

FREE PRINTABLE PRACTICE PACK • 2026–27

OSSLT Practice Test

Four reading selections, 24 reading questions, 12 writing questions and an opinion essay, with a full answer key and explanations.

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Name _____ Date _____

How to use this pack

For students

- Do Part 1 and Part 2 in two sittings, like the real test's two sessions.
- Read each selection before its questions. Go back to the text as often as you need.
- Circle one letter for each question, unless it asks for two answers.
- Write the reading answer and the opinion essay in full sentences. Both are marked as first-draft writing.
- Check your work with the answer key, then read the explanation for every question you missed.

For teachers

- Suggested time: about 60 minutes for Part 1 and about 60 minutes for Part 2.
- The mix of selections and the number of questions follow the blueprint in EQAO's OSSLT framework. The online test also uses question types, like drag and drop, that paper can't show.
- Every answer in the key names the skill it tests, so you can see which skills a class needs to practise.
- Code the essay with the two rubrics on the last pages, or mark it free at litguide.ca/osslt/essay-grader.

What the OSSLT is

The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test is the literacy requirement for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma, usually written in Grade 10. It has two sessions, about 65 and 75 minutes, and students write it online. Results are reported on a scale from 200 to 400, and 300 is a successful result. For dates, results and how each question is marked, see litguide.ca/osslt.

How Part 1 and Part 2 are built

SECTION	SELECTION OR TASK	QUESTIONS
Reading A	Information paragraph	1 to 6
Reading B	News report	7 to 12, including one written answer
Reading C	Dialogue	13 to 17
Reading D	Real-life narrative	18 to 24
Writing	Structure, organization and conventions	25 to 36
Writing	Opinion essay	37

Directions. Read each selection, then answer the questions that follow it. Circle the letter of the best answer unless the question asks for two.

Why Maple Syrup Season Is So Short

Every spring, Ontario's maple syrup producers race against the calendar. The sap that becomes syrup flows well only when the weather swings back and forth across the freezing point, with nights below 0°C and days above it. On cold nights, the tree draws water up from its roots and the pressure inside the trunk drops. When the sun warms the tree the next day, the pressure rises again and pushes sap out through small holes, called taps, that producers drill into the trunk. That pattern usually lasts only four to six weeks in late winter and early spring. Once the nights stay warm and the buds on the branches begin to open, the sap changes and syrup made from it has an unpleasant taste, so the season ends. Timing is not the only challenge. Fresh sap is mostly water, with only about two percent sugar, so producers boil it for hours to remove the water. It takes roughly 40 litres of sap to make a single litre of syrup, which is one reason pure maple syrup costs more than the imitation syrups sold beside it.

QUESTIONS 1 TO 6

- 1** According to the paragraph, when does sap flow well?
 - A** When days and nights are both below freezing
 - B** When the buds on the branches begin to open
 - C** When nights are below freezing and days are above freezing
 - D** When the trees have just been tapped for the first time
- 2** Why do producers boil the sap?
 - A** To remove the water
 - B** To keep it from freezing
 - C** To change its colour
 - D** To make the season last longer

3

The phrase “race against the calendar” suggests that producers

- (A) enter syrup-making contests
 - (B) plan their work a year ahead
 - (C) prefer to work in the winter
 - (D) have a limited time to do their work
-

4

Based on the paragraph, why would a warm night in March be bad news for a producer?

- (A) The sap would freeze inside the taps.
 - (B) Without a cold night, the tree would not draw water up, so less sap would flow the next day.
 - (C) The syrup would become cheaper to make.
 - (D) The producer would have to drill new taps.
-

5

Which sentence best states the main idea of the paragraph?

- (A) Pure maple syrup costs more than imitation syrup.
 - (B) Weather and the work of boiling sap make maple syrup season short and demanding.
 - (C) Producers drill small holes called taps into maple trees.
 - (D) Maple buds open in the spring.
-

6

Choose two answers. Which two details help explain why pure maple syrup costs more than imitation syrup?

- (A) Fresh sap is mostly water.
- (B) Taps are small holes drilled into the trunk.
- (C) It takes roughly 40 litres of sap to make one litre of syrup.
- (D) The season takes place in late winter and early spring.

Students Turn Empty Rooftop into Community Garden

HARLOW BAY — A roof that sat empty for twenty years is now covered in tomato plants, herbs and sunflowers, thanks to a group of Grade 10 students at Pinecrest Secondary School.

The project began last fall when student Amira Khan noticed that the school cafeteria bought most of its vegetables from suppliers hundreds of kilometres away. “We have all this space right above our heads,” she said. “It seemed strange not to use it.”

Khan and five classmates spent the winter planning. They measured the roof, researched which plants grow well in containers, and presented their idea to the principal, Daniel Osei. Osei agreed on one condition: an engineer had to confirm that the roof could hold the weight of the soil and water.

The engineer’s report came back in March. The roof could support the garden, but only if the containers were spread out rather than grouped in one corner. The students redesigned their plan using forty small planters instead of ten large ones.

By June, the garden had produced more than 200 kilograms of vegetables. Some went to the cafeteria, and the rest were donated to a local food bank. “People think gardening is just watering plants,” said Grade 10 student Lucas Tremblay. “Most of it is solving problems you didn’t expect.”

The school plans to expand the garden next year and add a rain-collection system so the plants can be watered without using city water. Osei says other schools have already called to ask how the project worked.

“I thought the hardest part would be growing the vegetables,” Khan said. “It turned out the hardest part was convincing everyone it was possible.”

QUESTIONS 7 TO 11

7

What did the engineer’s report say about the roof?

- (A) It could support the garden only if the containers were spread out.
- (B) It could not support a garden.
- (C) It needed a rain-collection system first.
- (D) The planters had to be grouped in one corner.

8

What happened to the vegetables the garden produced?

- (A) They all went to the school cafeteria.
 - (B) They were sold at a farmers' market.
 - (C) Some went to the cafeteria and the rest went to a food bank.
 - (D) The students took them home.
-

9

Why did the students most likely switch from ten large planters to forty small ones?

- (A) Small planters were cheaper to buy.
 - (B) The principal preferred smaller planters.
 - (C) Sunflowers grow only in small containers.
 - (D) Small planters spread the weight across more of the roof.
-

10

In "Osei agreed on one condition," the word condition means

- (A) the state the roof was in
 - (B) something that had to happen first
 - (C) an illness
 - (D) the weather that spring
-

11

Which headline would also fit this news report?

- (A) Principal Rejects Student Garden Plan
- (B) Food Bank Opens at Pinecrest
- (C) Rooftop Garden Grows Food and Problem-Solving Skills
- (D) Engineer Warns Schools About Rooftops

12

Amira Khan says the hardest part was “convincing everyone it was possible.” Explain what this suggests about the project. Use specific details from the news report to support your answer.

Write your answer in full sentences. About 6 to 8 lines is enough.

The Jersey Fund

Nadia and Theo are on the student council. Ms. Ferreira is the council's staff advisor.

- Nadia:** We have one week to raise money for the new team jerseys, and all we've got is a bake sale. Last year's sale made ninety dollars. The jerseys cost six hundred.
- Theo:** So we need a bigger idea. Or a lot more cupcakes.
- Nadia:** I'm serious, Theo.
- Theo:** So am I, sort of. Remember the teachers-versus-students volleyball game last spring? The gym was packed.
- Nadia:** People came to watch, but nobody paid anything.
- Theo:** Because we never asked them to. Two dollars at the door, and the bake sale table right outside the gym.
- Ms. Ferreira:** I like where this is going, but you'll need the gym, and the athletics department has it almost every day after school.
- Nadia:** What about Friday? The teams don't practise on the Friday before a long weekend.
- Ms. Ferreira:** That's true. If you can get six teachers to agree to play by Wednesday, I'll book it.
- Theo:** Six teachers? Mr. Laurent will say yes before I finish asking.
- Nadia:** And I'll ask the culinary class to bake for us. Their muffins sold out first last year.
- Ms. Ferreira:** Then write it all down: who is asking whom, and by when. Good ideas fall apart when nobody owns the next step.
- Nadia:** (opening her notebook) Theo, you're on teachers. I'm on muffins. We meet Wednesday at lunch.
- Theo:** Deal. And Nadia, relax. Ninety dollars was last year.

QUESTIONS 13 TO 17

13 What problem are the students trying to solve?

- ☐ A They need to raise far more money than last year's bake sale made.
 - ☐ B The gym is closed on Fridays.
 - ☐ C The culinary class will not help them.
 - ☐ D Ms. Ferreira does not like bake sales.
-

14 When Theo says "Or a lot more cupcakes," he is most likely

- ☐ A making a joke to show that a bake sale alone will not be enough
 - ☐ B suggesting they only bake
 - ☐ C complaining about having to bake
 - ☐ D placing an order with the culinary class
-

15 Why might Friday work for the event?

- ☐ A Teachers are free on Fridays.
 - ☐ B The culinary class bakes on Fridays.
 - ☐ C The teams don't practise on the Friday before a long weekend.
 - ☐ D The jerseys arrive on Friday.
-

16 Which word best describes Nadia at the beginning of the dialogue?

- ☐ A Bored
 - ☐ B Worried
 - ☐ C Angry
 - ☐ D Confident
-

17 Why does Ms. Ferreira want the plan written down?

- ☐ A To show it to the principal
- ☐ B Because Nadia often forgets things
- ☐ C To keep track of the money raised
- ☐ D So each next step has someone responsible for it

The Wrong Cake

On my third Saturday at Rossi's Bakery, I wrote the wrong name on a birthday cake.

It was a busy morning. The line stretched past the bread shelves, the phone kept ringing, and Mrs. Rossi was in the back pulling trays out of the oven. When a man called to order a chocolate cake for his daughter, I wrote the details on an order slip while handing change to another customer. "Happy Birthday, Mia," I wrote. Or I thought I did.

At two o'clock, the man came back for the cake. He looked at it for a long moment. "Her name is Maya," he said quietly. "M-A-Y-A."

My face went hot. I looked at the order slip. There it was in my own handwriting: Mia.

I started to apologize, but Mrs. Rossi was already beside me. She didn't look at me. She looked at the man. "What time is the party?" she asked.

"Four," he said.

"Then you'll have a new cake by three," she said. "No charge."

When he left, I waited for her to be angry. Instead, she handed me a piping bag full of chocolate icing. "You're going to fix this one," she said. "Then you're going to learn how to take an order."

For the next hour, she showed me how to scrape off the old letters and pipe new ones. My first "Maya" looked as if it had been written during an earthquake. The third one was almost straight. After that, she taught me her rule: read every order back to the customer, slowly, before you hang up. "People don't mind waiting ten seconds," she said. "They mind a wrong cake."

The man picked up the new cake at five to three. He smiled when he saw it.

I still work at Rossi's two years later. I read every order back, even the ones for plain bread. And whenever a new employee makes a mistake, I remember that afternoon, and I hand them a piping bag.

QUESTIONS 18 TO 24

18 What mistake did the narrator make?

- ☐ (A) Charged the customer the wrong price
 - ☐ (B) Wrote the wrong name on the order slip
 - ☐ (C) Forgot to bake the cake
 - ☐ (D) Gave the cake to the wrong customer
-

19 Why did the narrator most likely make the mistake?

- ☐ (A) The narrator was doing two things at once on a busy morning.
 - ☐ (B) The narrator did not know how to spell the name.
 - ☐ (C) The phone line was bad.
 - ☐ (D) Mrs. Rossi gave the narrator the wrong name.
-

20 “My face went hot” suggests that the narrator felt

- ☐ (A) sick
 - ☐ (B) excited
 - ☐ (C) tired
 - ☐ (D) embarrassed
-

21 What does Mrs. Rossi’s first question to the customer show about her?

- ☐ (A) She is angry with the customer.
 - ☐ (B) She wants to charge more for a second cake.
 - ☐ (C) She cares more about fixing the problem than about blaming anyone.
 - ☐ (D) She has forgotten about the party.
-

22 What rule does Mrs. Rossi teach the narrator?

- ☐ (A) Always bake an extra cake on Saturdays.
- ☐ (B) Never take orders over the phone.
- ☐ (C) Read every order back to the customer before hanging up.
- ☐ (D) Let the owner handle every mistake.

23 The first “Maya” “looked as if it had been written during an earthquake.” This means the letters were

- ☐ A cracked
- ☐ B too large
- ☐ C the wrong colour
- ☐ D shaky and uneven

24 Why does the narrator now hand new employees a piping bag when they make a mistake?

- ☐ A To pass on the way Mrs. Rossi helped the narrator learn from a mistake
- ☐ B To punish them
- ☐ C Because every employee must decorate cakes
- ☐ D To test their handwriting

Directions. These questions are about writing: structure, organization, spelling, grammar and punctuation. Circle the letter of the best answer.

- 25 Which sentence is written correctly?
- (A) The team practised all week, they still lost the final game.
 - (B) The team practised all week, but they still lost the final game.
 - (C) The team practised all week but, they still lost the final game.
 - (D) The team practised all week they still lost the final game.
-
- 26 Which word correctly completes the sentence? "The students handed in ____ projects on time."
- (A) there
 - (B) they're
 - (C) there's
 - (D) their
-
- 27 Which is the best topic sentence for a paragraph about keeping the school library open after class?
- (A) Keeping the library open after class would give students a quiet place to study and computers they may not have at home.
 - (B) Libraries have many books.
 - (C) I went to the library yesterday.
 - (D) Some libraries are very old.
-
- 28 Which sentence does not belong in this paragraph? (1) Walking to school has several benefits. (2) It gives students exercise before class begins. (3) It can also reduce traffic near the school in the morning. (4) My cousin's school has a large parking lot. (5) Finally, many students say the walk helps them feel awake.
- (A) Sentence 2
 - (B) Sentence 3
 - (C) Sentence 4
 - (D) Sentence 5

29 Which transition best fills the blank? "The bus was late again this morning. ____, half the class missed the start of the test."

- ☐ (A) For example
 - ☐ (B) As a result
 - ☐ (C) In contrast
 - ☐ (D) On the other hand
-

30 Which sentence uses an apostrophe correctly?

- ☐ (A) The students' lockers were painted over the summer.
 - ☐ (B) The dog wagged it's tail.
 - ☐ (C) The student's were excited about the trip.
 - ☐ (D) Its' raining again.
-

31 What is the best way to combine these sentences? "The storm knocked out the power. We finished our homework by flashlight."

- ☐ (A) The storm knocked out the power, we finished our homework by flashlight.
 - ☐ (B) Because the storm knocked out the power, we finished our homework by flashlight.
 - ☐ (C) The storm knocked out the power because we finished our homework by flashlight.
 - ☐ (D) The storm knocked out the power and, we finished our homework by flashlight.
-

32 Which of these is a complete sentence?

- ☐ (A) Running down the hallway after the bell.
 - ☐ (B) Because the cafeteria was closed.
 - ☐ (C) Which was the reason for the change.
 - ☐ (D) The cafeteria closed early on Friday.
-

33 Which word is spelled correctly?

- ☐ (A) recieve
 - ☐ (B) definately
 - ☐ (C) separate
 - ☐ (D) untill
-

34 What is the best order for these sentences? (1) Then, mix the dry ingredients in a separate bowl. (2) First, beat the eggs and sugar together. (3) Finally, pour the batter into the pan and bake it for 30 minutes. (4) Next, stir the dry ingredients into the egg mixture.

- (A) 2, 1, 4, 3
 - (B) 1, 2, 3, 4
 - (C) 2, 4, 1, 3
 - (D) 4, 2, 1, 3
-

35 Which sentence is correct?

- (A) The list of volunteers are on the office door.
 - (B) The lists of volunteers is on the office door.
 - (C) The list of volunteers is on the office door.
 - (D) The list of volunteers were on the office door.
-

36 Which is the best concluding sentence for a paragraph arguing that students should help plan school events?

- (A) Giving students a voice in planning would make school events better for everyone who attends.
- (B) Events can be fun.
- (C) Some events take place in the gym.
- (D) The last dance was on a Friday.

PROMPT

Some people think teachers should give less homework and more time to practise in class. Others think homework teaches students to work on their own. Should high schools replace most homework with practice time in class?

Write a series of paragraphs that states your opinion and supports it with reasons and specific details.

Checklist

- ☐ States a clear opinion in the first paragraph.
- ☐ Gives two or three reasons, each in its own paragraph, with specific details or examples.
- ☐ Connects every paragraph back to the opinion.
- ☐ Ends with a paragraph that returns to the opinion.
- ☐ Has been reread for spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Use your time

- About 5 minutes to plan your opinion and reasons.
- About 25 minutes to write.
- About 5 minutes to reread and fix errors.

Plan**MY OPINION****REASON 1 AND A SPECIFIC DETAIL****REASON 2 AND A SPECIFIC DETAIL****REASON 3 AND A SPECIFIC DETAIL (OPTIONAL)****HOW I WILL CLOSE**

#	ANSWER	SKILL	WHY
1	C	Stated information	The second sentence says sap flows well “with nights below 0°C and days above it.”
2	A	Stated information	Sap is “mostly water,” so producers “boil it for hours to remove the water.”
3	D	Vocabulary in context	The paragraph explains that sap flows for only four to six weeks, so producers must work within a short window.
4	B	Inference	The paragraph never mentions warm nights directly. It explains that cold nights let the tree draw water up, and the next day’s warmth pushes sap out. Without the cold night, that cycle breaks.
5	B	Main idea	The paragraph covers both the short, weather-dependent season and the long boiling process. The other choices are single details.
6	A, C	Supporting details	Because sap is mostly water, a great deal of it must be boiled down: about 40 litres for one litre of syrup. The other two details don’t explain the cost.
7	A	Stated information	Paragraph 4 says the roof “could support the garden, but only if the containers were spread out rather than grouped in one corner.”
8	C	Stated information	Paragraph 5 says some went to the cafeteria “and the rest were donated to a local food bank.” “They all went to the school cafeteria” is only half of the answer.
9	D	Inference	The engineer required the containers to be spread out, and forty small planters can be spread across the roof in a way ten large ones can’t. Joining those two details is the inference.
10	B	Vocabulary in context	The rest of the sentence explains the condition: an engineer had to confirm the roof was safe before the project could go ahead.
11	C	Main idea	The report covers what the garden produced and the problems the students solved. The other headlines focus on small details or get the facts wrong.
13	A	Stated information	Nadia says last year’s sale made ninety dollars and the jerseys cost six hundred.
14	A	Inference	Selling enough cupcakes to raise six hundred dollars isn’t realistic. His next line admits he is only “sort of” serious, then offers a bigger idea.
15	C	Stated information	Nadia says, “The teams don’t practise on the Friday before a long weekend.”
16	B	Inference	She points out the gap between ninety and six hundred dollars, insists “I’m serious,” and Theo later tells her to relax.
17	D	Purpose	She says good ideas “fall apart when nobody owns the next step.”
18	B	Stated information	The order slip says “Mia,” in the narrator’s own handwriting, but the daughter’s name is Maya.
19	A	Inference	The story describes a long line and a ringing phone, and the narrator wrote the order “while handing change to another customer.”
20	D	Vocabulary in context	It comes right after the narrator sees the mistake in their own handwriting, and just before they start to apologize.
21	C	Inference	She doesn’t look at the narrator. She asks when the party is so she can plan a replacement, then offers it at no charge.
22	C	Stated information	She tells the narrator to “read every order back to the customer, slowly, before you hang up.”

#	ANSWER	SKILL	WHY
23	D	Figurative language	An earthquake shakes everything. The comparison shows the narrator's first try at piping was wobbly; by the third try, it was "almost straight."
24	A	Making connections	Mrs. Rossi responded to the narrator's mistake by teaching instead of blaming. The narrator now does the same for others.
25	B	Sentence structure	Two complete sentences joined by a comma alone, or by nothing at all, make a run-on. A comma before "but" joins them correctly.
26	D	Word choice	"Their" shows that the projects belong to the students.
27	A	Topic sentences	A topic sentence states the main idea the paragraph will support. The others are single details or off topic.
28	C	Organization	Every other sentence names a benefit of walking to school. Sentence 4 is off topic.
29	B	Transitions	Missing the test was caused by the late bus, so the transition needs to show cause and effect.
30	A	Apostrophes	"Students' lockers" shows lockers belonging to more than one student. "It's" means "it is," and plurals like "students" don't take an apostrophe.
31	B	Combining sentences	"Because" shows the real relationship: the storm caused the flashlight homework. Joining with only a comma makes a run-on, one choice reverses the cause, and one puts the comma in the wrong place.
32	D	Complete sentences	"The cafeteria closed early on Friday" has a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought. The others are fragments.
33	C	Spelling	The correct spellings are receive, definitely, separate and until.
34	A	Organization	The signal words give the order: First, Then, Next, Finally.
35	C	Subject-verb agreement	The subject is "list," which is singular, so the verb is "is." "Of volunteers" doesn't change the subject.
36	A	Concluding sentences	A concluding sentence returns to the paragraph's opinion. The others are unrelated details.

Track your skills

Tick each question you got right. The skills with the most misses are the ones to practise first.

SKILL	QUESTIONS	RIGHT
Stated information	1, 2, 7, 8, 13, 15, 18, 22	
Vocabulary in context	3, 10, 20	
Inference	4, 9, 14, 16, 19, 21	
Main idea	5, 11	
Supporting details	6	
Purpose	17	
Figurative language	23	
Making connections	24	
Sentence structure	25	
Word choice	26	
Topic sentences	27	
Organization	28, 34	
Transitions	29	
Apostrophes	30	
Combining sentences	31	
Complete sentences	32	
Spelling	33	
Subject-verb agreement	35	
Concluding sentences	36	

A strong answer includes

- ☐ Answers the question in the first sentence.
- ☐ Uses at least two specific details from the report, such as the principal's condition, the engineer's report or the redesign.
- ☐ Explains how each detail connects to the idea of convincing people.
- ☐ Stays about the report and is written in the student's own words.

SAMPLE ANSWER

It suggests the biggest challenge was getting approval and support, not the gardening itself. The students had to present their plan to the principal, and he agreed only if an engineer confirmed the roof could hold the weight. When the report came back, they had to redesign the plan with forty small planters. Each step meant proving the idea could work before anyone would let them start.

Reading rubric: codes 10 to 30

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 30 | Considerable understanding, with accurate, specific and relevant ideas and information from the reading. |
| 20 | Some understanding, with vague ideas and information from the reading. |
| 10 | Minimal understanding, with minimal or irrelevant ideas and information. |
| 1 | Restates the question, misunderstands the reading, is off topic or is illegible. |

The opinion essay gets two codes: one for topic development and one for conventions. Find the description that fits best. When a response sits between two codes, choose the lower one.

Topic development: codes 10 to 60

- | | |
|----|--|
| 60 | Clear, consistent opinion. Enough specific details, thoughtfully chosen. Ideas progress in a coherent order. |
| 50 | Clear, consistent opinion with enough specific details. Organization is logical. |
| 40 | Clear, consistent opinion with enough details, but only some are specific. Organization is mechanical. |
| 30 | Clear opinion, but details are too few or vague, or not clearly tied to it. Lapses in organization distract. |
| 20 | Only part supports an opinion, or the opinion is unclear or changes. Details are too few or repeated. |
| 10 | Related to the prompt but no opinion, or an opinion with no supporting details. |
| I | Off topic, a restatement of the prompt, a yes or no with no ideas, or illegible. |

Conventions: codes 10 to 40

- | | |
|----|---|
| 40 | Control of spelling, grammar and punctuation is evident. It doesn't have to be perfect. |
| 30 | Errors don't distract from communication. |
| 20 | Errors distract from communication. |
| 10 | Errors interfere with communication, or fewer than 30 words not counting words from the prompt. |
| I | Illegible, or not written in English. |

Plain-language summaries of EQAO's generic rubrics from the OSSLT framework. Codes don't convert into an OSSLT score. The full marking guide is at litguide.ca/rubrics.



NEXT STEP

Get question 37 marked in seconds

Type your opinion essay into the free Litguide essay grader. It gives both rubric codes, shows what is holding the essay back and gives feedback on your first paragraph.

litguide.ca/osslt/essay-grader

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