

## **Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC)**

### **Course Overview**

### **Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course, Grade 12, Open (OLC4O)**

### **Course Description**

This course is designed to help students acquire and demonstrate the cross-curricular literacy skills that are evaluated by the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test. Students who complete the course successfully will meet the provincial literacy requirement for graduation. Students will read a variety of informational, narrative, and graphic texts and will produce a variety of forms of writing, including summaries, information paragraphs, opinion pieces, and news reports. Students will also maintain and manage a literacy portfolio containing a record of their reading experiences and samples of their writing.

### **Eligibility**

Students who have been eligible to write the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) at least twice, and have been unsuccessful at least once, are eligible to take this course to achieve both a Grade 12 credit and their literacy credential for graduation.

### **Rationale**

The OSSLC is an alternative way for students to demonstrate the provincial literacy skills required for graduation. Successful completion of the course demonstrates that students have achieved the reading and writing skills required by the OSSLT. Just as important is the opportunity the course allows students to improve their reading and writing skills as a foundation for building and refining the literacy skills they require in their postsecondary destinations.

### **Reading**

The aim of the course is to enable students to become competent readers who read informational, graphic and narrative texts with reasonable accuracy and efficiency, who understand both directly and indirectly-stated ideas and information, and who make connections between texts and their own experiences and knowledge. The course is designed to help students see themselves as readers by giving them opportunities to examine the many text forms they read in their daily lives, e.g., magazines, websites, and e-mail, and see the connections between reading texts and their own knowledge and experiences.

Reading is an active, complex process of thinking and constructing meaning from texts. Good readers, whether they are conscious of this or not, use strategies to help them

make sense of the texts they read. An important purpose of the OSSLC is to help struggling readers learn and use effective strategies and "secrets" to enable them to understand what they read.

Students will practice how to read and understand a range of texts for a variety of school and other real-life purposes. People's ability to read a particular text is greatly enhanced when they recognize that it has authentic value to their interests and aspirations. For this reason, students should be able to choose many of the texts and topics they will read about, and should be encouraged to apply the reading skills they have learned in the course to the reading they do in their other school subjects.

Two texts will be used to help support Student -selected material.

## **1. Literacy Power - OSSLC**

## **2. Break Away: Reading and Writing for Success**

### **Writing**

One of the goals of the OSSLC is to help students to write competently for a variety of school and other real-life purposes. Like the OSSLT, this course focuses on writers being able to state and support main ideas, organize writing clearly and coherently, and use the conventions of standard Canadian English. Unlike the OSSLT, which specifies the topics students write about and the forms of writing they use, and limits the time they are allowed for writing, the OSSLC is designed so that students use a writing process to produce and craft their writing, and choose some of their own topics and writing forms to match their own purposes. However, students should also demonstrate their writing skills and knowledge on demand, developing assigned topics and using specified forms. The Course Profile suggests ways in which on-demand writing is balanced with student choice of topics and forms.

Students will practice using the Writing Process including:

- **Pre-writing: generating ideas for writing**
- **Drafting: organizing and shaping ideas into a form to create a first draft**
- **Revising: reviewing the content, ideas, and information in the draft to ensure that the content is sufficient, coherent, and clear; that the ideas are in the appropriate order; and that every detail is relevant**
- **Editing: crafting the language to achieve the desired effect, to fulfill the writer's purpose; correcting the conventions of spelling, grammar, and punctuation to achieve the standard of Canadian English**

- **Publishing: creating a final, polished draft of the writing**

**Note: Conferring (discussions about the writing) between peers and between students and the teacher should occur at all stages of the writing process, except when students are demonstrating their writing skills for evaluation.**

### **The Literacy Portfolio**

In this course, students maintain and manage a literacy portfolio to demonstrate and help them assess their growth in reading and writing skills throughout the course. Students use a variety of tools to record and track the range of texts they have read and written in the course. The literacy portfolio contains all works in progress and all works that have been evaluated, for both reading and writing tasks. The literacy portfolio will also contain a learning journal in which students set goals for improving their reading and writing skills and monitor their learning during the course.

Students polish selected pieces from their literacy portfolio. These pieces may be used as samples for presentation and display, e.g., as part of an application to a workplace or postsecondary program. The teacher of the OSSLC may help the student select appropriate pieces for this purpose.

Students use all components of the literacy portfolio to review and reflect upon their improvement in reading and writing skills, both during and at the end of the course.

### **The Role of Oral Language**

**Many students of the OSSLC bring to their learning experiences strengths in oral language, including languages other than English. Oral language experiences in large and small groups help students clarify their thinking and share these understandings with others.**

Oral language activities assist in the development of specific reading and writing skills in this course. Readers benefit greatly when they talk to one another about what they know about text forms or topics before they read. Sharing through talk what students know and want to know gives students a firm knowledge base upon which to build. Students also benefit from sharing ideas and information after reading, consolidating, and extending understanding of what they have read. Similarly, writers improve the quality of their writing when given the opportunity to share and generate ideas before, and during the writing process. In addition to talk, reading aloud, guided reading, and shared reading help students expand vocabulary, improve fluency in reading and clarity in writing.

Through talk, the teacher helps students "make visible" the often invisible reading strategies they use to understand texts. In helping students use language to talk about language, the teacher helps students develop their understanding of the many ways

language is used. In addition, research has recognized that facility in a first language helps one learn a new language. For some ESL/ELD students, the opportunity to use their first language to create the content for writing before they write in English is an important support. Using their first language to generate ideas for writing increases the fluency (number) of ideas, and allows these to be patterned and organized before the student has to worry about using the language patterns of standard Canadian English and its conventions. The permission to use first language helps to improve the confidence of many students in a new language. Teachers should encourage ESL/ELD students to use first language dictionaries to help them develop vocabulary for reading, listening, speaking, and writing.

### **Units: Titles and Times**

#### **1. Reading and Writing for Personal Success**

**30 hours**

#### **2. Community Voices Through Reading and Writing**

**40 hours**

#### **3. Reading and Writing as Community Action**

**20 hours**

#### **4. Demonstrating Success in Reading and Writing**

### **Assessment and Evaluation of Student Achievement in the OSSLC**

Assessment of student work in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course differs from assessment for other courses in a number of key ways:

- Students who receive 50 per cent or higher in the course receive a credit for the course and also are deemed to have met the secondary school literacy requirement for graduation.
- Although this course is offered in Grade 12 and represents a credit awarded in Grade 12, the standard for a pass in the course is comparable to that established by the OSSLT, which represents achievement of Grade 9 literacy expectations.
- The course has an Achievement Chart that describes student achievement of literacy skills. However, as the following chart shows, the levels and their mark ranges differ from those in the Achievement Charts for other courses.
- This course differs from other courses in outlining specific requirements for the final 30 per cent evaluation that will be administered towards the end of the course.

### **Levels of Achievement in the OSSLC**

The levels of achievement for the OSSLC are outlined below. It should be noted that the descriptions of achievement reflect the literacy standards set for the OSSLT. To meet the literacy standard required for graduation, students must demonstrate a

moderate level of skill in reading and writing. Students who show limited skill in reading and writing will not pass the course. Note also that the percentage grade ranges in the chart are not aligned with the levels of achievement defined in other curriculum documents.

Percentage Grade Range	Description of the Level of Literacy Achieved
80-100%	<b>A skillful and effective performance in reading and writing. The student has significantly exceeded the level of literacy required for graduation, and earns a credit for the course.</b>
65-79%	<b>Performance that shows considerable skill in reading and writing. The student has exceeded the level of literacy required for graduation, and earns a credit for the course.</b>
50-64%	<b>Performance that shows moderate skill in reading and writing. The student has achieved the level of literacy required for graduation, and earns a credit for the course.</b>
0-49%	<b>Performance that shows limited reading and writing skills. The student may be approaching the level of literacy required for graduation but cannot be deemed to have met the requirement and does not earn a credit for the course.</b>

**Note:** A mark of 50 per cent represents both a pass in the course and the achievement of the literacy standard required for graduation.

### **Key Assessment Practices in the OSSLC**

Assessment that promotes student growth in reading and writing:

- provides for frequent diagnostic assessment preceding new learning, e.g., feedback from OSSLT, reading and writing interviews, and observation of students at work;
- provides varied, frequent, targeted, and ongoing feedback, including conferences;
- provides multiple opportunities for demonstration, practice, and feedback before evaluation
- provides students with models of quality work so they can understand and work towards the reading standard and the writing standard;
- encourages students to assess and reflect on their own growth in knowledge and help students to build on acquired skills throughout the course;
- balances the tasks assessed, ranging from student-selected to teacher-directed, from flexible process to "on-demand."