



THE ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL LITERACY TEST



Reading

These are the types of selections you will read on the OSSLT. They are divided into three categories:

- Informational
- Graphic
- Narrative

You will be asked to read and answer:

- multiple choice questions
- open response questions

on a variety of fiction and non-fiction passages.



Each test is made up of one of each of the following types of passages:

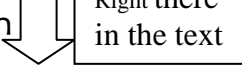
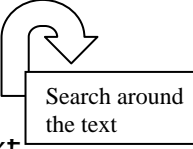
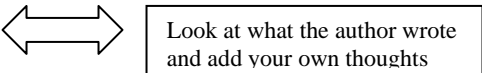
- Information paragraph** → content gives information and ideas on a topic
- News Report** → content takes the form of a news story
- Dialogue** → content is focused around a conversation between two or more people
- Real-Life Narrative** → content focuses on an important time or occurrence in an individual's life
- Graphic selection** → content is provided through charts, graphs, tables, sketches, diagrams, photographs, etc.

So, how many of each type are on the test?

- 31 multiple choice questions related to the 5 reading selections
- 4 open response questions related to the 5 reading selections

Type of Passage	Number of Questions
Information Paragraph	6 multiple choice 1 open response
News Report	5 multiple choice 1 open response
Dialogue	5 multiple choice 2 open response
Narrative	9 multiple choice
Graphic Selection	6 multiple choice

Three Reading Skills

- Understanding **explicitly** (directly) stated ideas and information 
- Understanding **implicitly** (indirectly) stated ideas and information 
- Making connections** between the information and ideas in the text and your personal knowledge and experience 

How do I make sense of what I read?

1. Preview

- a. Look at headings, titles, graphs, charts, captions
- b. What do they all have in common?

2. Use your prior knowledge

- a. You will understand more if you think actively while reading so make connection between what you know and what you read by asking questions like:
 - i. What does this story remind me of?
 - ii. What do I already know about this topic?
 - iii. Does this remind me of any other stories I've read before?
 - iv. Is there something in this text that is similar to something I already know?

3. Predict and Question

- Before you start reading ask:**
 - a. "I wonder what this selection will say about
 - b. Predict what the story will be about, perhaps based on its title
- During Reading**
 - o Stop and predict what will happen next
- After Reading**
 - o Ask yourself if your predictions were correct. If they were not, think about why.



4. Establish a Purpose for Reading

- a. This is your **GPS** → it keeps you on track so you don't get lost. Are you reading for research? To answer questions for an assignment? To locate an address? To get instructions? To escape into a novel? Different purposes require different types and degrees of engagement with the text.

5. Monitor for Meaning

- a. Check your understanding of what you read by asking
 - i. Do I understand what I just read?
 - ii. What is happening in the story?
 - iii. How do the key ideas and details connect?
 - iv. Who? What? When? Where? Why?

6. Visualize

- a. Make pictures in your mind of what's happening in your reading; it helps you remember information and can deepen your understanding of the text.



7. Infer (make an educated guess about the text)

- a. Look at diagrams, pictures, or maps or any other information in the text
- b. Combine your background knowledge and experience with the information in the text to create meaning BEYOND what is directly stated in the text. You might make conclusions, predictions or make new ideas
- c. Ask yourself:
 - i. Why did I think this would happen?
 - ii. What do I think this story (article, text) is about?
 - iii. How do I think that character feels?
 - iv. How do I know this?
 - v. What is the writer actually saying? Why might s/he be saying that?

8. Figure out what's most important

- a. **Before reading:** think about what you already know about the topic and what you want to find out
- b. **During Reading:** Look for clues in the transition words (*first and foremost, most importantly, etc.*). Check the first and last lines of a paragraph, the title, headings and subheadings (if there are any), font size, font style (underlined, *italicized* or **bolded** text).
- c. **After reading:** think about the key ideas you learned.

9. Synthesize → put it all together by asking these questions:

- a. What was the author's purpose for writing this piece?
- b. What is the main idea of this story?
- c. What clues helped me to determine the main idea?
- d. How do the different parts of the piece connect?
- e. How has my thinking changed after reading this piece?
- f. What could be a new title for this piece?

Helping you Understand what you Read

If you come across something that's difficult to understand, try one or more of these strategies:

- Reread:** Sometimes a second reading is all you need to work it out
- Skip Ahead:** Sometimes, it's best to keep going. There may be information ahead that can help you understand the section you're having trouble with. You can always go back and reread the difficult section later.
- Context clues:** use familiar words surrounding an unfamiliar word to help you determine the meaning of the word you don't know
- Picture clues:** use information from pictures and other graphic text to help
- Ask for help:** when you've tried these strategies and still are stuck, ask a teacher, parent, classmate, or sibling

