

Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP)

By June 30, 2020 80% of student will be at or above grade level in reading, writing and math.*
“Math” refers to number strand only.

Grade 9 Writing Exemplars

May 2019

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Acknowledgement

The Provincial Leadership Team and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education would like to thank the teachers who contributed to the development of scoring rubrics and student prompts and to the selection of exemplars. Thanks are also extended to school divisions and First Nations education organizations for allowing educators to participate in this project. Parents and students, who have contributed immeasurably to this project by sharing their writing, deserve a special thank you.

**Any errors, such as spelling and punctuation errors, are presented exactly as they appear in the original student work. Please note, however, that any identifying information students may have included in their writing, such as names of individuals or communities, has been altered in order to maintain student anonymity.

Preamble

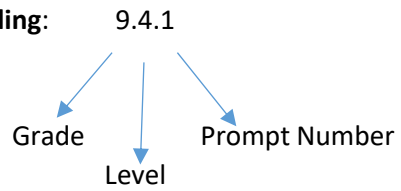
To support the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) outcome that “by June 30, 2020, 80% of students will be at or above grade level in reading, writing and math,” representative student samples of Level 1, 2, 3, and 4 writing have been gathered.

The exemplar package contains the following information:

- **Provincial rubrics**
 - The English language arts curricular outcomes informed Saskatchewan teachers as they worked with the Ministry of Education to develop rubrics for each grade level.
 - The teachers involved in the development of rubrics were directed to develop four-level, holistic rubrics.
 - It is important to keep in mind that holistic rubrics require teachers to look at the student’s writing “as a whole” rather than at the component parts of the student’s writing. Holistic rubrics should not be sub-divided into various elements of writing; rather, holistic rubrics should help the scorer determine “the big picture.” If teachers determine a student response straddles two levels of the rubric, the teacher should select the level that is MOST reflected in the student response.
 - When determining the writing level of your students as per the provincial writing rubric for provincial reporting purposes, you may wish to consider the students’ work over the course of the year. You may also wish to consider a variety of writing genres. While the prompts focus more on expository writing, expository texts are not the only texts that can be considered when determining the writing level. The provincial rubric is general enough that it can apply to a variety of writing.
 - Teachers are expected to use the provincial rubric when reporting to the ESSP outcome.
- **Writing prompts**
 - English language arts teachers developed writing prompts that are connected to curricular outcomes, contexts or units.
- **Student samples**
 - Teachers met in spring 2019 to review student work and determine rubric levels.
 - Samples of each of the levels of the rubric are accompanied by rationales for the level determination.
 - Teachers were encouraged to employ their usual classroom practices when working with their students to gather responses to the provincial prompts.

Level 4 samples are the first set of samples, followed by samples from Levels 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The rubric for the level is inserted before the student samples. The prompt precedes each student response.

Prompt Coding:



Grade 9 Rubric

Grade 9			
4	3	2	1
The message is thoughtful, compelling, and supported by interesting details. Precise and purposeful register and tone are established through skillful use of language. The introduction, body, and conclusion are well-connected and thought-provoking. Transitions effectively connect ideas. Word choices are varied and sentence structures are refined. There are few errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar.	The message is straightforward, using the appropriate register, and the message is supported with details, examples, and explanations. The writing is coherent and contains a strong introduction, transitions, and an effective conclusion. Word choices and sentence structures are varied. Errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar do not interfere with meaning.	The message is limited and inadequately supported. An introduction and conclusion may be present, but rudimentary, and there is limited use of transitions. Sentences structures lack variety and word choice is limited. Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar may interfere with meaning.	The message is unclear and/or vague. The introduction and conclusion are unrelated to the main idea. The text lacks coherence and unity. Word choices are ineffective and sentences are simple or incomplete. Incorrect spelling, grammar, and punctuation interfere with meaning.

Grade 9 Writing Prompts

Prompt	Context
9.1 The word “survival” literally means “to live.” Does living mean more than having enough food and adequate shelter? Explain how and why it is important to do more than simply “survive.”	Social, Cultural, and Historical; Personal and Philosophical; Environmental and Technological Unit: Surviving and Conquering
9.2 Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper explaining how the rights and freedoms of Canadians are closely related to the responsibilities of Canadians. Use specific examples of Canadian rights and freedoms, and consider various points of view.	Social, Cultural, and Historical Unit: Conflicts, Challenges, Issues, and Choices – Doing the Right Thing

Grade 9 Level 4

Grade 9 Level 4 Rubric

The message is thoughtful, compelling, and supported by interesting details. Precise and purposeful register and tone are established through skillful use of language. The introduction, body, and conclusion are well-connected and thought-provoking. Transitions effectively connect ideas. Word choices are varied and sentence structures are refined. There are few errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Prompt 9.1 The word “survival” literally means “to live.” Does living mean more than having enough food and adequate shelter? Explain how and why it is important to do more than simply “survive.”

Sample 9.4.1

Survival Without Living

What is the true meaning of life? Life can mean two things, survival and living. These two things may seem very similar when you hear them, but the truth is they have very different meanings. Survival does not mean living. Living is much more than just being able to keep themselves alive. Survival without living means nothing. The question here is why? Why is this so important? Why are these two meanings so different from each other? I am going to go further into depth with the questions that may go through someone’s head when they read that survival without living means nothing.

The meaning to survive is to keep oneself alive. It is to keep blood moving through one’s body and keeping one’s heart from stopping. It is consuming enough food and water to stay alive. It is staying safe from harm and sickness. Survival is simply the ability to breathe. Yes, survival is important but what is the point of survival if you’re not living? To understand this, you need to know survival compared to living.

Living is an essential part of life. Living is using your abilities to do something and making a difference whether that be impacting someone else’s life or taking your abilities to create incredible things. Living is trying to find happiness in the best possible way. It is travelling, creating memories, helping one another, experiencing life, challenging one’s abilities, and most of all living is not taking your days of survival for granted. The significance of this is to compare survival and living.

I have experienced these two forms of life and I know that my life wasn’t even a life when all I was doing was surviving. When I had been struggling with a mental illness known as anorexia, all I was ever focused on was that. I didn’t care about life at the time. I wasted three years of my life because all I was doing was surviving. Even though my brain was working, my heart was functioning, I still never enjoyed my life. I isolated myself from everyone I loved, I felt numb, lost interest in activities I used to love, and I was never happy. After receiving help, I have never felt more alive. I have never felt true meaning until I started to truly live. Living is important because without it, life is boring, numb, and doesn’t have meaning.

In conclusion, living is important. Survival without living means nothing. If all you’re doing is surviving, you’re not fulfilling life’s greatest potentials. Imagine if everyone were just a bunch of breathing creatures that ate, slept and did the things they could to only keep oneself alive. The truth is our world would be boring, lonely and depressing and that is why life shouldn’t just mean survival, there

is a purpose to life and that is for us to live. Don't take life for granted. Do the things you love, love the things you have while you have them, make friends and be kind because one of these days, it will be gone. Don't just survive, live your life to the fullest every day possible.

Rationale:

This is a thought-provoking and compelling response. The student has organized the response well, moving from the general to the specific. The personal experience described in this response accents the thesis. The reader is drawn into the text.

The student has been able to manage a challenging prompt, delineating the difference between survival and living and elaborating on that difference throughout the response. The student has employed a variety of sentence structures and has few errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Sample 9.4.2

Prompt 9.1 The word "survival" literally means "to live." Does living mean more than having enough food and adequate shelter? Explain how and why it is important to do more than simply "survive."

The word "survival" literally means "to live." I believe that living means more than just having enough food and adequate shelter. I believe in order to be truly living you need to have many things.

The first thing that you need to live, is having relationships with other people. This is important because without these relationships you would never be able to grow as a person. Another reason is without these relationships, you would never feel emotions and know the right response to each emotion. Finally, it would be a very lonely life without other people in it.

The next thing I think you need to be living are goals and ambitions. This is important because without having things to strive for, you end up doing nothing with your life. This can lead to things like depression. Without having goals and ambitions you will never be able to find where you belong in life.

The final thing I believe you need is a strong beliefs system and values. These are very important because they teach you how to properly interact with people. They also teach you the rules of society, and without them you could find yourself in a lot of trouble with the law. They also help you meet the people who have the same belief system as you, these people would probably be your best friends and family.

In conclusion, I believe that you need relationships, goals, ambitions, a strong belief system and strong values in order to be living. Without these you are just surviving and living a life without purpose.

Rationale:

This response is thoughtful and well-organized. The reader knows what to anticipate from the opening paragraph. The writer then skillfully meets that anticipation in the three paragraphs of the body of the paper, which follow through on the plan outlined in the first paragraph. The final paragraph effectively rounds out the comments made in the response. The student has presented ideas clearly, employing refined and varied sentence structures. This student understands "register," and as a result develops a mature and thoughtful text.

Grade 9 Level 3

Grade 9 Level 3 Rubric

The message is straightforward, using the appropriate register, and the message is supported with details, examples, and explanations. The writing is coherent and contains a strong introduction, transitions, and an effective conclusion. Word choices and sentence structures are varied. Errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar do not interfere with meaning.

Sample 9.3.1

Prompt 9.1 The word “survival” literally means “to live.” Does living mean more than having enough food and adequate shelter? Explain how and why it is important to do more than simply “survive.”

Today people want to live instead of simply surviving. We want more than just food, shelter and clothing. People want to have things so they can be happy. Today we seem to be more concerned about making sure we are living above standards than worrying about surviving.

Animals are all about surviving. Other than pets, animals every day have the goal to make sure they are fed and a place to sleep. They do have some enjoyment, but that’s not what they live for. Humans live while surviving. They accomplish things that need to be accomplished. Humans do what they want to do while living because they don’t all ways have to survive if they don’t want to.

We do more than eat, sleep and go bathroom. People do activities, play with friends and family and do things that make them happy. We do what we want to do while we live, whether it’s skydiving or go hunting. People work jobs so they can afford, not only to survive, but to live the life they’ve always wanted.

We can create a lot of things with our imagination. People express their feelings through the arts and through music and through writings. We know that there is more to life than just surviving. Life is more than just about being fed and has more to with feeling fulfilled.

Living versus surviving is what separates the humans from the animals. People want to live while surviving. With our time on earth we want to enjoy things. It’s a neat thing to see people living and enjoying all the things this world has to offer. I am glad that I am a person that can live and not only survive.

Rationale:

The contrast between animal survival and human “living” is clear, even though the introductory paragraph is somewhat disjointed and difficult to follow. The absence of transitions weakens the effectiveness of supporting points. The text is generally straightforward, although coherence is sometimes a concern and the message occasionally is obscured. The student has adopted an appropriate register and has clearly presented the difference between the lives of animals and humans.

Sample 9.3.2

Prompt 9.1 The word “survival” literally means “to live.” Does living mean more than having enough food and adequate shelter? Explain how and why it is important to do more than simply “survive.”

The word “survival” literally means “to live.” Does living mean more than having enough food and adequate shelter? Yes it does, having enough food and an adequate shelter is just the bare minimum. If you want to live your life, truly live it then there is so much more to it than the minimum. There is a difference between surviving and living and I want to live my life because surviving just isn’t enough for me. I like to think of it as the mountain of life that you need to climb and reach the top of it. Surviving is at the bottom of the mountain and a lot of people will decide to stay at the bottom because they do not want to put in the work for the climb. Others will put in their blood, sweat and tears into the climb to reach the top, to reach living. You will breathe the fresh air and know that you have won.

There is a difference between surviving and living, one is a dream that will come true with hard work and the other is a nightmare that people are settling for which is not right. We were all put on this planet for our purpose and I think our purposes is to live our best life not settle for less than we deserve. Both of them take hard work and perseverance. Living is joyful, exciting and rewarding but climbing a mountain is not easy and you will need to take breaks but during those breaks you must stay strong and be prepared to continue on your journey. Surviving is draining and repetitive the journey is long and there are no rewards it is just the same thing over and over again. The difference between surviving and living is major so the decision on which one you decide to pursue should be simple.

Survival is living off of the minimal life necessities as in; enough food/water and adequate shelter. Nothing to exciting, if you have ever watched the show “Naked and Afraid” then that is what you can compare surviving to. If anything surviving could be a little dangerous at times which is not something I would be interested in, I understand wanting a little thrill every now and then but never a constant battle. I would prefer to thrive then to struggle with an everyday task. Surviving is a challenge without a reward, I think we would all obviously rather work for a reward then to work for another disappointment. We should never have to work harder to receive less then what we deserve and that is what surviving is.

Living is the greatest feeling ever, it’s the feeling you get once you have reached the top of the mountain of life and you breathe in the fresh air of victory, when you know you have succeeded. Climbing up that mountain was so rewarding and so challenging all at the same time because you are constantly getting hit with road blocks. When you hit a road block you are given a choice, you choose whether you want to fall back down to surviving or blast through those challenges. When you push through those road blocks you are showing yourself and the world the kind of person you are. When you reach the top and you look down at the mountain that you have conquered you feel proud and thankful to the mountain that has sculpted you into the person you are today. That is what living, truly living feels like.

Why would you want to live your lowest life when you know how to get to your highest and most fulfilling part of your life? It will not be easy getting to the top especially crushing through the road blocks. The road blocks are what sculpt you to be the person you are once you reach the top of the mountain of life. Road blocks could be anything that goes on in your life as in a relationship, career, and activity anything that happens in life is a road block but without them you may as well just stay at the bottom. You are probably thinking why wouldn’t you just stay at the bottom it is easier down there. It is

easier to an extent, it is so mentally draining to not accomplish anything or feel successful. That is I would choose to live to truly live my life to the fullest. I am going to climb to the top of the mountain of life.

Rationale:

The student has successfully maintained the metaphor throughout the text. At the same time, that metaphor proves problematic as the student fails to provide consistently solid support for the image of being either at the top or bottom of the mountain. The message is fairly straightforward. The punctuation errors do not hinder understanding.

Grade 9 Level 2

The message is limited and inadequately supported. An introduction and conclusion may be present, but rudimentary, and there is limited use of transitions. Sentences structures lack variety and word choice is limited. Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar may interfere with meaning.

Sample 9.2.1

Prompt 9.1 The word “survival” literally means “to live.” Does living mean more than having enough food and adequate shelter? Explain how and why it is important to do more than simply “survive.”

What do you think it means to “survive”?

The definition of “survive” means “to live.” When I hear the word survive, I think of having just enough. Just enough food, just enough water, and just enough shelter. Is surviving how we are suppose to live? Are we suppose to go through life having just enough, and nothing more?

I think living is anonymas to surviving. Living is doing the best you can through everything. Living is reaching your full potencial and continuing to be better. Living is having more than just enough. Do you live or survive?

A wise person once told me “If you aim for failure you’ll hit every time.” Surviving is having just enough, and being fine with it. Surviving might be a good way not to die, but is it a good way to live? Living is striving to be better. You should ask yourself this “Am I proud of where I am?”

I think a person with a life well lived, is a person who has lived right. A survivor might look strong, but in reality, they are scared to reach further. Do you want to live or survive? Do you want to stay where you are with no change?

Change is good.

Rationale:

The message is limited and disorganized. Sentences structures show lack of variety, and work choice is limited. The conclusion is abrupt.

Sample 9.2.2

Prompt 9.1 The word “survival” literally means “to live.” Does living mean more than having enough food and adequate shelter? Explain how and why it is important to do more than simply “survive.”

Survival

Though the literal meaning of the word “survival” is “to live,” humans shouldn’t just survive literally, rather they should survive in the common means “live happily.” It is important that humans realize their value, live happily, work, find their passion etc. If we just lived for food and had a roof over our head, did nothing else, life would be dull. So many inventions and facilities wouldn’t exist. So many things would remain unknown and unexplored. There wouldn’t be scientists, mathematicians nor artists. Around 7.7 billion people live in the earth today, however, if we just “survived” (by the literal meaning) then there would hardly be 5 million people alive. People would live in huts rather than in proper houses and apartments. Fire torches would replace the beautiful lights and lamps. We wouldn’t be wearing such nice clothes, rather we would be wrapped up in leaves, since fabric wouldn’t have been discovered by the people that are too busy surviving. Everyone would be illiterate. no schools would exist. Even the food wouldn’t be so good, only raw fruits and veggies. Life would be reasonless. There are a few positives about this too though they are overpowered by negatives. There would be no pollution, global warming or greenhouse gases. The extinct animals we’d love to see, would more likely not have died out. But what would we do if we had a couple of good things and a billion bad things? Who’d enjoy the one two things? No one would! Because then happiness wouldn’t exist either! Thank goodness we are surviving properly, or else you wouldn’t be reading this right now!

Rationale:

The message is limited and inadequately supported. The lack of organization significantly detracts from the message. There is a rudimentary introduction and conclusion. Diction is limited.

Sample 9.2.3

Prompt 9.2 Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper explaining how the rights and freedoms of Canadians are closely related to the responsibilities of Canadians. Use specific examples of Canadian rights and freedoms, and consider various points of view.

Dear Editor,

I am writing this letter to explain what responsibilities come with Canadian's rights and freedoms. For the first example, we have our own rights and freedoms, and because of this we have the responsibilities to respect each others rights and freedoms. Also, we have freedom but there is limitations. We have to respect Canada's laws. We also have language rights, so with these rights we have responsibilities to respect the languages of other people. And lastly, although we have freedom for ourselves and our family we have the responsibility to protect them and ourselves.

Rationale:

The text has an introduction, but lacks a conclusion. While there are three basic supporting details, the message is still limited. There is quite a bit of repetition between stating the right and its corresponding responsibilities (e.g., stating the "we have our own right and freedoms" and then suggesting that "we have the responsibilities to respect each others (sic) rights and freedoms").

Grade 9 Level 1

The message is unclear and/or vague. The introduction and conclusion are unrelated to the main idea. The text lacks coherence and unity. Word choices are ineffective and sentences are simple or incomplete. Incorrect spelling, grammar, and punctuation interfere with meaning.

Sample 9.1.1

Prompt 9.1 The word “survival” literally means “to live.” Does living mean more than having enough food and adequate shelter? Explain how and why it is important to do more than simply “survive.”

I think its important to do more than just survive for multipul reasons. To me survive would mean to just do enough to live like if your rich in a home you will be lazy and watch tv which will just be enough to live but if your stranded on an island they will do enough to get by and live. I think life is to do more and go above and bieond with your work and go teach people what they might not know. its always alright to go on a little vacation or a little nap to stay on topice with going out in life and enjoy it while you have the chance because people be lazy and doesn't do anything while they have the chance to do abunch of things and doesn't care about life.

Rationale:

The message is unclear and lacks coherence and unity. More supporting details regarding the differences between living and surviving are required. The errors interfere with meaning.

Sample 9.1.2

Prompt 9.1 The word “survival” literally means “to live.” Does living mean more than having enough food and adequate shelter? Explain how and why it is important to do more than simply “survive.”

Why would anyone want to just survive when you could prosper? No person I know would want to get by with just enough. Instead, they would want more than enough. I wouldn't want to live just getting by without anything but food and shelter. This is why I don't believe anyone would want to just survive.

Rationale:

The text lacks details and explanation, leaving the message vague and undeveloped. There is an introduction and a conclusion, but no supporting content. The message is ineffective.

Sample 9.1.3

Prompt 9.1 The word “survival” literally means “to live.” Does living mean more than having enough food and adequate shelter? Explain how and why it is important to do more than simply “survive.”

First of all you must have basic knowledge of how to survive. You can start off with looking for shelter or food or water. My personal preference is shelter because I think shelter takes the most time out of all of them. Why you may ask? because you have to look for a source of food as well as a source of water, it helps a lot with your survival if you are close to each of them, because you will waste way less energy if they are in a short walking distance because you will have energy to make stuff to help with your survival, so you can then make a S.O.S. signal by a fire which produces smoke that they can now see, do that daily until you get rescued. Never ever lose hope if you want to get rescued think positive thoughts.

Rationale:

The message is unclear. The student has not addressed the prompt. The ideas lack coherence and the word choice is ineffective. The response begins abruptly and an introduction absent. There are errors in sentence structure and punctuation.

Sample 9.1.4

Prompt 9.2 Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper explaining how the rights and freedoms of Canadians are closely related to the responsibilities of Canadians. Use specific examples of Canadian rights and freedoms, and consider various points of view.

Dear Editor of Newspaper,

There are many rights that we have and can be taken away from us if we don't do our part. Our part is to pay our taxes and by paying our taxes we have health care and other things but if you don't pay your taxes you can go to jail or get rights taken away wich won't be good. The rights that can be taken away are health care you will have to pay more and have to pay more in things like edication so I think taxes are good.

Rationale:

The student has focused on one responsibility Canadians have, that of paying taxes. The introduction and conclusion are not related. Few facts or details are presented. Word choices are repetitive and simple.