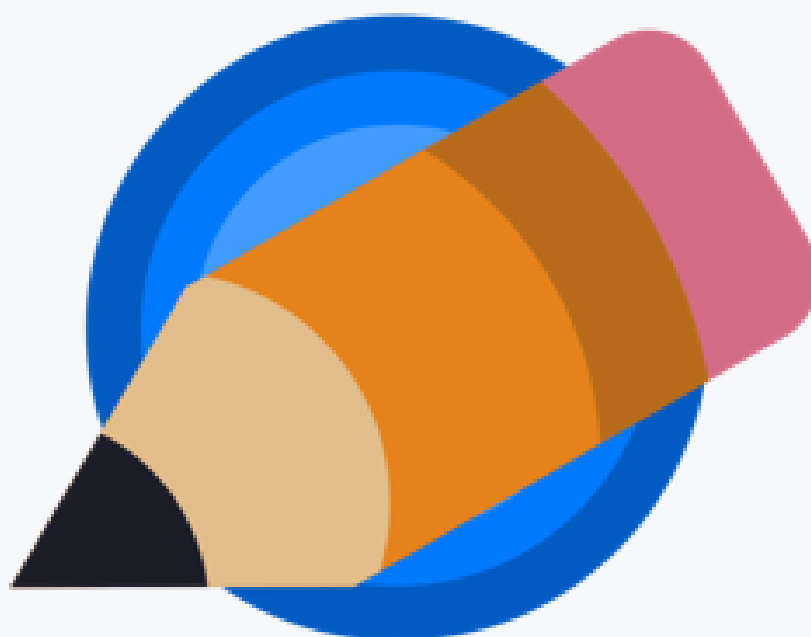




Frequently Asked Questions

Report Writing for the SEA



Curriculum Planning and Development Division
2021

Contents

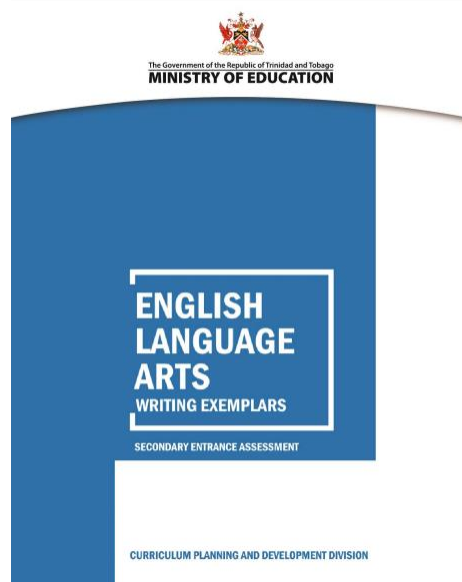
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Note to Teachers

The Curriculum Planning and Development Division continues to be committed to supporting teachers as they empower their students to be independent, competent writers.

Teachers preparing their students for the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) should be guided by the English Language Arts Writing Exemplars (2019), which provides



- detailed, analytic rubrics to guide teaching and assessment of students writing (page 79 Narrative, page 81 Report)
- explicit guidance on the application of the rubrics (pages 1-12 Narrative, pages 43-54 Report)
- scored, annotated student samples at varying levels of achievement (pages 15-42 Narrative, pages 55-78 Report)

Figure 1: English Language Arts Writing Exemplars

Additionally, the Curriculum Planning and Development Division has prepared resources in the form of Power Point Presentations and videos which can be found at: <https://learn.moe.gov.tt/course/view.php?id=1008> The following are links to useful videos that have been uploaded on the TTT Live Online YouTube channel.

Overview of Report Writing/Spelling -ing words

[\(614\) English Language Lesson #2 - S.E.A Time - YouTube](#)

The Language of Reports

[\(615\) The Language of Reports - Gillian Pilgrim - YouTube](#)

Distinguishing Stories from Reports

[\(614\) Distinguishing Reports from Stories Gillian Pilgrim - YouTube](#)

Please note that the content of the report should primarily be guided by the writing task. Encourage the students to answer the '4 W's' of the task:

What happened?

Involving **whom**?

Where?

When?

Frequently Asked Questions: Format of the Report

Q 1: Should reports be written in letter/memo format (E.g., To: From: Date: Subject line)?

A: There is no allocation of marks in the SEA ELA report rubric for a specific format (e.g. the use of a memo format). The report rubric on page 81 of the ELA Writing Exemplars document specifies four criteria for consideration: Content, Language Use, Organisation, Grammar and Mechanics. See Figure 2 below for details.

Content	Language Use	Organisation	Grammar/ Mechanics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •What happened (from beginning to end) <input type="checkbox"/>Persons involved <input type="checkbox"/>Location <input type="checkbox"/>Date <input type="checkbox"/>Time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/>Use of factual language <input type="checkbox"/>Formal tone <input type="checkbox"/>Varied sentence types 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/>Introduction, Body, Conclusion <input type="checkbox"/>Logical sequence of ideas <input type="checkbox"/>Use of appropriate transitional words to link ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/>Accurate use of: <input type="checkbox"/>parts of speech <input type="checkbox"/>capitalisation <input type="checkbox"/>punctuation <input type="checkbox"/>spelling

Figure 2: Criteria for Report Writing (adapted from ELA Writing Exemplars, p. 44)

Q 2: Is there a word limit for the reports written for the SEA?

A: No word limit is specified in the ELA Writing Exemplars. The only guideline given in the 2019 SEA Writing paper was that students should write more than one paragraph (See Figure 3).

Teachers are encouraged to guide students to provide all the relevant details required by the writing task using concise, factual language. Conciseness itself is a honed skill, which develops alongside writing fluency. The writing time of 50 minutes, in a sense, limits the number of words.

Students should organise these details into a clear **introduction**, **body**, and **conclusion**, using coherent paragraphs and suitable transition words. For more specific details, please refer to the SEA Time lessons in the Report Writing Resource package.

Instructions for the English Language Arts Writing Paper

1. You will have **50 minutes** to plan and write on **one** of the topics inside this booklet. Remember to leave a few minutes to read over your writing and to correct any mistakes you see.
2. Take a few minutes to think about what you want to write. You may make notes or an outline in the area marked NOTES. **Your notes will not be marked.**
3. Write on the lined pages of this booklet. Use a pencil and write neatly.
4. Check your work to make sure you have done your best.
5. Pay attention to the construction of your sentences, correct use of grammar and punctuation.

Note

How well you write is more important than how much you write. You need to write more than one paragraph.

Figure 3: Instructions from SEA ELA Writing (2019)

Q 3: What is the word limit for paragraphs in a report?

A: It is not advisable to provide word/sentence limits per paragraph since this varies depending on the writer's purpose. It is also advisable to avoid restricting fluent writers. It is preferable to emphasise that a paragraph is a series of sentences that are all related to one main idea.

Q 4: What is the acceptable format for time in a report?

A: Use numerals to indicate an exact time. This is formatted as follows: 12:45 p.m., 8:00 a.m. Words may be used when the sentence starts with a number. For example: Five minutes later, Ms. James indicated that the race was about to begin.

Frequently Asked Questions: Content of the Report

Q 5: What is the difference between 'incident' and 'accident'?

A: An incident is an example of something happening such as an event or an occurrence. An incident is a broad term that refers to any event whether "good" or "bad". An accident is an incident that happens by

chance. It is unplanned, unexpected and unintentional. An accident may cause harm and injury.

Q 6: Is it necessary to include “The following report will give details on the incident and its outcome” (or any equivalent of this) at the end of the introductory paragraph of a report?

A: The introductory paragraph provides a summary of the four W's (who, what, where, when) of the incident/event/trip etc. outlined in the writing task. While some students may choose to include a line like the one in the question above, it is not necessary to do so.

Q 7: Is it necessary to present the outcome/conclusion of the event/incident in the first paragraph of the report?

A: As mentioned in the answer to question 6, the introductory paragraph provides a summary of the four W's of an incident/event. It is possible to incorporate/mention the outcome of an incident in the first paragraph. However, students are expected to be as succinct as possible. The following provide some examples:

On Monday 8th November 2021, at approximately 10:45 a. m., an accident occurred on the football field of Happy Learners Government Primary School. As a result of this accident, Jamila Jones of Standard 5 was injured.

On Monday 8th November 2021, Jamila Jones of Standard 5 J sustained an injury on the football field of Happy Learners Government Primary School. The incident occurred at approximately 10:45 a. m.

On Monday 8th November 2021, at approximately 10:45 a. m. an accident took place on the football field of the Happy Learners Government Primary School. This resulted in Jamila Jones of Standard 5 J sustaining an injury.

It should be noted that the following introduction is also acceptable:

On Monday 8th November 2021, at approximately 10:45 a. m., an accident took place on the playground of the Happy Learners Government School. The person involved was Jamila James of Standard 5 J.

Q 8: Does the student need to demonstrate knowledge of protocols or writing conventions in his/her writing?

A: Always encourage students to be guided by the writing task. All tasks will require that the student writes to a specific recipient. For example, a student may be asked to write a report to a teacher or to the principal. The student is only expected to provide details, which he/she observed/experienced.

Q 9: What is the difference between Exemplary and Proficient in the content of a report?

A: The student is to be guided by the descriptors in the rubric. For content, an exemplary report has, "All details are carefully selected, specific and relevant to genre, audience and task. Main ideas are specific to the task and are developed *skilfully* through, relevant supporting details." However, content in the proficient level includes, "Most details are carefully selected, specific and relevant to genre, audience and task", while the main ideas are developed *competently*. The report with 'exemplary' content exceeds the standard of performance, while a report with 'proficient' content meets the minimum standard.

Frequently Asked Questions: Language Use in the Report

Q 10: Is usage of pronouns acceptable in an SEA report?

A: Yes, pronouns may be used in a report once they do not introduce ambiguity in the report.

Q 11: Can students use the first person in their reports?

A: The report rubric allocates no marks for first or third person, neither is there any penalty for the use of one or the other. Students should be advised to pay attention to the specific report task. If the task requires a student to write the report as a person who was himself/herself involved in the incident/activity, it is reasonable for the student to use the first person.

An example of such a task is:

As the Class Prefect, write a report to your school principal on the 'Keep Your School Clean' competition in which your class participated.

Note that overuse of the first person, especially by young writers, may result in an informal tone. Formal reports are usually written in the third person for objectivity and distancing of what is written.

Q 12: Can colours or descriptions be included in a report when speaking about a robbery or accident?

A: Yes, if the purpose is to provide relevant, factual details. Adjectives that are emotionally charged or opinion-based should be avoided. For example, rather than referring to someone as “large”, which is an opinion, one can reference the person’s approximate height. It is necessary to teach the difference between factual descriptions and descriptions required for a story (narratives).

Q 13: What is the acceptable tense to be used in a report?

A: Reports should be written in the past tense, since they refer to incidents/events that happened in the past.

Q 14: What transitional words are appropriate for report writing?

A: Transitional words and phrases are used to connect ideas, sentences, and paragraphs. When used in reports, these words/phrases should ensure that the report flows logically. Therefore, transitional words like “suddenly” should be avoided because they are emotionally charged and may lead the writing toward imaginative fiction.

Q 15: Is the use of direct speech permitted in report writing?

A: Since a report is written about an incident/event that has already taken place, the use of reported/indirect speech is encouraged rather than direct speech.

Q 16: If a report is incomplete, will information in the report plan/note contribute to the student's score?

A: The directions for the SEA ELA Writing paper (Q 2, Figure 3) states, "Your notes will not be marked."

End of document