

# Owning the English 12 Provincial Exam

The BC Provincial Exam is worth a staggering 40% of your overall grade when you take English 12 and it is a fallacy that you can just cram for it. However, what you can do is some very concentrated and focused work over the course of 2-4 weeks that will dramatically help improve your chance for success. Even spending just 2-3 days with focused work and effort can lead to an improved result.

## Stage 1: Take a Practice Exam

The best way to understand the provincial exam is to actually take an exam where you can get a sense of what is asked/expected of you. Here's a quick breakdown of the exam and also some suggestions for the initial writing.

## Part A: Reading Comprehension (Stand-Alone Text)

*Suggested Time: 25 minutes*

*Total Value: 19 marks / 23%*

*7 Multiple Choice Questions*

*Paragraph (150 Words) 12 Marks*

Students will read one text and respond to multiple-choice questions and one written-response question. The text may be informational, poetry or literary prose. In answering the written-response question, students should **develop a unified and coherent expository paragraph of at least 150 words**. Personal or narrative responses are not an appropriate format. Responses should be constructed using complete and effective sentences and adhere to the conventions of standard written English. *(Source: BC Ministry of Education)*

- ☐ Look over the paragraph response question **BEFORE** you start reading the text.
- ☐ Respond to the text and not your own ideas about the topic
- ☐ In your AG (attention getter), focus on the **theme** of the text, then follow up with the **significance** (why, as a reader, we should care about this text)
- ☐ Now **ANSWER** the question in a thesis statement followed up with support from the beginning, middle, and end of the text (3 or more quotes).
- ☐ Move beyond **WHAT** is happening to **HOW** (choices) and **WHY** (context)
- ☐ Use powerful revelatory **VERBS**
- ☐ Use literary vocabulary such as protagonist, irony, foreshadowing, symbol, etc
- ☐ Write descriptively with elevated vocabulary
- ☐ Have a **conclusion** that has an **epiphany** that is insightful.
- ☐ Create a **title** for your paragraph that uses elements from your conclusion.

**Question:** Discuss contrast in the poem "The Dumka."

A single musician can perform beautiful solos, but in time variety is craved and the magic of the solo is destroyed. The sounds of a single piano playing at twilight from the farm contrasts to the music of the lives of the old couple, for music of their life is created by a symphony consisting of everyone who has ever affected the couple, and is therefore much richer in tone and quality. During the piece composed by the couple there are numerous crescendos, such as during the dust storms in the Thirties. As the green glow of doom changes to become a terrifying pale fire the music increases in tempo and volume, then suddenly dies down to a slower, calmer tune as the couple "smiles faintly" (19) and speaks of "the farm in twilight with piano music spiraling out across red roads and fields of maize." (21-23). The topic changes to the "bread lines in the city" (23) and the people across the country "lining the street like mannequins" (24) as the music maintains a slow tempo and a mournful tune, then symbols crash and the musicians force a feeling of intensity through their intonaments as the scene abruptly changes to on World War Two. The terror and hardship felt during that time is then again rapidly thrown into sharp relief as thoughts turn quickly to the end of the homecoming of soldiers from Europe. This whole sequence of thoughts and events contrasts like black to white when compared to the slow and sedate pace of the earlier lines of the poem. From the homecoming the music begins a gradual *ritardo*, slowing down until the couple arrives where they started; done in their room "in the house in Kansas" (40).

**Comment:** This response was awarded a 6 because it demonstrates a superior understanding of contrast. The sophisticated use of language guides the reader through this insightful and strongly supported discussion.

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**British Columbia. Ministry of  
Education**



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**Resources in Education** ,1992 *Teacher Education* ,1983 *How Schools Worked* Robert Douglas Gidney,Winnifred Phoebe Joyce Millar,2012 A richly textured study of educational developments in English speaking Canada from the close of the Victorian Age to the eve of World War II *Swedish Economic Policy Review* ,1999 **Administration de tests et évaluation du rendement des élèves au Canada** Geraldine Gilliss,Canadian Teachers' Federation,Ghyslaine Faubert,Marita Moll,1986 This bibliography draws together references to Canadian materials on testing and evaluation of student achievement published between 1976 and 1984 It also includes some earlier works of significance The entries are arranged alphabetically under topical subheadings and have been annotated wherever possible *The Saturday Review of*

*Politics, Literature, Science and Art* ,1881      **Saturday Review** ,1881      Annual Report - Department of Education of the Province of British Columbia British Columbia. Department of Education,1974      **Guide** American Anthropological Association,1992      *AAA Guide* American Anthropological Association,1992      **Review of Legal Education in the United States and Canada, 1926/27-1934** Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching,Alfred Zantzinger Reed,1928  
 List of publications of the foundation dealing with legal education and cognate matters is included in each issue  
     **University of Western Ontario law review** ,1982      *Canadian Periodical Index* ,1998      **Annual Report** British Columbia. Ministry of Education,1984      *The W.B.A. Review* ,1919

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