

BOOKLET

1

March 2011

Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test

SESSION 1

**RELEASED SELECTIONS
AND TEST QUESTIONS**

Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test

Session 1

Read the selection below and answer the questions that follow it.

Teen's Recycling Recipe Bags Award

Landfills are clogged with plastic bags that can take up to 1000 years to decompose. Daniel Burd, a 17-year-old high school student from Waterloo, Ontario, has discovered a way to break down the plastic in a matter of months.

Burd's idea won the top prize of \$10 000 and scholarships at the 2008 Canada-Wide Science Fair in Ottawa.

Burd said his idea literally hit him on the head one day. "Each time I open the closet ... the plastic bags are on the top shelf and they always fall down like an avalanche onto my head." One day he just got tired of it, so he researched what other people are doing with these bags.

Burd discovered that approximately 500 billion plastic bags are used worldwide each year. Many end up in the oceans, where they are ingested by animals that often die as a result.

Burd's hypothesis was that if plastic bags can eventually break down, it should be possible to speed up the process by isolating and concentrating the micro-organism responsible for the decomposition.

To test his hypothesis, Burd took soil samples from the landfill and mixed them with polyethylene (the substance used to make plastic bags) and a solution to encourage bacterial growth. After concentrating the solution and incubating it for 12 weeks, Burd was able to degrade the plastic by 43 percent in six weeks. He figures the bacterial soup would entirely break down plastic bags in three months.

Burd envisions future "recycling stations" acting as large composters for plastic bags. Meantime, he says he hopes to attend a university to study science.



Adapted from "Waterloo student devises bacterial soup that breaks down plastic in matter of months" by Kristine Owrarn, the Canadian Press, July 2, 2008. Reprinted with permission of the Canadian Press. © Photo: *The Waterloo Region Record*/The Canadian Press/David Bebee.

Multiple-Choice (Record the best or most correct answer on the Student Answer Sheet.)

1 Which paragraph describes the event that happened first?

- a paragraph 2
- b paragraph 3
- c paragraph 4
- d paragraph 5

2 What is the meaning of “hypothesis” as used in paragraph 5?

- a a recipe
- b a problem
- c a prediction
- d an experiment

3 What is responsible for the decomposition of plastic bags?

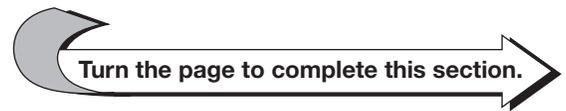
- a bacteria
- b polyethylene
- c additional water
- d large composters

4 What is the purpose of the information inside the parentheses in paragraph 6?

- a It provides an explanation.
- b It refers to another experiment.
- c It presents a step in the experiment.
- d It emphasizes the importance of the problem.

5 Why did Burd’s experiment win the top prize?

- a It could solve a significant problem.
- b Burd plans to study science in university.
- c It encourages people to reduce their use of plastic bags.
- d Burd discovered the bacteria that break down plastic bags.



Written Answer

- 6** Explain how Burd’s project demonstrates the work of a scientist. Use specific details from the selection and your own ideas to support your answer.

Rough Notes

Use the space below for rough notes. Nothing you write in this space will be scored.

End of Section I. Continue to Section II. 

Multiple-Choice (Record the best or most correct answer on the Student Answer Sheet.)

- 1** Choose the option that best combines all the information in the following sentences.

I love basketball.

The Bears are my favourite team.

I hope they win the championship this year.

- a I love basketball, and I hope the Bears win the championship this year.
- b I love basketball and the Bears because I hope they win the championship this year.
- c I love basketball and hope the Bears, my favourite team, win the championship this year.
- d I love basketball, I love the Bears, my favourite team, I hope they win the championship this year.

- 2** Which option tells how to make the following sentence correct?

John Reid, the mayor of Kapuskasing wondered how his city would survive the economic downturn.

- a Capitalize the word “mayor.”
- b Add a comma after “Kapuskasing.”
- c Replace the period with a question mark.
- d Use quotation marks around “how his city would survive the economic downturn.”

- 3** Choose the sentence that is written correctly.

- a The students is going on the bus.
- b Each of the students is going on the bus.
- c Two students and their teacher is going on the bus.
- d All of the students except for Jim is going on the bus.

- 4** Choose the sentence that does **not** belong in the following paragraph.

(1) Eating a variety of nutritious foods is important for good health. **(2)** Fruits and vegetables provide daily vitamins.

(3) Exercise is an important part of healthy living. **(4)** Protein from meat, dairy foods or legumes is needed for muscle growth. **(5)** Fat intake should be limited. **(6)** A proper diet is important.

- a sentence 2
- b sentence 3
- c sentence 4
- d sentence 5

Short Writing Task (Answer in full and correctly written sentences.)

1 What is the best advice you have ever given to someone? Use specific details to explain your answer.

Rough Notes

Use the space below for rough notes. Nothing you write in this space will be scored.

End of Section III. Continue to Section IV. 

Writing a News Report

- 1 Task:** Write a **news report** on the next page based on the headline and picture below.
- You will have to make up the facts and information to answer some or all of the following questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?
 - You must relate your newspaper report to **both** the headline **and** the picture.

Purpose and

Audience: to report on an event for the readers of a newspaper

Length: The lined space provided for your written work indicates the approximate length of the writing expected.

Storm Shuts Down Region



Rough Notes

Use the space below for rough notes. Nothing you write in this space will be scored.

Write your report on the lines provided on the following page.

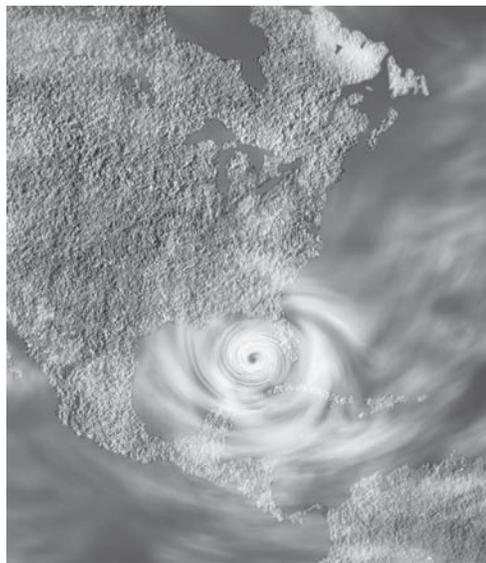
Read the selection below and answer the questions that follow it.

The methods of naming Atlantic basin hurricanes have varied over time, but all have encountered problems. Originally, a hurricane in the West Indies took its name from the particular saint who was celebrated on the day on which it occurred. Confusion arose when there was a recurrence. For example, on September 13, 1876, the day of San Felipe, a hurricane hit Puerto Rico. More than 50 years later, another hurricane struck on the same day. It was named “San Felipe II.” In 1953 the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) adopted the alphabetical system of women’s names, retiring names of significant storms to avoid this duplication. When demands for gender equality arose, the WMO added men’s names in 1979. The male-female-male-female alphabetic naming pattern has continued since then. Twenty-one names are designated for each year, skipping the letters *q*, *u*, *x*, *y* and *z*. Names of major storms such as Hugo and Katrina are retired, and the WMO chooses new names to replace the retired ones. Storm activity increases and decreases in cycles over decades, but today, a new problem has developed. Hurricane activity has increased so much since 1995 that the WMO may need more than 21 names for a season. The 2005 season was the busiest on record, with 26 named storms, including 13 hurricanes. One proposal is to include the Greek alphabet, which adds 24 more names to the WMO roster. This idea is the latest in a series of solutions to the challenge of naming hurricanes.

5

10

15



Multiple-Choice (Record the best or most correct answer on the Student Answer Sheet.)

- 1** In 1979 the method of naming hurricanes changed to respond to
- a the need for more names.
 - b requests for equal treatment.
 - c confusion with repeated names.
 - d a desire to use all letters in the alphabet.
- 2** What factor determines when a hurricane's name is retired?
- a the location of its origin
 - b the time of year it struck
 - c the first letter of its name
 - d the degree of its destruction
- 3** The word "designated" as used in line 10 means
- a assigned.
 - b repeated.
 - c demanded.
 - d eliminated.
- 4** Why are the letters *q*, *u*, *x*, *y* and *z* (line 11) shown in italics?
- a to highlight their importance
 - b to indicate the naming pattern
 - c to distinguish letters from words
 - d to emphasize their unique sounds
- 5** The numbers in lines 15 and 16 emphasize the
- a uncommon names.
 - b pattern of unusual names.
 - c intensity of severe storms.
 - d increasing frequency of storms.
- 6** What is the overall organizational structure of this selection?
- a present to past
 - b general to specific
 - c problem to solution
 - d least to most important



Written Answer

7 State a main idea of this selection and provide one specific detail from the selection that supports it.

Rough Notes

Use the space below for rough notes. Nothing you write in this space will be scored.

**Education Quality and
Accountability Office**



The information in this booklet is being collected under the authority of clause 4 (1) (b) and subsection 9 (6) of the *Education Quality and Accountability Office Act*, 1996, for the purposes of administering and scoring tests of pupils in secondary schools and evaluating the quality and effectiveness of secondary education, in accordance with section 3 of the Act. Inquiries regarding this collection should be directed to the Senior Policy Analyst, EQAO, 2 Carlton Street, Suite 1200, Toronto, ON M5B 2M9 • 1-888-327-7377.

BOOKLET

2

March 2011

Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test

SESSION 2

**RELEASED SELECTIONS
AND TEST QUESTIONS**

Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test

Session 2

Writing a Series of Paragraphs

1 Task: Write a **minimum of three paragraphs** expressing an **opinion** on the topic below. Develop your main idea with supporting details (proof, facts, examples, etc.).

Purpose and

Audience: an adult who is interested in your opinion

Length: The lined space provided for your written work indicates the approximate length of the writing expected.

Topic: **Is participation in extracurricular activities an important part of secondary school life?**

Write your series of paragraphs on the lines provided on the following two pages.

Rough Notes

Use the space below for rough notes. Nothing you write in this space will be scored.

Multiple-Choice (Record the best or most correct answer on the Student Answer Sheet.)

1 What should the writer of the following paragraph do to improve its organization?

(1) The Comfort Maple tree stands in a field near Welland, Ontario. (2) It is over 30 metres high and eight metres around the trunk. (3) Today it is a local attraction. (4) The tree was already 300 years old when the Comfort family settled the land in 1816. (5) Few trees like it survive.

- a Break sentence 2 into two sentences.
- b Switch the order of sentences 3 and 4.
- c Insert “Since” at the start of sentence 4.
- d Move sentence 5 to the start of the paragraph.

2 Which sentence is written correctly?

- a I travelled along the trans-Canada highway near North Bay.
- b I then continued toward Sudbury, passing the village of wahnapitei.
- c Once I got to Sudbury, I went to the lake laurentian conservation area.
- d Mayor Fortin greeted me at the park gate before my tour of the wetland.

3 Choose the best closing sentence for the following paragraph.

Travel is exciting and educational, but preparation is necessary. You should book transportation ahead. Guide books will help you learn about attractions. Knowing about the weather will help you make good decisions when packing your suitcase.

- a Travel guides are exciting to read.
- b Summertime is a popular time to travel.
- c Updating travel documents might be necessary.
- d Planning will make your vacation enjoyable.

4 Choose the sentence that is written correctly.

- a The flagpole stands on it’s own.
- b The cat licked its wounded paw.
- c Because of the storm, it’s roof caved in.
- d The game is cancelled because its raining.

End of Section VII. Continue to Section VIII. 

Read the selection below and answer the questions that follow it.

A Labour of Love Sparks a Career



Terasa Hill did not intend to do something so impulsive. It began when Terasa, who had grown up around horses, was observing a horse auction. A chestnut racehorse was for sale. The mare had an injured leg, but that didn't matter. "She was the most gorgeous thing I'd ever seen," said Terasa.

When the bidding started, Terasa surprised herself by leaping in. There was no way she was going to allow that mare to have an uncertain future. At \$450, the bidding stopped! Terasa became the new owner of Sierra, a nervous racehorse with an unfortunate past.

Sierra, limping and wracked with pain from a fractured knee, became a labour of love for Terasa. After three long months of nursing her under the guidance of a local veterinarian, the leg healed and Terasa's most spectacular gamble began.

It wasn't only Sierra's leg that needed to heal; Sierra needed to relearn how to trust people. Terasa thought the best way to win Sierra's trust and affection was to feed her treats. Terasa plied Sierra with many treats, but none passed the sniff test—Sierra turned up her nose at all of them. Desperate, Terasa experimented by whipping up her own mixture of molasses and grains, which she baked in her own kitchen. The cookies were a hit with Sierra and her stablemates, sending Terasa's life in a new direction.

Terasa took her treats, called "Barnies," to a local store. They sold like hotcakes, and within months local retailers began clamouring for more. Terasa's kitchen was no longer big enough for the increased demand, which forced her to move her operation to an Oshawa company.

Then a serious health problem threatened to derail her plans. Terasa called upon the same determination that had helped her rehabilitate Sierra to help her overcome her own ailment. Family and friends came to her rescue and kept Barnies Ltd. going. Almost a year later, healthy and more resolute than ever, Terasa found a national distributor and Barnies began selling in 144 stores across Canada.

That same year, one of Terasa's daughters was watching a television program on which entrepreneurs compete for money to expand their businesses. On the show, a panel of five self-made millionaires listen to the entrepreneurs' business plans and sales proposals and decide which ones deserve money.

“Mom, you can do that!” enthused her daughter.	8
Terasa took up this challenge and beat out 4000 applicants who had auditioned to appear on the show.	9
The day for the final televised presentation arrived. This show would decide if Terasa would get the money she needed to expand her business. Several inventors had already demonstrated their products only to leave disappointed. Opening her briefcase in preparation for her turn, Terasa was surprised as little handwritten notes saying “We believe in you!” from her four young daughters, all under the age of 11, flew out.	10
Terasa delivered her product sales pitch persuasively and, some might say, “straight from the horse’s mouth.” The producers had brought her “four-legged prop” up to the 10th floor studio on a freight elevator to help her. The “prop” couldn’t get enough of the Barnies treats.	11
Terasa triumphed. The panel of judges became partners, investing in her company for a 51% profit share. Barnies treats are now available online and in stores. “Dream big, work hard... and anything’s possible,” says Terasa.	12
And what about Sierra, the inspiration for all this success and change? The mare has fully recuperated and has become a wonderful riding horse.	13

Multiple-Choice (Record the best or most correct answer on the Student Answer Sheet.)

- 1** Why did Terasa create her own cookies?
- a to be able to work from home
 - b to compete on a television show
 - c to find a way to bond with Sierra
 - d to provide a healthy diet for Sierra
- 2** What is emphasized by the use of the word “plied” (paragraph 4)?
- a Terasa’s trust
 - b Terasa’s fussiness
 - c Terasa’s frustration
 - d Terasa’s determination
- 3** When were Barnies available in 144 stores across Canada?
- a after Terasa appeared on TV
 - b after Terasa recovered from her illness
 - c while Terasa’s friends and family ran the business
 - d while Terasa was making them in her own kitchen
- 4** Between which paragraphs does the focus shift from Sierra to Terasa’s business?
- a paragraphs 2 and 3
 - b paragraphs 4 and 5
 - c paragraphs 5 and 6
 - d paragraphs 6 and 7
- 5** Why was it important for Terasa to deliver “her sales pitch persuasively” (paragraph 11)?
- a She hoped to impress the judges.
 - b Sierra’s health depended on her success.
 - c Her daughters had written encouraging notes.
 - d Four thousand applicants were auditioning for the show.
- 6** What did Terasa have to give up to attain greater success?
- a Sierra
 - b her health
 - c a part of her earnings
 - d time with her friends
- 7** Which of the following was most likely spoken?
- a “Barnies” (paragraph 5)
 - b “We believe in you!” (paragraph 10)
 - c “straight from the horse’s mouth” (paragraph 11)
 - d “Dream big, work hard...” (paragraph 12)
- 8** Why is paragraph 13 an effective conclusion?
- a It provides surprising information.
 - b It returns to the topic of the opening paragraph.
 - c It continues the focus of the paragraph before it.
 - d It builds suspense by asking an unanswered question.

Multiple-Choice (Record the best or most correct answer on the Student Answer Sheet.)

- 9** Which phrase indicates the popularity of Barnies?
- a “Terasa took up this challenge”
 - b “Terasa found a national distributor”
 - c “Terasa plied Sierra with many treats”
 - d “Terasa delivered her product sales pitch”

End of Section VIII. Continue to Section IX. 

Read the selection below and answer the questions that follow it.



Amy followed her co-worker into the lunchroom. “Stop worrying. You can’t lose your job.” 1

She walked over to the staff bulletin board. “Look, it says so right here in this brochure about the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. Any worker can say no to work if ‘the physical condition of the workplace or the part thereof in which he or she works or is to work is likely to endanger him or her.’” 2

“And what exactly does that mean in everyday language?” asked Joe. 3

“It means that any worker has the right to refuse unsafe work. The shift supervisor asked you to clean the equipment with solvent in an unventilated space. That storeroom doesn’t even have a window to open. If you had obeyed her, you would have breathed harmful 4

fumes. So you were right to say no. Because Shauna is a supervisor, she really needs to know about what’s in the Act.”

“I’ve only worked here three weeks. I don’t want Shauna to think I’m a troublemaker,” Joe blurted in a rush. He collapsed into a chair. 5

“When I did a research project at school, I found out that an average of 42 young workers are harmed on the job every day just in Ontario. You don’t want to be one of them.” 6

“I can see that knowing about workplace safety is essential for everyone.” Joe stood up with a smile. “Let’s talk to Shauna.” 7

Multiple-Choice (Record the best or most correct answer on the Student Answer Sheet.)

1 Why does Joe ask Amy to use “everyday language” (paragraph 3)?

- a Joe is testing Amy’s understanding.
- b The lunchroom is too noisy to hear her.
- c The brochure uses complicated language.
- d Amy is speaking too fast for him to understand.

2 What is the relationship between the information in paragraphs 2 and 4?

- a two contrasting ideas
- b a question and its answer
- c an opinion and supporting details
- d a general idea and a specific example

3 Why does Joe collapse into the chair?

- a Working has tired him out.
- b He doesn’t know what to do next.
- c He feels sick from breathing fumes.
- d Amy’s words help him feel relaxed.

4 Which phrase is quoted from the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*?

- a “any worker can say no to work” (paragraph 2)
- b “is likely to endanger him or her” (paragraph 2)
- c “any worker has the right to refuse unsafe work” (paragraph 4)
- d “workplace safety is essential for everyone” (paragraph 7)

5 What does this selection indicate about Joe’s and Amy’s workplace?

- a Some employees lack safety training.
- b Only men are in supervisory positions.
- c New employees feel secure in their jobs.
- d All storage areas are adequately ventilated.



Written Answer

6 What is one character trait that describes Amy? Use specific details from this selection to support your answer.

7 Why should everyone learn about workplace safety? Use specific details from this selection and your own ideas to support your answer.

Rough Notes

Use the space below for rough notes. Nothing you write in this space will be scored.



Short Writing Task (Answer in full and correctly written sentences.)

1 Identify the ideal destination for a high school field trip. Explain your choice with specific details.

Rough Notes

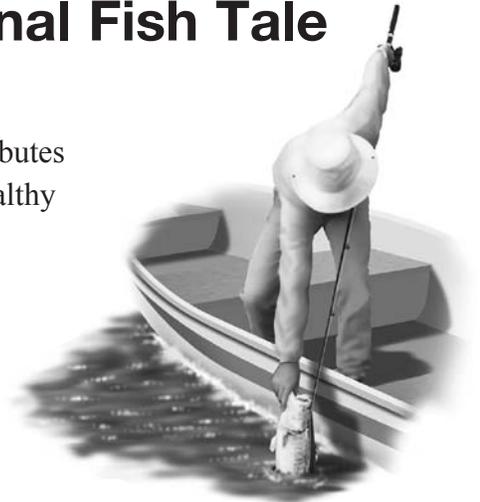
Use the space below for rough notes. Nothing you write in this space will be scored.

End of Section X. Continue to Section XI. 

Read the selection below and answer the questions that follow it.

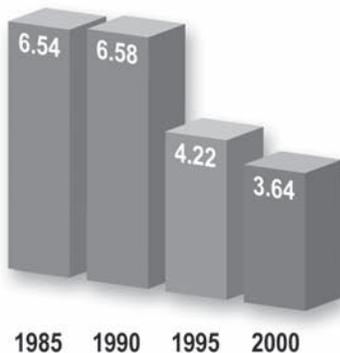
Canada's Recreational Fish Tale

The recreational fishing industry in Canada, which contributes billions of dollars each year to the economy, relies on healthy freshwater ecosystems. Studies done every five years by Fisheries and Oceans Canada show that, while the number of anglers (people who fish) has dropped dramatically, fishing-related spending has remained relatively steady. Here's a look at recent statistics.



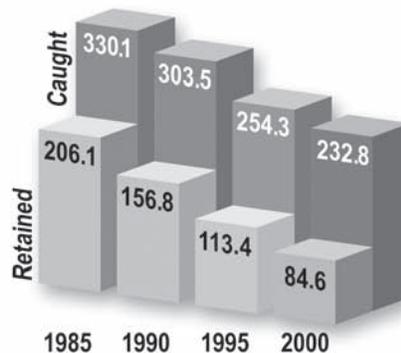
Total number of anglers

Shown in millions of resident and non-resident anglers



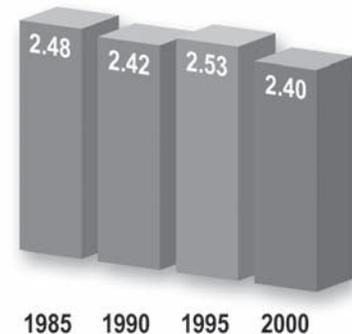
Total fish caught and retained

Shown in millions of fish



Direct fishing-related expenditures*

Shown in billions of dollars



*Direct fishing-related expenditures include food and lodging, transportation, fishing services and fishing supplies.

Why are anglers releasing so many more fish?



Barbless hook

In 1985, anglers released fewer than 38% of all fish they caught. By 2000, that number had climbed to 64%. In part, this is because many recreational anglers have adopted the “catch and release” approach to fishing. By using barbless hooks and carefully releasing fish, they help to ensure the continued sustainability of Canada's recreational fishing industry.

Multiple-Choice (Record the best or most correct answer on the Student Answer Sheet.)

- 1** What does the increasing use of barbless hooks suggest about anglers?
- a They want to help maintain fish populations.
 - b They want to retain as many fish as possible.
 - c They want to make a lot of money selling fish.
 - d They want to make sure the fish are securely hooked.
- 2** If the trends shown in the graphs continue, what is a logical prediction?
- a The number of fish caught decreases.
 - b The number of anglers rises to 1985 levels.
 - c In 2005, anglers spend less than one billion dollars on fishing.
 - d In 2005, the number of retained fish reaches 150 million.
- 3** What is the purpose of the asterisk (*) beside “Direct fishing-related expenditures”?
- a to direct the reader to the graph
 - b to indicate the importance of the section
 - c to connect the heading to other information
 - d to emphasize the amount of fishing-related expenditures
- 4** Which part of the selection relates most closely to the final paragraph?
- a the introductory paragraph
 - b the “Total number of anglers” graph
 - c the “Total fish caught and retained” graph
 - d the “Direct fishing-related expenditures” graph
- 5** What is the meaning of “adopted” as used in the final paragraph?
- a used
 - b noticed
 - c suggested
 - d abandoned
- 6** Which part of the selection shows that the recreational fishing industry contributes to the economy?
- a the picture of the angler
 - b the “Total number of anglers” graph
 - c the “Total fish caught and retained” graph
 - d the “Direct fishing-related expenditures” graph

Background Information (Record your answers on the Student Answer Sheet.)

We need to know about your background, so we can see how students with different experiences do on the test. All responses will be summarized and reported at the school, board and provincial levels.

Read each question carefully. If no answer seems exactly right, fill in the circle on the Student Answer Sheet with the response closest to what you want to say.

Language Background

- 1** a) Is English the first language you learned at home?
 Y Yes **N** No
- b) What languages do you speak at home (choose one only)?
- A** Only or mostly English
- B** Another language (or languages) as often as English
- C** Only or mostly another language (or other languages)

Home Computer Use

- 2** Indicate how often you use a computer at home for homework (choose one only).
- A** I don't have a computer at home.
- B** I never or hardly ever use the computer for homework.
- C** I use the computer once or twice a month for homework.
- D** I use the computer once or twice a week for homework.
- E** I use the computer almost every day for homework.

Reading

- 3** Indicate the types of materials you read in English outside school most weeks.
- a) Non-fiction books, e.g., biographies
 Y Yes **N** No
- b) Comics
 Y Yes **N** No
- c) Web sites, e-mail, chat messages
 Y Yes **N** No
- d) Letters
 Y Yes **N** No
- e) Magazines
 Y Yes **N** No
- f) Manuals, instructions
 Y Yes **N** No
- g) Newspapers
 Y Yes **N** No
- h) Novels, fiction, short stories
 Y Yes **N** No
- i) Song lyrics, poems
 Y Yes **N** No
- j) Religious or spiritual writings
 Y Yes **N** No
- 4** Indicate the number of hours a week you read materials written in English outside school, not including your homework (choose one only).
- A** One hour or less
- B** More than one hour but less than three hours
- C** More than three hours but less than five hours
- D** Five hours or more

5 Indicate what English-language materials you have at home.

- a) Dictionaries, encyclopedias (print or electronic)
Y Yes N No
- b) Books
Y Yes N No
- c) Newspapers
Y Yes N No
- d) Magazines
Y Yes N No

Writing

6 Indicate the types of writing you do in English outside school most weeks.

- a) E-mail, chat messages
Y Yes N No
- b) Letters, journals, diaries
Y Yes N No
- c) Notes, directions, instructions
Y Yes N No
- d) Song lyrics, poems
Y Yes N No
- e) Stories, fiction
Y Yes N No
- f) Work-related writing
Y Yes N No

7 Indicate the number of hours a week you write in English outside school, not including your homework (choose one only).

- A One hour or less
- B More than one hour but less than three hours
- C More than three hours but less than five hours
- D Five hours or more

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