

Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT)
Dos and Don'ts for the Writing Component

These Dos and Don'ts were compiled from marker observations made while marking the October 2002 administration of the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test. They do not replace the Tips on Writing in the Support Materials. They are meant to draw attention to strategies the markers observed in student writing that either did or did not help students to succeed on the writing component of the OSSLT.

General Advice for All Four Writing Tasks

Dos	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Write your response in the lined space provided. ✓ Stay on topic. ✓ Follow all the instructions carefully. ✓ Write clearly (print if you have poor handwriting). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Do not write the final copy of your responses in the Rough Notes section. Anything written in the Rough Notes section will not be marked. ✗ Do not copy a reading selection into the space for a writing task. This is plagiarism. ✗ Do not cross out any work until you are completely finished.

Specific Advice

<i>Summary</i>	
Dos	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Read the entire selection before deciding on the main idea. ✓ Give at least two supporting details to support the main idea. ✓ Write at least two sentences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Do not write more than 100 words. ✗ Do not write an opinion or a critique of the selection. ✗ Do not use the title as one of the ideas from the original.

Specific Advice (continued)

<i>Series of Paragraphs Expressing an Opinion</i>	
Dos	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Write more than a page. ✓ You must write at least three paragraphs (introduction, development and conclusion). ✓ Make sure the divisions between paragraphs are clearly marked. ✓ Clearly state an opinion at the beginning or end (e.g., begin your opinion by expressing agreement or disagreement in response to the question). ✓ Make sure you have at least two supporting details in the development part of your series of paragraphs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Do not write less than a page. ✗ Do not write less than three paragraphs. ✗ Do not write a story. ✗ Do not copy the title as one of your three paragraphs.

<i>News Report</i>	
Dos	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Write more than half a page. Refer to the headlines and the picture to create your news report. ✓ Answer the five Ws and H questions as if your answers are facts. ✓ Pretend you are a newspaper reporter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Do not copy the news report from the previous reading selection. ✗ Do not pretend you are a TV or radio reporter. ✗ Do not answer the five Ws and H question in a point-form list.

<i>Information Paragraph</i>	
Dos	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Write more than half a page. ✓ Remember to choose at least four points from the list that relate to only one aspect of the topic. ✓ Remember to include in your paragraph the points you chose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Do not use the topic as the aspect. ✗ Do not try to use too many points from the list. This can lead to a lack of focus on a single aspect. ✗ Do not write more than one paragraph.