

Guide to Writing Assignments (Social Studies 30-2)

In Social Studies 30-2, you are asked to complete three different types of writing assignments. These are referred to as Written Response Assignment I, Written Response Assignment II, and Written Response Assignment III on the Diploma Examination.

Each type of writing assignment requires you to complete a different task. All three types of writing assignments give you an opportunity to demonstrate your ability and your knowledge and understanding of social studies.

This tutorial will give you some general guidelines for completing writing assignments throughout this course and in the diploma examination.

Get Ready

The people who put together the Diploma Examination meet regularly with teachers from across the province. Participants in these meetings have agreed that students must read the instructions carefully and complete all tasks in order to obtain the highest mark possible.

Regardless of the type of writing assignment you are completing, you must do the following in order to be successful:

- **Read** the assignments carefully.
- **Think** about what you are being asked to do.
- **Plan** your writing so that it will focus on the topic.
- **Reread** your writing and ask yourself if you have communicated clearly.
- **Correct** your mistakes.

If you hurry through the writing assignment, there is a greater chance that you will misread instructions or that you will leave work incomplete.

Take Advantage of the Design of the Writing Assignment

You are encouraged to use information provided in the writing assignment to help complete your writing assignment—but be careful: it is best to choose information that you can confidently incorporate into your written response.

If you do choose to use information provided, remember that it is provided to help *stimulate* your response, not to be your response. A written response containing only the information provided to you, strung together into a few sentences, is not as the same as a written response that contains the information provided to you that has been carefully chosen to add support to well-thought-out ideas and explanations.

Reread Your Work

You are awarded marks for the clarity and correctness of your writing, as well as for what you say. Therefore, be sure to take some time to reread your writing carefully. Do not read what you *thought* you meant to say. Read what you actually said.

As you reread, ask yourself questions such as these:

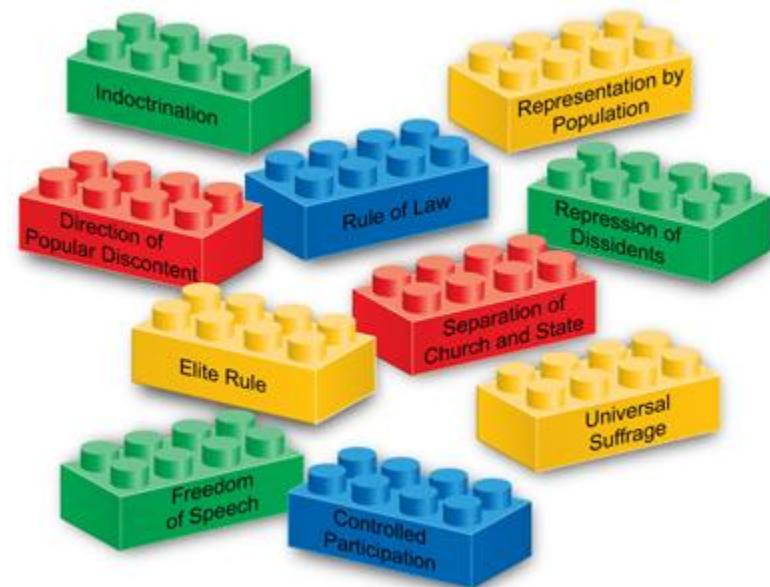
- Are my ideas consistent, or do they contradict one another?
- Did I support my ideas with thorough explanations?
- Did I use examples that are historically correct and relevant to the topic?
- Is my writing organized and easy to follow?
- Did I use correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar?
- Did I use vocabulary correctly?
- Will my reader understand why I have said what I said?

Understand the Scoring Criteria

Make sure that you are familiar with the scoring criteria that will be used to mark your writing assignments in the diploma examination. The criteria are included in information bulletins, available on the Alberta Education website.

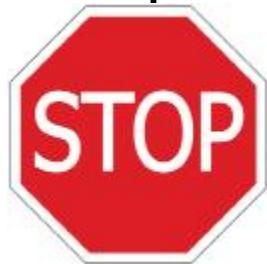
Being knowledgeable about the scoring criteria will also help you to fulfill the requirements needed for completing the writing assignment.

Assignment I: Understanding and Evaluating Key Course Concepts



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Which characteristic(s) of political systems do you think is/are the most important to a liberal democracy?



Write a response in which you **must**

- **identify** the characteristic(s) of political systems that is/are the most important to a liberal democracy
- **explain** why the characteristics(s) is/are the most important
- **support** your response using your understanding of social studies

Reminders for Writing

- **Organize** your response.
- **Proofread** your response.

Alberta Education recommends that you spend at least 20 to 25 minutes on this type of writing assignment.

As shown in the image, in Written Response Assignment 1, you will be asked to respond to a specific question about the characteristics of an ideology, and you will be given a number of terms. Here are some hints you can use when planning your response.

- What is the nature of the question? Is the question about politics, economics, or another topic?
- Examine the terminology provided. Assume you are asked to explore liberal political systems, as is the case in the example provided here. Some of the terms provided will reflect practices that embrace liberalism and some of the terms will reflect practices that reject liberalism. You may want to make two columns. In one column, write the terms that apply to political systems that embrace liberalism. In the second column, write the terms that apply to systems that reject liberalism.

| Terms That Embrace Liberalism | Terms That Reject Liberalism |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | |

- When preparing to respond to the question, choose the terminology you are most familiar with. If you are not certain about a term, do not use the term.
- You may choose to only elaborate on one of the terms from the list for your response. That is fine. Remember, your response must be complete and fit the criteria provided. You must provide detail and support. Use the Scoring Criteria and the suggested time to guide your work.
- You must also remember to provide support in your response. Explaining the answer does not suffice as a response. The marker wants to know that you actually took the course and learned something. Share what you have learned by providing explanations and detail in your response.

The question in the example provided is as follows:

Which characteristic(s) of political systems do you think is/are the most important to a liberal democracy?

This writing assignment asks you to reflect on liberal democracies. Determine which of the terms provided apply to liberal democracies and which terms do not.

Make your two-column chart and place each term in the appropriate column. If you are unsure of where one the words belongs, look at the word and try to imagine how it applies to the question. Think of the context in which you leaned the term. Try to determine if the context supported or rejected liberalism.

| Terms That Embrace Liberalism | Terms That Reject Liberalism |
|--|---|
| representation by population rule of law freedom of speech separation of church and state universal suffrage | elite rule controlled participation repression of dissidents indoctrination direction of popular discontent |

Determine if the question is about politics or economics, or whether that is important to the question. In this case, the question clearly states it is about politics.

Choose at least one term from the appropriate column. Make sure that the term you chose applies to the question. Explain why the term(s) you chose is most appropriate. You may choose to define the term. Then, support your choice of term with explanations.

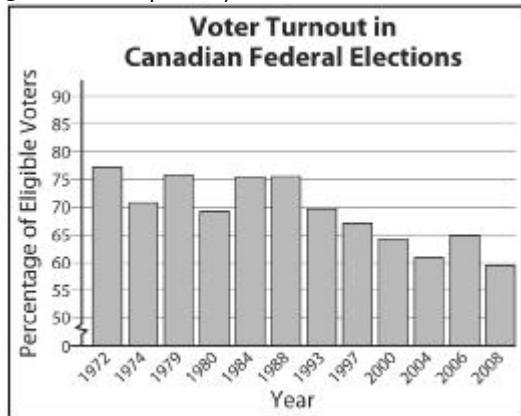
In this example, you would explain how the terms you chose are the most important to a liberal democracy. In this type of writing assignment, you will provide explanations and support that are relevant to the question and that demonstrate your understanding of social studies.

Remember to use the scoring criteria to guide and check your work.

Assignment II: Interpretation of Sources and Defending a Position



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Alberta Education recommends that you spend at least 40 to 45 minutes on this writing assignment.

In this writing assignment, you must accomplish two tasks. In the first task, you are asked to examine the three sources provided to you. Sources may be charts, photos, political cartoons, maps, text, quotes, or many other forms of information. Once you have examined all three sources, you must respond to two questions.

Here are some hints you can use when planning your response.

- Remember that you must respond to the two questions.

- In responding to the first question, you must interpret the sources. Provide a description about the nature of each source. What do these sources communicate to you about the role of individuals or government in society? (The question will always relate to the role of either individuals or government in society.)

- Identify what each source tells you about the role of either individuals or government in society.

- You can present your response in one or more paragraph(s).

- In responding to the second question, you must explain and defend your position by referring to the sources and to your understanding of social studies. Be sure to include what the role of either individuals or the government should be in society. Provide specific examples to support your position.

- Select appropriate support when presenting your position.

- It is essential that you remember to provide support in your response. Explaining the answer is not a complete response. The marker wants to know that you actually took the course and learned something. Share what you have learned by providing explanations in your response.

Consider the following two sample questions.

What do each of the three sources presented communicate about the role of individuals in society?

This sample question addresses the role of individuals. Examine the details in the chart, graphic, photo, political cartoon, or other sources provided. What details can you get from the information provided in each source? What details reflect the role individuals play in society? Find details in the photograph. Provide a brief description of these details and how they affect the role of individuals.

Considering the sources presented, what do you think should be the role of individuals in society?

Again, this sample question addresses the role of individuals. When answering this part of the question, make sure you refer to the sources provided. This is also your opportunity to express your position on what the role of the individual should be in society.

Support your interpretations and position by referring to the details in the sources and your understanding of social studies. Do not be afraid to explore and elaborate on your response. The more important and related information you provide, the better your response will be.

Remember to use the scoring criteria to guide and check your work.

Assignment III: Exploring an Issue and Defending a Position

Should governments pass laws mandating the hiring of people based on their race, ethnicity, or gender?

Citizen I



Governments must take strong action to correct historical wrongs. In the past, women, visible minorities, and even men who were not of British origin were discriminated against and denied jobs. We must mandate that the percentage of jobs in all businesses given to any group equals the percentage that each group makes up of the total population.

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Citizen II



Affirmative-action programs, or other similar programs that give preferential treatment for people based on physical or cultural characteristics, are totally unacceptable. People should get a job because they are the best qualified. All of society benefits when fair competition breeds excellence.

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Citizen III

Everyone should have an equal chance to get a job. Some groups of people did not always and may still not have an equal chance. If someone clearly is the most able candidate for a job, then they should get it. However, if two or more equally



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qualified people are competing, the government should mandate that the job go to the person from a group that has been discriminated against in the past.

Alberta Education recommends that you spend at least 40 to 45 minutes on this writing assignment.

In this writing assignment, you must write a letter to the editor. There will be positions presented by three individuals who will express their points of view on an issue. Once you have examined all three points of view, you must respond to the question provided.

Here are some hints you may use when you are planning your response.

- Remember that you must read the three points of view presented.
Each point of view will be different from the others.

- You must analyze, explore, and explain the point of view of each of the three citizens.

- You must explore the issue provided. Provide a general discussion about the issue.

- You must take a position on the issue. This position must be supported with arguments that defend your position.

- Support your point of view with examples using your understanding of social studies.

Remember to use the scoring criteria to guide and check your work.