Who creates the Literacy Test?
● EQAO (The Education Quality and Accountability Office) is responsible for creating the test. This is the same organization that wrote the grade 3, 6 and 9 tests. The tests are written by teams of teachers in Ontario.

Why is the literacy test necessary?
● Functional literacy is a necessary skill both in secondary school and beyond. The OSSLT is one indicator that you have mastered the essential reading and writing skills.

What percentage do I need to get to pass this test?
● The test is scored out of 400. You must earn 300, or 75%. This is the provincial standard.

Why do we have to get 75% to pass instead of 50% like all other high school exams?
● In all of your courses, the Ministry of Education sets a level three (70-79%) as the standard that students are expected to achieve. This test matches that expectation. Remember that the skills tested on the OSSLT are based on grade 9 expectations. You are not writing the test until mid-way through grade 10; your mastery should have continued to increase beyond 50%.

How does the literacy test benefit me?
● The test helps students to have a sense of the reading and writing tasks that are necessary in daily life. Students who are unsuccessful on the test are provided with additional literacy supports in their last years of high school.

Do I have to complete the OSSLT?
● If you intend to graduate from high school, you must write the OSSLT. If you are unsuccessful a plan will be put in place. This may include rewriting the test the following year, and/or taking the Ontario Literacy Course which will count as one of your 30 credits and the OSSLT graduation requirement.

I'm a grade 9 student in a grade 10 class; do I have to write the test?
● No. You write the test in your second year of high school regardless of what classes you are currently enrolled in.

Is this part of my English course?
● No. Literacy is a common expectation across all high school courses. The OSSLT is not a part of any one course.

Test Format

How big will the test be?
• The test will consist of four booklets - a question and an answer booklet that you will use before the break, and a second set that you will use after the break.

**How many pages are in the booklets?**

• The test can change slightly year-to-year, but the sample booklet for the new format is:
  ○ Question Booklet 1 - 12 pages - Answer Booklet 1 - 10 pages
  ○ Question Booklet 2 - 14 pages - Answer Booklet 2 - 12 pages

**Are there long answer, true or false, or fill-in-the-blank questions?**

• There are two "long" answer questions - a one page news report, and a series of paragraphs expressing an opinion (minimum of three paragraphs). These long writing tasks are worth a high percentage of your final mark. Make sure you complete them thoroughly!
• There are no true or false questions.
• There are no fill-in-the-blank questions.

**How many multiple choice questions are on the test?**

• Slight changes may be made year-to-year, but the sample booklet has 45 multiple choice questions.

**Logistics of the Literacy Test**

**When is the test?**

• Thursday March 26th. This is the **ONLY** day the test is offered for the entire school year. Your attendance is essential.

**How long will the test be?**

• The test is made up of two 75 minute sessions with a 15 minute break in the middle.

**Where will this be taking place?**

• The test will be written on the second floor. Students will be grouped with their homeroom. Some students with either Special Education or ESL exceptionalities will write in alternate locations (e.g. MPR or library) but this will be communicated to you well ahead of time.

**Can you ask your teacher questions if you do not understand what the question is asking?**

• No.
• Here is what EQAO says:
  ● “Once the test materials have been opened, no one may use information from the test to provide instruction on any concept or item being tested prior to, during or after the administration of the test.”
“During the test, no one may explain, define, translate or provide examples of reading vocabulary or writing terminology to students, including those with accommodations.”
“During the test, nothing may be said or done to influence student responses, including, but not limited to, actions such as drawing a student’s attention to an unanswered question.”

Is it hard to finish in the allotted time period?
- If you stay on task and limit your answers to the length suggested by the lines provided in the answer booklet, you will have time to finish the test.

Are open response questions (paragraph answers) written in the answer booklet or on a separate sheet of paper? Is there space to write the long answer questions inside the answer booklet?
- ALL ANSWERS MUST BE WRITTEN IN THE ANSWER BOOKLET ON THE APPROPRIATE PAGE. Space is provided for each question. Use the amount of space provided as a guideline to how much you should write.

Do I have to only write on the lines provided?
- Yes. (Additional space or paper is NOT provided. NO ANSWERS, OTHER THAN WHAT IS ON THE LINES PROVIDED WILL BE MARKED.)

Can we write in the empty sides of the answer booklet?
- You may use this space for brainstorming and planning notes, but IT WILL NOT BE MARKED!

What if my homeroom is a grade 11 class?
- We have a list of all students who are in grade 10, but may have grade 9 or 11 homeroom classes. You will be directed to a room on the second floor to write the test. You will receive these instructions ahead of time.

What do you do if you finish early?
- Read and re-read every question and every answer you have provided. You may not leave, you may not talk, and you may not have your cell phone in the room and you may not access a cell phone during the break.

Are we allowed to eat during the break?
- Yes, a snack will be provided in the hallway. You may also bring your own snack.

Are we allowed to socialize during the break?
You may socialize in the hallway with the other students writing on the second floor. NO CELL PHONE ALLOWED AT ANY TIME!

**Do we write the test in a room with different students?**
- If you are in a grade 10 homeroom you will write with the students in that class. If you are in a grade 9, 11, or 12 homeroom, you will write in a classroom with other students in the same situation. If you are provided extra time (IEP or ESL students), you will write in an alternate location with students in the same situation.

**Do I have to take the test in Grade 12 if I take the OLC course?**
- Every student who intends to graduate must write the test at least once. If you are unsuccessful in grade 10, you may be asked to write it again in grade 11 depending on your circumstances. Students who have not successfully completed the test by grade 12 will take the Ontario Literacy Course. This course will teach the foundational skills from the literacy test and students will be evaluated on this work. OLC counts as a replacement for passing the literacy test, and as a credit toward the 30 required for graduation.

**Level of Difficulty**

**Do my grade nine marks tell me how I will do - approximately?**
- They can be a predictor, but remember that classroom assessments are more varied and not all "on demand" in terms of time. Your performance on your exams may be an indicator of how well you are likely to do. You can also go back to see how you managed in the Grade 6 EQAO assessments.

**If I do well in English, is it likely I will pass the test?**
- Literacy is taught across the curriculum. Your English mark will not be the only indicator of your success on the literacy test. (For example, the literacy test asks you to read a graphic text (table, chart, map, figures, etc.), something you might not do on a regular basis in English.)

**Is it easy? How hard is it going to be?**
- The OSSLT is based on grade 9 curriculum expectations. You write it mid-way through grade 10 so these skills you have been developing for a long time..

**Test Preparation**

What can I do to prepare and practice for the test?
- You have been preparing and practicing for this test for years as you have expanded your literacy skills in school everyday. However, as the test approaches, you may want
to focus your attention to literacy in a more specific and guided way. Here are some suggestions:

○ Participate in the classroom sessions during the Litz Blitz (March 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11). These sessions will target areas that students have found challenging in the past.


○ Practice the tasks on the KCSS Literacy Moodle: “KCSS Literacy Learning”. The enrollment key is “literacy”.

**Will studying help me pass the test?**

● The OSSLT is a skills based test, not a knowledge based test. You do not need to “study”, but you will want to “practice”. Looking at the student sample answers and scoring guides will be very helpful.

**What skills will we be learning in class?**

● We will be focusing on areas that past students have found challenging. This will include: topic development making connections, reading and understanding implicit details, and accurately decoding graphic texts such as tables, charts, etc..

**Are there going to be any practice sessions or study guides? Will we get a package to take home over the March Break, other than just the review days in class?**

● All grade 10’s were invited to register for the After School Literacy program. In addition, we will have six practice session in class called a “Litz Blitz”. You will receive two booklets during the Litz Blitz, one is a question and guide book, and the other is an answer and exemplar book. There is more content in the booklets than we will be able to cover at school. You are welcome to work on the remaining questions and look at the exemplar answers on your own.

**Writing Skills**

**Are there essay questions?**

● You are asked to write a series of paragraphs expressing an opinion. You will be given two lined pages to write your response. You must write a minimum of three paragraphs. This is similar to a short personal essay.

**What is the longest question?**

● There are two long-answer questions. There is a one-page news report, and a two-page series of paragraphs expressing an opinion. The series of paragraphs is the longest written response you will be required to give.
Is there a lot of writing?

- This is what is on the test:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading selections:</td>
<td>Types of writing tasks and questions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>information paragraph</td>
<td>- long-writing tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(225 to 250 words)</td>
<td>- news report (one page)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>news report (225 to</td>
<td>- series of paragraphs expressing an opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250 words)</td>
<td>(two pages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dialogue (225 to 250</td>
<td>- two short-writing tasks (six lines each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>words)</td>
<td>- multiple-choice questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>real-life narrative</td>
<td>- developing a main idea with supporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(550 to 600 words)</td>
<td>details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>graphic text</td>
<td>- organization of ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(fewer than 150 words)</td>
<td>- language conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of questions:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>multiple-choice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>open-response (six</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lines each)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why do we have to learn how to write a newspaper article?

- The reality is that most of you will not become journalists and will not write news reports after high school; however, writing a news report indicates a number of the writing skills that EQAO wants to be sure you have achieved. Your news report will demonstrate that you are able to make connections (between the headline and the photo provided), develop one topic with a consistent focus, provide supporting details, and that you can organize ideas in coherent manner. The news report allows you to write objectively about concrete, observable details (5W’s + H).

Concerns Regarding Special Education and English Language Learners

Do you get extra time if you have an IEP?
You will receive the accommodations outlined in your IEP. If your IEP allows for extra time as an assessment accommodation you will be provided with this opportunity. Likewise, you can also use a computer or a scribe if your IEP outlines this as an assessment accommodation.

**Will my IEP lower my required mark for passing?**
- No. Every writer must achieve 300/400. This is a standardized test.

**What level of ESL does a student have to be at to pass?**
- Most students defer writing the test until they are in ESL “E”.

**After the test**

**Will the mark that I receive on the OSSLT be on my high school transcript?**
- Your transcript will indicate that you have successfully completed the OSSLT. No mark will be recorded.

**Is my mark on the OSSLT going to appear on my report card?**
- No.

**What happens if you don’t meet the 75% requirement? / What happens if you are unsuccessful on the test?**
- You will need to write the test next year and/or you will need to take the Ontario Literacy Course in Grade 12.

**Does the Literacy Test mark count toward your English mark?**
- No. The test assesses literacy across the curriculum. It is not an English test.

**Will post-secondary institutions be able to access these marks?**
- No. They will see that you have successfully completed the OSSLT, but no mark will be indicated.

**Do future employers see our marks?**
- No.

**What if you get 299/400? Would that technically be a failure?**
- Yes. (Although in reality 295 is the highest mark you can score and still be considered unsuccessful. The “scores” are rubric based, and are calculated by level, not by individual numbers, so a score of 299 cannot happen.)

**If a 74% is given, will the teachers be lenient?**
No. Different teachers mark different sections. In fact, each question is marked twice, by two different teachers. They have no knowledge of what marks you earned on the other sections of the test. Each teacher’s response is downloaded to a computer database and then final marks are calculated.
**Will we get feedback on our test results once it is evaluated?**

- Yes. This link shows you what your individual report will look like. There is an example for successful and unsuccessful students. ([http://www.eqao.com/pdf_e/14/sample-individual-student-report-osslt.pdf](http://www.eqao.com/pdf_e/14/sample-individual-student-report-osslt.pdf))

If you have further questions please see Ms. Morris (room 204) or Ms. Littlejohn (Library). We would be happy to answer your questions.