

## **The EQAO Grade 3 and Grade 6 Assessment of Reading, Writing and Mathematics**

*Excerpts from the Ontario Provincial Report, 2001-2002 (January 2003), pages 4-10*

The Grades 3 and 6 assessments are conducted annually in May. All Ontario Grade 3 and Grade 6 students in publicly funded schools are expected to participate in these assessments.

The assessments take place over five days for up to two-and-a-half hours each day. In both grades, students complete introductory activities with their classmates and then work independently to solve problems, write their responses and answer multiple-choice questions.

The Grade 3 and Grade 6 assessments measure how well students have met the provincial expectations in *The Ontario Curriculum, Grade 1-8*. Each assessment covers the knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics that the students are expected to have acquired by the end of the grade being assessed. These assessments contain performance-based activities, requiring written responses, and multiple-choice questions. This combination of question types allows students to demonstrate both the depth and the scope of their learning and provides a variety of ways for students to demonstrate what they know and what they can do.

### **Reading**

In the reading component of the assessment, students demonstrate their knowledge and skills by reading a variety of materials including both fiction and non-fiction. This part of the assessment measures how well students use various reading strategies and conventions and how effectively they understand concepts, make inferences and connect ideas. The four reading categories outlined in Grade 3 and Grade 6 curriculum and evaluated by the assessments are as follows:

- Reasoning: the student selects, describes, interprets and analyzes relevant information and ideas from the text to show understanding
- Communication: the student relates ideas from the text to personal knowledge and experiences and to other readings (Grade 3); the student explains an interpretation of the text, supporting it with evidence from the text and his/her own knowledge and experience (Grade 6)
- Organization of ideas: the student identifies and describes different organizational forms and characters of texts and uses this knowledge to aid understanding
- Application of language conventions: the student identifies and explains the use of appropriate language conventions (e.g., phonics, spelling, grammar, punctuation and style)

## **Writing**

In the writing component of the assessment, students demonstrate their knowledge and skills by using various forms of writing and by writing for different purposes. This part of the assessment measures how well students use writing conventions and how effectively they understand assigned tasks, organize ideas and communicate with the reader. During the assessment, students produce two pieces of written work. One piece models the writing process, while the other is an on-demand piece. The four writing categories outlined in the Grade 3 and Grade 6 curriculum and evaluated by the assessments are as follows:

- Reasoning: the student understands the purpose of the task, develops ideas and relates them to the purpose of the task and to each other
- Communication: the student uses appropriate writing techniques, (including vocabulary, imagery and sentence variety), uses an appropriate voice and writes for a specific audience
- Organization of ideas: the student shows evidence of a logical plan and/or focus and presents connected ideas (Grade 3); the student uses a logical sequence in sentences, paragraphs and overall organization and structure (Grade 6)
- Application of language conventions: the student applies language conventions correctly (spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.)

## **Mathematics**

In the mathematics component of the assessment, students demonstrate their knowledge and skills by solving problems, applying procedures and explaining how they have arrived at their answers. This part of the assessment also tests students' knowledge and skills within the five strands of mathematics: number sense and numeration, geometry and spatial sense, measurement, patterning and algebra, and data management and probability. The four mathematics categories outlined in the Grade 3 and Grade 6 curriculum and evaluated by the assessments are as follows:

- Problem solving: the student chooses and carries out appropriate strategies and applies them correctly
- Understanding of concepts: the student uses and explains required concepts, incorporating mathematical ideas and relationships
- Application of mathematics procedures: the student selects and accurately applies procedures (e.g., making a graph) and operations (e.g., adding and multiplying)
- Communication and required knowledge: the student justifies the reasonableness of solutions and provides clear explanations using appropriate mathematical terms and symbols

## **Marking**

EQAO reports on student achievement in reading, writing and mathematics using a four-level scale. This scale is based on The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8 and sets Level 3 as the provincial standard. The markers are trained to assess student written work according to these four levels of achievement. Students may also be designated “NE1” (the student has provided enough information to scores but does not demonstrate enough evidence or knowledge and understanding to be assigned Level 1), “IIS” (the student’s work provides insufficient information to be assigned a level of achievement), “exempt” (the student was formally exempted from participating in the assessment) and “No Data” (EQAO received no completed assessment booklets).

Calculations are made in two ways, which EQAO terms Method 1 and Method 2.

### *Method 1*

In Method 1 all data are reported. Method 1 expresses the number of students achieving at each level as a percentage of all the students in the grade, including students who were exempted and those who took part in the assessment but did not produce enough work to be scored. Method 1 is EQAO’s primary method of reporting, because publicly funded schools are accountable for the achievement and progress of all students. Schools and school boards are required to use this method to ensure consistency of reporting across the province.

### *Method 2*

Method 2 is an alternate way of presenting the data. Method 2 expresses the distribution of student results as a percentage of those students who actually took part in the assessment and produced at least some work that could be scored. Students who were exempt or for whom we have no performance data are excluded. Method 2 highlights the results achieved by students who have at least some scorable work.