

**SCALES
OF COMPETENCY LEVELS**

SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION
CYCLE TWO

**English
Language Arts**

Third Edition
Secondary III, IV and V

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Foreword

The scales of competency levels presented in this document constitute the official reference points that form the basis of the student competency reports that teachers must prepare in Secondary Cycle Two. Part I of this document is intended to provide additional information on the nature of these instruments and how they are meant to be used. The scales for each subject are then presented in Part II.

It should be noted that this third edition contains the scales for Secondary III, IV and V, and replaces the earlier editions, published in 2007 and 2008, of the scales of competency levels for Secondary Cycle Two.

Part I: Introduction

Introduction

An Official Tool for All Teachers

The scales of competency levels were designed to enable teachers to determine the competency levels attained by students at the end of each year in Secondary Cycle Two, and their use is prescribed by the Basic school regulation (section 30.1).

A Uniform Model for All Subjects

To ensure that the scales for all subjects have the same format, a model composed of five competency levels was selected. Table 1 outlines the general model that served as the basis for defining the competency levels for all the subjects, at both the elementary and secondary levels.

Outline of the scales of competency levels

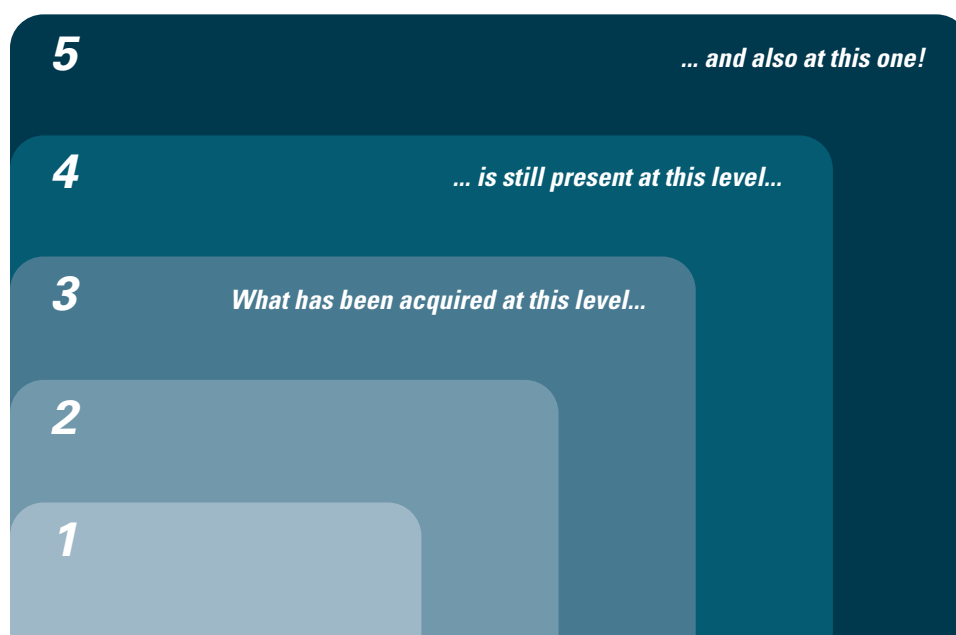
LEVEL	COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT	MOBILIZATION OF RESOURCES*
5	ADVANCED	The student effectively mobilizes the full range of resources: he/she performs the tasks in a remarkable manner.
4	THOROUGH	The student mobilizes the full range of resources: he/she performs the tasks correctly.
3	ACCEPTABLE	The student mobilizes the main resources: he/she performs the basic tasks.
2	PARTIAL	The student mobilizes some of the resources, with guidance: he/she has trouble performing the tasks.
1	MINIMAL	The student mobilizes few resources: he/she partially performs the tasks or performs them with constant help.

* Resources: the *Program Content* section of each subject-specific program “describes the learning essential for the development and exercise of the competency. . . . It includes learning related to concepts, methods, strategies, processes, techniques and attitudes.” (See *Québec Education Program, Secondary Cycle Two*, chapter 4, p. 28.)

The description of each competency level is consistent with the content of the Québec Education Program, but is not a literal reiteration of that content. It is not a matter of defining learning objectives, but of proposing reference points that can be used as a guide in making an assessment with respect to the student’s level of competency development at the end of each year of Secondary Cycle Two.

In general, each level describes concrete achievements that are typical for the students who have attained them. When viewed in its entirety, each description implies that some choices had to be made so that only certain aspects, typical of that competency level, were retained. The purpose of this description is to provide a succinct picture of the competency level, not to propose an exhaustive list of the elements to be verified. The competency level descriptions appear in the form of structured paragraphs and these profiles pertain as much to the processes or procedures adopted by the student as they do to the results he or she finally achieves.

It should be noted that the levels progressively subsume each other. In other words, an aspect of a competency deemed to have been acquired at a given competency level is presumed to have been acquired at the superior levels.



The Distinctive Feature of Level 1

The wide range of observable behaviours possible for a competency exhibiting minimal development makes it difficult to draw up a typical profile for level 1. In fact, competency level 1 is attributed to students who have not attained level 2. Thus the description of level 1 is often brief and usually mentions that the student needs ongoing support to successfully carry out the tasks assigned to him or her.

Cross-Curricular Competencies

The descriptions contained in the scales for the various subjects take the cross-curricular competencies into account, since their development is closely linked to that of the subject-specific competencies. The presence of elements associated with cross-curricular competencies, particularly at the higher levels of the scales for each subject, indicates their importance for students' educational success and highlights the fact that they must be specifically targeted by planned learning and evaluation situations.

Particular Features of the Scales for Secondary Cycle Two

While the scales of competency levels for Secondary Cycle Two are an extension of those for Secondary Cycle One, they have their own particular features, since a competency report must be prepared at the end of each year. In this context, under the heading *Development of the Competency*, the Québec Education Program provides guidelines for planning the learning and evaluation to be carried out each year, for each competency. The introduction to each scale restates elements of these guidelines, highlighting those that have an impact on the preparation of the competency report.

Use of the Scales

The competency report is not the result of some mathematical calculation made on the basis of results recorded during the cycle; it is, rather, an assessment of the level of competency a student has attained, that is, of the student's ability to effectively draw on and use the resources specified in the Québec Education Program (concepts, methods, strategies, processes, techniques, attitudes). Analysis of the observations made makes it possible to obtain a portrait of the student's competency development and to match it with one of the levels on the scale. Keep in mind that this is a global assessment and that the scales are not designed for analytical use. Teachers should not, therefore, carry out a point-by-point comparison of the statements for a given level with the recorded data.

Since the descriptions contained in the scales are relatively short, they cannot specify all the aspects that must be taken into account in making an assessment of competency development. Different evaluation tools (e.g. rubrics, checklists) are therefore needed to gather more specific, complete information in order to give students feedback during the learning process and to provide a foundation for teachers' assessments. Since these are based on relevant and sufficient records attesting to the levels attained, it is important that teachers keep such records so that they can refer to them as needed.

It is therefore important that students who are at risk of not progressing beyond the lower levels of the scale (1 and 2) be identified as early as possible, and given appropriate support. A pedagogical diagnosis and proposals for support measures could be provided along with the competency report in such a case (for example, within an individualized education plan).

In the interests of greater transparency, teachers are encouraged to familiarize the students and their parents with the scales, to ensure that they understand the competency level descriptions and the manner in which they will be used.

MAIN PRACTICES TO BE ESTABLISHED FOR PREPARING COMPETENCY REPORTS

- Provide the students with frequent and varied opportunities to demonstrate their competencies.
- Explain the scales and their purpose to students and parents.
- Keep relevant and sufficient records of student learning.
- Make a general association between a student's competency and one of the levels on the scale, without carrying out a point-by-point comparison between the observations made and each of the statements for a level.
- Where called for, report more detailed information for certain students (e.g. those with an individualized education plan).

Part II: The Scales

English Language Arts

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Competency 1: Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn

At the end of each year of Secondary Cycle Two, the teacher must prepare competency reports by determining the competency levels attained by students. Throughout the cycle, the teacher presents students with a variety of learning and evaluation situations that enable them to demonstrate their competency in using language/talk to communicate and to learn, in accordance with the requirements of the Québec Education Program and, more specifically, with the guidelines under the heading Development of the Competency.

On a regular basis, classroom conditions should allow students to do the following:

- show evidence and use of spoken English and application of strategies in their integrated literacy profiles, along with samples of reflection and critical judgment
- work in integrated language arts activities and learning and evaluation situations that are designed to address aspects of the Talk, Reading and Production competencies
- read and listen to spoken, written and media texts, as well as multigenre and multimodal texts written for young adults
- produce spoken, written and media texts, as well as multigenre and multimodal texts
- read texts that reflect personal interests and preferences, along with those intended to expand experiences and thinking

In Secondary III, the teacher presents situations that, among other things, enable students to do the following:

- explore the affordances (possibilities or distinctive potential) of genres in the contexts of reading and production
- use talk to explain, report, argue, debate and persuade
- adjust register as required for purpose and audience
- negotiate and collaborate with peers
- ask questions to clarify meaning
- use inquiry to research a topic to persuade a familiar audience
- evaluate own performance when working in groups

In Secondary IV, the teacher presents situations that, among other things, enable students to do the following:

- compare and contrast affordances of genres in the contexts of reading and production
- adapt known organizational strategies to structure genres
- adjust register as required for chosen genre
- use collaborative talk to construct communal knowledge
- listen to and offer feedback in collaborative situations
- participate actively in negotiating and determining responsibilities in group research tasks
- evaluate own and group's performance

In Secondary V, the teacher presents situations that, among other things, enable students to do the following:

- evaluate differences in affordances (possibilities or distinctive potential) of genres in the contexts of reading and production
- explore personal, cultural, political and social issues
- use conventions of genre
- refer to a variety of sources when researching
- extract essential ideas from spoken texts
- choose a range of issues to undertake action research
- evaluate own and team's performance

Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn

5

Advanced competency development

Considers audience and uses appropriate register, as needed. Assumes various stances, points of view and/or roles, when necessary. Extends ideas through talk by active listening in shared conversations. Promotes purposeful and constructive direction for talk by encouraging participants or by offering feedback. Uses specialized language in a variety of situations. Engages in inquiry to probe, question and provoke thought while working on group projects. Examines and justifies sources to ensure reliability. Justifies stance and position by defending interpretation or production decisions. Employs a variety of strategies to disagree constructively. Reflects insightfully on own learning and progress, and sets attainable goals during conferences.

4

Thorough competency development

Uses appropriate vocabulary to communicate meaning to a specific audience. Asks focused questions to enhance learning. Uses talk to express and defend a specific point of view. Organizes material to effectively communicate a spoken message. Focuses talk to address a specific inquiry or problem when working in groups. Detects instances of bias in spoken text. Applies communication and language conventions in conjunction with audience and purpose. Negotiates and constructs meaning through talk. Defends own perspective and/or production processes with evidence. Collaborates verbally and assumes roles and responsibilities when working in groups. Discusses own learning based on personal goals. Offers and uses feedback to encourage and extend personal and group thinking.

3

Acceptable competency development

Employs talk in a variety of situations to suit a range of audiences and purposes. Engages in a variety of spoken activities, such as discussions, plans, sharing research, speeches, improvisations, etc. Demonstrates basic listening strategies when working in groups and conveys meaning through talk. Uses language to support helpful exchanges. Negotiates within group to understand or produce text. Responds to written and visual texts, using suitable vocabulary while making pertinent connections. Identifies and applies codes and conventions of familiar spoken text. Identifies characteristics of target audience and adjusts language accordingly. Uses basic technical language appropriate to context such as literary terms, media production terms or stage directions. Uses rules, codes and conventions of spoken language suitable to the task. Reflects on own use of talk and sets goals when directed.

2

Partial competency development

Draws on a limited repertoire of strategies to convey meaning in talk exchanges and production. Selects indiscriminately materials related to research topic with a general focus on the chosen topic. Requires teacher's guidance when using basic language conventions suitable to the spoken text. Shares ideas with the group when encouraged. Contributes general and superficial information to the research and discussion. Follows group decisions without question. Uses simple or inaccurate vocabulary when communicating ideas. Reacts to others' work by voicing general opinions. Responds using limited vocabulary, making connections on an affective level. Talks about own learning when invited to do so.

1

Minimal competency development

Participates in spoken production with direct prompting. Prepares and delivers a brief talk to a familiar audience. Proposes unrelated ideas and questions when undertaking research for a personal project. Applies some basic procedures and strategies, with prompting, when working in groups. Shares ideas when challenged. Completes tasks when monitored. Maintains conversations with teacher's supervision and offers opinions when prompted. Reflects on own learning when asked direct, specific, short questions.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Competency 2: Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts

At the end of each year of Secondary Cycle Two, the teacher must prepare competency reports after determining the competency levels attained by students. Throughout the cycle, the teacher presents students with a variety of learning and evaluation situations that enable them to demonstrate their competency in reading and listening to written, spoken and media texts, in accordance with the requirements of the Québec Education Program and, more specifically, with the guidelines under the heading Development of the Competency.

On a regular basis, classroom conditions should allow students to do the following:

- show evidence of interpretation of texts, reflection and critical judgment in their integrated literacy profiles
- work in integrated language arts activities and learning and evaluation situations that are designed to address aspects of the Talk, Reading and Production competencies
- read and listen to spoken, written and media texts, as well as multigenre and multimodal texts written for young adults
- produce spoken, written and media texts, as well as multigenre and multimodal texts
- read texts that reflect personal interests and preferences, along with those intended to expand experiences and thinking

In Secondary III, the teacher presents situations that, among other things, enable students to do the following:

- interpret texts and substantiate ideas
- make connections between and among varied texts
- explore and respond to varied texts and substantiate opinions and ideas
- use an inquiry process and information-gathering strategies
- consider audience and purpose of texts
- maintain an integrated literacy profile
- self-assess own development as readers

In Secondary IV, the teacher presents situations that, among other things, enable students to do the following:

- interpret texts and offer more than one interpretation of a text
- transfer insights gained from reading to the other competencies of talk and production
- accommodate different viewpoints and new perspectives
- determine how readers are situated or positioned by a text
- develop questions to frame critical reasoning
- maintain an integrated literacy profile
- self-assess own development as readers

In Secondary V, the teacher presents situations that, among other things, enable students to do the following:

- determine a view of the world depicted in texts and its impact on self as reader
- argue and persuade in support of ideas from texts
- consider the sociocultural contexts of texts
- determine the characteristics of open and closed texts
- examine how the characteristics of readers determine decisions made by writers/producers
- use critical judgment when selecting, organizing and presenting information
- consolidate integrated literacy profile
- self-assess own development as readers

Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts

5

Advanced competency development

Analyzes and extends meaning of written and media texts. Discusses alternate points of view about an issue presented through texts. Examines universal issues and reflects on aspects of the human condition addressed in different genres. Communicates an understanding of how text can serve social and political purposes. Explains bias and propaganda in texts. Synthesizes ideas when researching opposing views related to issues under discussion. Responds to texts with a world-view. Interrelates the elements and techniques of texts to support understanding and interpretation. Analyzes and interprets structures, codes and conventions of unfamiliar texts, and notes the organization of the texts. Uses teacher-student conferences to articulate awareness of self as a reader and to set goals. Reflects on autonomy as a reader.

4

Thorough competency development

Interprets meanings embedded in text. Elaborates meaning with textual details. Compares texts and synthesizes related ideas to extend understanding and interpretation. Supports ideas through specific quotations from the text when responding. Expresses meaningful connections between own experience and text. Detects instances of author's bias and stereotyping in texts. Communicates understanding of processes and strategies of own reading development. Considers feedback when setting goals and choosing texts.

3

Acceptable competency development

Adjusts own stance (perspective, viewpoint) in getting at meaning when reading a variety of genres. Demonstrates how the purpose for reading affects the stances taken by the reader. Constructs personal interpretations of texts, justifying opinions. Articulates inferred ideas in texts and clarifies meanings through discussion by going beyond an initial response and offering an explanation. Makes sense of a text in light of purpose and meaning, and cause and effect. Recognizes obvious bias in familiar texts. Applies and explains reliable strategies for working with different genres. Uses teacher-student conferences and reflections to describe self as reader and to explain rationale for choices made when selecting texts for reading.

2

Partial competency development

Understands written and media texts at a literal level. Chooses texts based on visual images, size of font, preferred author or subject matter. Locates supporting information in text with prompting (e.g. will refer to a table, graph, headline, etc., that elaborates on the text, when directed). Draws obvious connections from the text to self or to other texts. Recognizes basic differences among genres through comparison. Articulates the basic purpose for the creation of a text when prompted. Participates in teacher-student conferences when invited to discuss own learning or reading profile.

1

Minimal competency development

Retells the events sequentially when asked. Demonstrates a general understanding of text when questioned. Identifies obvious features, codes and conventions of familiar texts. Makes simple or literal connections to personal experiences when responding to texts. Focuses on unimportant or secondary events in a text. Makes superficial comparisons between one text and another with teacher prompting. Selects reading materials with assistance. Discusses reading habits, focusing on preferences when questioned.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Competency 3: Produces texts for personal and social purposes

At the end of each year of Secondary Cycle Two, the teacher must prepare competency reports after determining the competency levels attained by the students. Throughout the cycle, the teacher presents students with a variety of learning and evaluation situations that enable them to demonstrate their competency in producing texts for personal and social purposes, in accordance with the requirements of the Québec Education Program and, more specifically, with the guidelines under the heading Development of the Competency.

On a regular basis, classroom conditions should allow students to do the following:

- show evidence and use of student-produced written, spoken and media texts in their integrated literacy profiles, along with samples of reflection and critical judgment
- work in integrated language arts activities and learning and evaluation situations that are designed to address aspects of the Talk, Reading and Production competencies
- read and listen to spoken, written and media texts, as well as multigenre and multimodal texts written for young adults
- produce spoken, written and media texts, as well as multigenre and multimodal texts
- read texts that reflect personal interests and preferences, along with those intended to expand experiences and thinking

In Secondary III, the teacher presents situations that, among other things, enable students to do the following:

- produce familiar genres
- select topics of personal and social interest
- explore community and social issues
- identify characteristics of chosen audience
- use appropriate codes and conventions
- assume a personal stance for production
- use revision and editing strategies

In Secondary IV, the teacher presents situations that, among other things, enable students to do the following:

- produce multimodal texts
- select topics of cultural interest
- explore issues from larger social and cultural worlds
- address more distant audiences
- use codes and conventions for special effect
- assume an opposing stance for discussion and viewpoint
- extend revision and editing strategies

In Secondary V, the teacher presents situations that, among other things, enable students to do the following:

- produce multigenre texts
- select topics of political interest
- use mode and genre to shape meaning and influence audience
- address unfamiliar as well as familiar audiences
- manipulate codes and conventions for deliberate effect
- assume a range of stances
- consolidate revision and editing strategies

Produces texts for personal and social purposes

5

Advanced competency development

Analyzes characteristics of target audience and tailors elements and affordances of written texts, media texts, multimodal and multigenre texts to fit the purpose. Demonstrates a meticulous use of language conventions and techniques of both media texts and written texts, consistent with purpose and audience. Enhances organization and coherence of texts through use of transitional devices. Evaluates the reliability of sources of information used in research. Offers for discussion questions arising from research. Provides and applies supportive feedback for written and media productions. Critiques own productions and justifies production decisions. Sets clearly stated attainable goals for improving productions.

4

Thorough competency development

Uses specific characteristics of target audience, such as age, interests and knowledge to craft a production. Uses suitable codes and conventions of form for different written and media texts that clearly meet the intended purpose. Compares and discusses the impact of various forms of texts that cover the same subject when making production decisions. Respects language conventions and media conventions to develop a quality production. Consults a variety of appropriate sources to support production process and revision. Revises productions to better communicate a message and offers supportive feedback to peers for purposes of revision. Evaluates own work with reference to criteria stipulated, such as the use of rubrics. Explains own use of strategies when producing written and media texts. Uses specific characteristics of target audience, such as age, interests and knowledge to craft a production.

3

Acceptable competency development

Identifies target audience and purpose, and frames messages to meet the needs of the target audience. Makes decisions that are appropriate to the writing and/or media production. Uses elements of the production process as required by the context. Writes for a specific audience to inform or to express feelings and opinions. Conveys meaning of a text by means of a media and/or written production such as a slide show, poster, print ad, etc. Demonstrates through revision evidence of research, collaboration and application of feedback suggestions. Employs basic genre requirements and language conventions, and media codes and conventions for media production. Assumes roles and collaborates with peers to produce media and written texts. Shares productions for peer feedback. Evaluates own production and explains choices made in revision process. Approaches conferences with general goals in mind.

2

Partial competency development

Engages in a writing process with support, using a limited repertoire of strategies. Adopts a point of view for a specific audience when prompted. Follows a research process with support from peers and teacher. Works with some elements of writing and/or media in a production. Employs basic conventions of form for written and media productions, attending to purpose and/or target audience. Conveys meaning in spite of problems with structure and/or organization. Uses language conventions in an inconsistent manner. Attempts revisions of own production, when directed, using feedback to correct basic mechanical errors. Explains opinions, with prompting, about media and written texts studied in class. Talks about the production of own written and media texts when prompted with directed questions.

1

Minimal competency development

Requires direct one-on-one support when working with rudimentary elements of writing or media productions. Applies basic processes and strategies, with assistance, when producing texts for a familiar audience. Attempts to follow a model, with sustained support, when working with a new genre. Plans written and media productions in a step-by-step fashion when assisted. Presents initial draft of text or media production as final product. Incorporates teacher's feedback to a limited extent with respect to basic mechanical errors. Expresses unsupported opinions about own or peers' written or media productions.

