Grammar (40%)

2%   (2)   Given two simple sentences of basic high-frequency words, the student will be able to identify and circle two words (*proper nouns*) in each sentence that require a capital letter.

2%   Given a choice of four similar simple sentences of basic high-frequency words, the student will be able to identify the sentence that demonstrates the appropriate use of the comma in a series of three.

2%   Given four simple sentences where end punctuation (. or ?) has been omitted, the student will be able to insert the correct punctuation.

2%   Given two multiple choice questions with four possible choices each, the student will be able to identify the proper abbreviation for two days of the week.

2%   Given four sentences with a choice of two contractions, the student will be able to circle the contraction with the correct placement of the apostrophe.

2%   (4)   Given a simple sentence of high-frequency words containing the names of two provinces of two words each, without capitalization, the student will be able to rewrite the sentence with the appropriate capitalization.

2%   Given two sentences made up of high-frequency words, the student will be able to identify the appropriate plural possessive for each sentence by selecting and circling the correct answer from two proposed choices.

2%		Given a list of five high-frequency words, the student will be able to put the words in alphabetical order, using the numbers 1 to 5.
2%		Given four scrambled but interrelated sentences, the student will be able to put the sentences in order, using the numbers 1 to 4.
2%		Given four sentences made up of high-frequency words with the (irregular) verb provided in parentheses in the infinitive form, the student will be able to rewrite the verb in the past tense.
2%	(6)	Given a sentence of functional words used in social and work settings containing the names of two businesses without capitalization, with two words in their titles and one or two joining words, the student will be able to accurately rewrite the sentence, using the appropriate capitalization.
2%		Given two sentences made up of functional words used in social and work settings, the student will be able to identify the appropriate use of apostrophes with irregular possessives by circling the correct answer among three proposed answers.
4%		Given four sentences made up of functional words used in social and work settings, the student will be able to demonstrate the correct usage of subject pronouns (first and second sentence) and object pronouns (third and fourth sentence) by circling the correct answer between two proposed answers.
2%		Given four sentences made up of functional words used in social and work settings, and a choice of two commonly misused adjectives and adverbs (i.e., *good/well, real/really, bad/badly*), the student will be able to circle the appropriate adjectives or adverbs.
4%	(8)	Given a choice of difficult verb forms in a series of four sentences written at a high-intermediate level, the student will be able to circle the verb that agrees with the subject.
2%		Given an example of converting a sentence from the active voice to the passive voice, the student will be able to rewrite in the passive voice a sentence of no more than seven words that is written in the active voice.
4%		Given a list of four frequently abbreviated words at a high-intermediate level, the student will be able to rewrite the words in their abbreviated form.

Written Production (40%)

Three topics of a descriptive, explanatory or expository nature will be proposed. In a writing sample of approximately 25 to 75 words, the student will be able to:

5%	(9)	- write a clear, accurate sample in a descriptive, explanatory or expository style;
5%		- use clear letter formation with the correct word spacing;
5%		- use correct spelling;
5%		- use correct capitalization;
5%		- use correct punctuation;
5%		- use proper sentence structure;
5%		- demonstrate organization of ideas;
5%		- adhere to instructions (subject, length of text, etc.).

6   JUSTIFICATION OF CONTENT, SKILLS AND THEIR WEIGHTING

For the placement test of the English Literacy program, only measurable and observable objectives that are essential to functional production in English have been chosen.

Although all skills in the program are equally important, it was decided that the placement test should focus on the writing component (specifically spelling, mechanics and grammar and written production). There were several reasons for excluding the listening, speaking and reading components: For one, it was felt that the writing component would give a very good indication of the level of the student. As well, including all of the components of the program would greatly lengthen the test and its correction time. It is not necessary for the placement test to be as exhaustive as the summative evaluation.

The selected objectives reflect a progression from Step 1 through 4 of the program. For Step 4, a written production component has been included. It is assumed that the quality of production will be consistent with the student's actual level and should be evaluated accordingly.

As a result, the weighting of the first three steps is equally distributed, while the weighting is more significant for the fourth step, as follows:

Step 1   15%
Step 2   15%
Step 3   15%
Step 4   55%

The abilities have been weighted as follows:

Knowledge   20%
Comprehension   40%
Application   40%

7   DESCRIPTION OF THE PLACEMENT TEST

7.1   Type of Test

The placement test focuses on writing skills and is divided into three components: spelling, mechanics and grammar and written production.

The test is to be written individually at the beginning of the Literacy program or at any other moment deemed appropriate by the school board.

7.2   Duration

The placement test is written in a single session lasting no more than 60 minutes. The approximate time to be devoted to each component is as follows:

- Spelling   10 minutes
- Mechanics and Grammar   20 minutes
- Written Production   30 minutes

7.3   Materials

The use of a dictionary or any other resource materials is not permitted during the test.

7.4   Placement Decisions

Placement decisions are based on the minimum performance standard for each step in the test.

8   BIBLIOGRAPHY

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