

PRACTICE EXAM 4: EQAO GRADE 6 LANGUAGE SIMULATION (47 QUESTIONS)

READING SESSION A

Time: Approximately 35 minutes

Passage 1: "The Empty Desk"

A short story by Lila Okafor

The desk next to Jamal's had been empty for six days.

It was Aisha's desk. She had sat there every morning since September, with her bright orange water bottle, her three favourite pencils lined up in a row, and the small yellow sticky notes she liked to leave on the edge of his desk when their teacher wasn't looking. *Good luck on the test, you've got this. Don't forget your library book. Are you eating lunch with me today?*

The sticky notes had stopped six days ago.

Aisha had moved schools. Her family had relocated to another city — somewhere far enough away that visiting on weekends was not realistic. Jamal had known this was coming for weeks. Aisha had told him in October. They had spent the months since making plans for her last day, trading playlists, exchanging email addresses. He had even helped her carry her box of belongings out to her mother's car on her final afternoon.

What he had not been prepared for was the desk.

Jamal had not realized how often he had looked over at her in class. Not constantly — just small moments. When the teacher said something funny. When a difficult question was on the board. When something interesting happened outside the window. He would glance to his left, and Aisha would be glancing back, and a small unspoken exchange would happen between them — a raised eyebrow, a tiny smile, a quick shake of the head. Then they would both look away, and class would continue, and he would not think about it again until the next moment came.

Now there was no one to look at.

On the seventh day, a new student arrived. Her name was Priya. She had moved from a town up north, where she had lived all her life. She seemed quiet. Polite. Slightly nervous. Their teacher introduced her to the class and pointed to the empty desk beside Jamal.

"Priya, you can sit there. Jamal will help you with anything you need."

Priya sat down. She placed her pencil case on her desk — neatly, but not in any particular order. She did not have an orange water bottle. She did not have sticky notes.

Jamal nodded politely at her. He did not say much. He turned back to his work.

For most of the morning, Priya was silent. She copied notes carefully. She asked the teacher one quiet question about which page they were on. She did not glance to her right. She did not seem to want to.

At recess, Jamal saw her standing alone near the fence, watching the other kids play. He recognized the look. He had seen it on his cousin's face when his cousin had switched schools two years ago. He had seen it on his own face in photographs from his first week of kindergarten.

He walked over slowly.

"Hi," he said. He shifted his weight from one foot to the other. "Do you, uh — do you want to know who plays what at recess? I can show you."

Priya looked at him. For a moment she did not say anything. Then she smiled — a small, careful smile.

"That would be nice," she said.

They walked along the fence together. Jamal pointed out the soccer field, and the basketball net where his friends usually played, and the bench where students sat if they wanted to read at recess. Priya listened. She nodded. She asked him one question about the library. He answered.

When the bell rang, they walked back to class side by side.

That afternoon, when their teacher was distracted, Jamal tore a small corner off a piece of yellow paper from his notebook. He wrote three words on it. He folded it carefully. And when no one was looking, he slid it onto the corner of Priya's desk.

Glad you're here.

He did not look at her when he did it. He did not need to. He just turned back to his work.

A few minutes later, he saw her hand reach for the note. He saw her unfold it. He saw her smile — bigger this time — and tuck the note into the front of her notebook where she could see it.

Then she glanced to her right.

And Jamal, without quite meaning to, glanced back.

1. Why does the author **MOST LIKELY** describe Aisha's three pencils, her orange water bottle, and her sticky notes in such specific detail?

- A. To show how well Jamal remembers small things about her
- B. To suggest that Aisha was an unusually organized student
- C. To explain why Aisha eventually decided to move schools
- D. To prove that the teacher noticed Aisha's habits closely

2. What does the author **MOST LIKELY** mean by writing that "the sticky notes had stopped six days ago"?

- A. Aisha had run out of yellow sticky notes before leaving the school
- B. The teacher had finally noticed Aisha leaving notes and forbidden it
- C. Aisha's departure has left a quiet gap in Jamal's daily routine
- D. The students in the class had stopped passing notes to each other

3. What can the reader infer about Jamal from the description of his small exchanges with Aisha in class?

- A. Jamal frequently got into trouble for not paying attention in class
- B. Jamal valued small, unspoken moments of connection with his friend
- C. Jamal preferred working alone rather than collaborating with classmates
- D. Jamal disliked the teacher's lessons and often looked for distractions

4. Read this sentence from the passage:

"What he had not been prepared for was the desk."

What does this sentence MOST suggest about Jamal?

- A. He had expected to be given a different seat after Aisha left
- B. He was upset that no one had cleaned out Aisha's desk yet
- C. He believed Aisha would come back and use the desk again
- D. He was unprepared for the daily reminder of Aisha's absence

5. Why does Jamal MOST LIKELY recognize the look on Priya's face at recess?

- A. He had seen the same look on Aisha's face during her last week
- B. He had read about it in a book about new students at school
- C. He had experienced the same feeling himself when he was younger
- D. The teacher had warned him that Priya might feel uncomfortable

6. What is the central THEME of this story?

- A. Small acts of kindness can help someone feel welcome in a new place
- B. Friends who move away are usually replaced by new friends quickly
- C. Teachers should pay closer attention to students who feel lonely
- D. Children should not become too attached to people they sit next to

7. Which sentence from the story BEST shows that Jamal hesitates before approaching Priya?

- A. "He walked over slowly."
- B. "He shifted his weight from one foot to the other."
- C. "He pointed out the soccer field, and the basketball net."
- D. "He turned back to his work."

A small farewell, performed for none below.
The squirrels are busy. The geese have read the message.
The light has thinned. The afternoons are short.
The world is packing slowly for its passage
Into the long, slow stillness of its sort.
And I, who walk this path in every season,
Am quieter than I was three months ago.
October teaches me, without a lesson,
That every change is also letting go.

11. What is the MAIN message (theme) of this poem?

- A. October is the most beautiful month of the entire year
- B. Trees are useful symbols for writing autumn poetry
- C. Change is connected to the experience of letting go
- D. People should spend more time outdoors during October

12. Read these lines from the poem:

"The trees have stopped pretending to be summer.

Their leaves have given up the green disguise."

What kind of figurative language do these lines use?

- A. Simile — comparing leaves to costumes worn by people
- B. Personification — giving trees the human ability to pretend
- C. Hyperbole — exaggerating the colour change for effect

D. Onomatopoeia — imitating the sound of leaves falling

13. What does the poet MOST LIKELY mean by writing that the falling leaf is "A small farewell, performed for none below"?

- A. The leaf is sad about leaving the tree it grew on
- B. No one is paying attention to the changing season
- C. The poet wishes there were more people in the park to watch
- D. The leaf's beautiful drift happens without an audience to see it

14. In the final stanza, the speaker says she is "quieter than I was three months ago." What does this MOST LIKELY suggest?

- A. The season has affected the speaker's mood and inner state
- B. The speaker has lost her voice and cannot speak as loudly
- C. The speaker walks more slowly when the weather grows colder
- D. The speaker no longer enjoys walking the same path in autumn

15. (Open-Response)

Both the short story "The Empty Desk" and the poem "October" explore the experience of change and loss. Choose ONE specific way the two pieces are SIMILAR in how they handle this theme. Use details from BOTH pieces to support your answer.

(Write your response in the space provided.)

Most Canadians have seen his paintings, even if they cannot name him. The orange autumn maples reflected in a still lake. The single jack pine bent against a grey sky. The northern wilderness rendered in bold, almost rough brushstrokes that somehow look more real than careful photographs. The painter behind these images was Tom Thomson — a man who spent only a few short years painting before his mysterious death, but who changed the way Canadians see their own country.

Beginnings

Tom Thomson was born in 1877 near Claremont, Ontario. He was the sixth of ten children in a farming family, and from a young age he was known as a quiet boy who preferred wandering in the woods to the company of crowds. He learned to fish, to handle a canoe, and to recognize the calls of birds before he learned to read with much enthusiasm. As a young man, he tried his hand at several occupations — apprentice machinist, ironworker, photo engraver — but none of them held him. He moved to Toronto in 1905 to work as a commercial designer, and it was there, late in his life by the standards of most painters, that he began to take painting seriously.

Discovering Algonquin

Thomson's transformation began when he first visited Algonquin Park in 1912. He was thirty-four years old. The vast lakes, dense forests, and constantly shifting weather of the park struck him as a kind of revelation. For the next five years, he would spend as much time as possible in Algonquin, working in the park as a fishing guide and fire ranger during the warmer months and painting in Toronto during the winter. He carried his paints into the bush in a small wooden box. He worked in oils on small wooden panels that he could fit easily into his canoe.

What emerged from those five years was extraordinary. Thomson painted hundreds of small panels and a smaller number of larger canvases. His best-known works — *The Jack Pine*, *The West Wind*, *Northern River* — are now among the most recognized paintings in Canadian art history.

A New Way of Seeing

Before Thomson, Canadian landscape painting tended to follow European traditions. Painters used soft colours, careful brushwork, and idealized compositions designed to look pleasant on a parlour wall. Thomson did something different. His brushstrokes were thick and visible. His colours were bold — burning oranges, deep blues, sharp whites. His compositions were unflinching: a single twisted tree against a vast sky, a dark forest reflected in cold water, a winter sun setting over snowbound hills. He was not interested in making the Canadian wilderness look tame. He was interested in showing it the way it actually felt — wild, vast, and alive.

His paintings helped inspire a group of younger Canadian painters who would later become known as the Group of Seven. Though Thomson himself died before the Group officially formed, several of its founding members had been his close friends and painting companions. They credited him directly with helping them see their own country in a new way.

The Mystery

On July 8, 1917, Tom Thomson set out alone in his canoe on Canoe Lake in Algonquin Park. He was thirty-nine years old. He did not return. Eight days later, his body was found floating in the lake. The official cause of death was listed as accidental drowning. But almost from the day of his death, questions have surrounded the case. Some who knew him insisted he was too skilled a canoeist to have drowned in calm water. Others wondered about a private dispute Thomson was rumoured to have had with a local man the night before. To this day, the true cause of his death remains unknown.

What is known is what he left behind. In just five short years of serious painting, Tom Thomson produced a body of work that helped a young country see itself with fresh eyes. He is buried at Leith, Ontario, near where he was born. His paintings hang in major galleries across Canada. And every autumn, when the maples flame orange against a grey lake, somewhere in Canada, someone looks at the scene and thinks — even if they do not know his name — that looks like a Tom Thomson painting.

Comparison Chart: Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven

Feature	Tom Thomson	Group of Seven
Active painting years	~1912–1917 (5 years)	Officially formed 1920
Primary subject	Algonquin Park wilderness	Canadian landscape (national)
Style	Bold brushstrokes, vivid colour	Bold brushstrokes, vivid colour
Number of members	Individual painter	Originally seven painters
Relationship to Thomson	—	Several were Thomson's close friends
Status today	Major influence on Canadian art	Most famous group in Canadian art history

16. What is the MAIN idea of this article?

- A. Tom Thomson's death in Algonquin Park remains a mystery to this day
- B. The Group of Seven was the most important art movement in Canadian history
- C. Tom Thomson changed the way Canadians see their own country through his paintings
- D. Algonquin Park is a beautiful place that has inspired many famous painters

17. Why does the author MOST LIKELY open the article by saying that most Canadians have seen Thomson's paintings "even if they cannot name him"?

- A. To capture the reader's interest by suggesting Thomson is more familiar than they realize
- B. To criticize Canadians for not knowing the names of their own famous artists
- C. To explain why Thomson's paintings are now displayed in galleries across Canada
- D. To prove that Thomson's name has been forgotten in his own country

18. Read this sentence from the article:

"He carried his paints into the bush in a small wooden box."

The author MOST LIKELY includes this detail to —

- A. show that Thomson could not afford a proper artist's studio
- B. compare Thomson's tools to those of modern Canadian painters
- C. explain why Thomson preferred working on small wooden panels
- D. show how Thomson combined his outdoor skills with his painting

19. Which detail from the article BEST supports the idea that Thomson began painting seriously LATE in life?

- A. He was born in 1877 near Claremont, Ontario
- B. He was thirty-four years old when he first visited Algonquin Park
- C. He died on July 8, 1917, when he was thirty-nine years old
- D. He worked as a commercial designer in Toronto for several years

20. What does the word revelation MOST LIKELY mean as it is used in this sentence?

"The vast lakes, dense forests, and constantly shifting weather of the park struck him as a kind of revelation."

- A. A sudden, powerful new understanding or insight
- B. A polite invitation to return for another visit
- C. A formal religious ceremony performed outdoors
- D. A peaceful place to rest after travelling a long way

21. According to the article, how did Thomson's paintings DIFFER from earlier Canadian landscape painting?

- A. Thomson painted only in winter rather than in all four seasons
- B. Thomson preferred painting cities rather than the natural wilderness
- C. Thomson used bold colours and rough brushstrokes instead of soft, careful ones
- D. Thomson painted on large canvases instead of small wooden panels

22. (Open-Response)

The author writes that Thomson "was not interested in making the Canadian wilderness look tame. He was interested in showing it the way it actually felt — wild, vast, and alive." Explain what this means about Thomson's purpose as a painter. Use at least TWO specific details from the article to support your answer.

(Write your response in the space provided.)

WRITING SESSION A

Time: Approximately 35 minutes

Part 1: Language Conventions (Questions 29-32)

29. Read the sentence:

The teacher reminded the students ____ their permission forms before the field trip.

Which phrase BEST completes the sentence?

- A. of bringing
- B. for bring
- C. to bring
- D. with bring

30. Which sentence is a complete sentence (not a fragment or run-on)?

- A. Walking quickly through the rainy parking lot toward the side door
- B. The musician played the violin softly while the audience listened carefully
- C. After the assembly ended and the students returned to their classrooms
- D. The phone rang we all turned to see who would answer it first

31. Which sentence uses commas correctly?

- A. My uncle who lives in Halifax sent me a postcard, with photos of the harbour
- B. My uncle, who lives in Halifax sent me a postcard with photos, of the harbour
- C. My uncle who, lives in Halifax, sent me a postcard with photos of the harbour

D. My uncle, who lives in Halifax, sent me a postcard with photos of the harbour

32. Which sentence has correct subject-verb agreement?

A. Neither the coach nor the players were satisfied with the result of the game

B. Neither the coach nor the players was satisfied with the result of the game

C. Neither the coach nor the players is satisfied with the result of the game

D. Neither the coach nor the players being satisfied with the result of the game

Part 2: Short Writing Responses (Questions 33-35)

33. (Open-Response)

Read the paragraph below. It contains THREE errors in grammar, punctuation, or spelling. Rewrite the paragraph correctly.

My cousins came over last weekend and we played soccer in the backyard. They was faster than me but I scored two goals anyway. Afterwards we drank lemonade and ate fresh strawberries from my mothers garden.

(Write your response in the space provided)

D. The judge's decision surprised the whole audience at the science fair

38. Read the sentence:

The package was much heavier ____ Carlos had expected when he picked it up.

Which word BEST completes the sentence?

A. then

B. than

C. that

D. their

39. Which sentence is punctuated correctly?

A. Although the recipe looked complicated it turned out to be quite easy to follow

B. Although, the recipe looked complicated it turned out to be quite easy to follow

C. Although the recipe looked complicated, it turned out to be quite easy to follow

D. Although the recipe looked complicated; it turned out to be quite easy to follow

40. Which sentence contains a spelling error?

A. The committee met every Tuesday afternoon to discuss the upcoming festival

B. The librarian recomended a wonderful series of mystery novels to our class

C. The audience was completely silent during the most dramatic scene of the play

D. The students were enthusiastic about the new music program at our school

Part 2: Short Writing Responses (Questions 41-42)

Part 3: Conventions Continued (Questions 43-45)

43. Which sentence uses capitalization correctly?

- A. Every September, my class studies a different chapter of Canadian history
- B. Every september, my class studies a different chapter of Canadian History
- C. Every September, my class studies a different Chapter of canadian history
- D. Every September, my Class studies a different chapter of canadian history

44. Read the sentence:

The runner stopped at the water station, ____ a long drink, and continued the race.

Which word BEST completes the sentence?

- A. take
- B. takes
- C. taking
- D. took

45. Which sentence uses quotation marks correctly?

- A. "Where did you put my keys" asked Dad. "I cannot find them anywhere."

B. Where did you put my keys "asked Dad I cannot find them anywhere."

C. "Where did you put my keys?" asked Dad. "I cannot find them anywhere."

D. "Where did you put my keys, asked Dad I cannot find them anywhere"

Part 4: Extended Writing Prompts (Questions 46-47)

46. (Extended Writing — Opinion)

Some people believe that students should learn one new language (such as French, Spanish, or Mandarin) starting in Grade 1. Other people believe that students should focus on reading and math in the early grades and learn a second language later.

What do you think?

Write a response in which you:

Clearly state your opinion

- Give at least TWO reasons that support your opinion
- Explain each reason with specific examples or details
- Briefly acknowledge an opposing view
- End with a strong concluding thought

(Aim for approximately four paragraphs.)

Practice Exam 4: Answer Key and Explanations

1. A — The specific, almost photographic details — three pencils in a row, orange water bottle, yellow sticky notes — show how closely Jamal had observed and remembered Aisha. This specificity is the author's way of conveying the depth of their connection. The other options misread the details as personality traits, plot causes, or teacher observation.

2. C — The sentence is a quiet, symbolic line that signals not just the absence of physical notes but the absence of the daily routine and connection they represented. The author is using the sticky notes to communicate emotional loss without stating it directly. The other options take the line too literally (running out, getting forbidden, school-wide policy).

3. B — The small unspoken exchanges — raised eyebrows, tiny smiles, quick head shakes — reveal that Jamal valued these quiet moments of connection without making a show of them. This characterizes him as someone who appreciates subtle, meaningful interactions. The other options misread the glances as inattention, isolation, or disinterest.

4. D — Jamal had been prepared for Aisha's move logically — they had made plans and exchanged email addresses — but the daily visual reminder of the empty desk caught him off guard emotionally. The sentence reveals an unexpected emotional weight to a physical object. The other options misread the line as being about a different seat, cleaning, or hoping for return.

5. C — The passage states that Jamal had seen that same look "on his own face in photographs from his first week of kindergarten." His personal experience of being new is what allows him to recognize what Priya is feeling. The other options misread the source of his recognition as Aisha, books, or teacher warnings.

6. A — The story builds toward Jamal's small act of kindness — passing Priya a note that says "Glad you're here" — and shows how that small gesture begins a new connection. The whole story is built around this theme. The other options misread the story as being about replacement, teacher attention, or warnings against attachment.

7. B — Shifting weight from one foot to the other is a classic physical sign of nervous hesitation. This small body-language detail shows that approaching Priya took courage for Jamal. The other options

describe later actions (walking, pointing, returning to work) that occur after the hesitation has been overcome.

8. D — The closing glance between Jamal and Priya intentionally echoes the small unspoken exchanges Jamal once shared with Aisha. The author is showing that a new connection has begun — not identical to the old one, but similar in spirit. The other options misread the moment as regret, hoping to be caught, or grief.

9. Open-Response — **Sample strong answer:** *At the beginning, Jamal is grieving Aisha's departure and finds it hard to look at her empty desk. By the end, he has reached out to Priya by showing her the playground and slipping her a yellow note that says "Glad you're here." He grows from being closed off to being someone who actively welcomes a new student, much like he wished someone had welcomed him long ago.* (Strong: clear change + specific text evidence.)

10. Open-Response — **Sample strong answer:** *The ending is effective because it quietly mirrors the small exchanges Jamal once shared with Aisha. Earlier in the story, he and Aisha had glanced at each other across their desks, and now he and Priya do the same. The author uses this echo to show that connection can begin again without grand gestures — just a small, shared glance.* (Strong: identifies the echo + cites specific text + explains the effect.)

11. C — The poem's closing lines explicitly state the theme: "October teaches me, without a lesson, / That every change is also letting go." The whole poem builds toward this insight about change and release. The other options misread the poem as being about beauty, symbolism, or outdoor activity.

12. B — Describing trees as "pretending to be summer" and giving up a "disguise" assigns human behaviour (pretending, disguising) to non-human things — the definition of personification. There is no "like" or "as" (so not simile), no exaggeration of fact (so not hyperbole), and no sound imitation (so not onomatopoeia).

13. D — The line describes the leaf's drift as a "small farewell" that no one is watching — a moment of natural beauty happening without an audience. The poet is observing how nature performs its small ceremonies whether or not people notice. The other options take the line as the leaf's emotion, criticism of inattention, or wish for company.

14. A — The speaker is reflecting that the season has changed her inner state — she is "quieter" because October has affected her mood. This is an emotional, reflective statement, not a literal one about voice or walking speed. The other options take the metaphor literally.

15. Open-Response — **Sample strong answer:** *Both pieces show that loss and change can happen quietly, without dramatic events. In "The Empty Desk," Jamal's grief comes through small details — the missing sticky notes and the empty seat beside him. In "October," the speaker notices the falling leaf and her own quieter mood as the season changes. Both pieces explore how loss reveals itself in everyday moments rather than in big announcements.* (Strong: clear similarity + evidence from both texts.)

29. C — The verb "remind" takes the infinitive form "to bring." "The teacher reminded the students to bring their permission forms" is the standard grammatical pattern. The other options ("of bringing," "for bring," "with bring") all use incorrect prepositions or verb forms that do not fit with "reminded."

30. B — Option B has a clear subject ("The musician"), a verb ("played"), and a complete thought. Option A is a fragment (no main verb). Option C is a fragment (a dependent clause alone with no main clause). Option D is a run-on (two independent clauses fused without proper punctuation).

31. D — Option D correctly uses commas to set off the non-essential descriptive clause "who lives in Halifax." The phrase adds information about the uncle but can be removed without changing the basic meaning, so it must be enclosed in commas on both sides. The other options misplace or omit the commas in ways that disrupt the sentence.

32. A — In "neither/nor" constructions, the verb agrees with the subject closer to the verb. Here "players" (plural) is closer to the verb, so "were" is correct. Options B and C use singular verbs that do not agree with "players." Option D uses an incomplete verb form ("being satisfied").

33. Open-Response — **Sample strong answer:** *My cousins came over last weekend and we played soccer in the backyard. They were faster than me, but I scored two goals anyway. Afterwards we drank lemonade and ate fresh strawberries from my mother's garden.* (Three errors fixed: "was" → "were"; "strawberrys" → "strawberries"; "mothers" → "mother's.")

34. Open-Response — **Sample strong answer:** *When the bell rang at three o'clock, the students grabbed their backpacks and rushed toward the front doors of the school.* (Strong: combines all three ideas using subordination, flows smoothly, improves rhythm.)

35. Open-Response — **Sample strong answer:** *My next-door neighbour, Mrs. Park, has been kind to me ever since my family moved onto our street three years ago. Last winter, when I twisted my ankle slipping on the ice in our driveway, she walked over with a thermos of hot soup and stayed for an hour to make sure I was okay. Her quiet, steady kindness has made our street feel like home.* (Strong: specific person, concrete example, personal voice.)

36. Extended Writing — **Sample Level 3 response benchmark:** A strong series-of-paragraphs response introduces the book, movie, or show in the opening paragraph with a clear sense of when and how the writer encountered it. Two body paragraphs each develop a specific aspect (a character that resonated, a scene that moved the writer, a theme that changed their thinking, etc.) with concrete examples. The closing paragraph reflects on what the writer learned or felt. Length: approximately four paragraphs. The strongest responses include at least one specific quote, scene, or detail that anchors the writer's emotional response.

37. D — The sentence describes one judge making one decision, so the singular possessive "judge's decision" is correct. Option A omits the apostrophe. Option B incorrectly pluralizes both judge and decision. Option C unnecessarily adds an apostrophe to "audience." This follows the standard rule for singular possessives.

38. B — "Than" is the comparison word ("heavier than expected"). "Then" refers to time, "that" is a pronoun or conjunction (incorrect here), and "their" is possessive. The sentence is making a comparison,

so "than" is the only correct choice. This is one of the most commonly tested homophones at the Grade 6 level.

39. C — The sentence begins with the dependent clause "Although the recipe looked complicated," which must be followed by a comma before the independent clause. Option A omits the comma. Option B misplaces the comma after "Although." Option D incorrectly uses a semicolon where a comma is required for an introductory dependent clause.

40. B — "Recomended" is misspelled; the correct spelling is "recommended" with two m's. The other three sentences contain no spelling errors. This is one of the most commonly misspelled words at the Grade 6 level and a frequent EQAO convention item.

41. Open-Response — **Sample strong answer:** *Between you and me, the surprise party for Grandma was harder to plan than we thought it would be.* (Two corrections: "Between you and I" → "Between you and me" because "between" is a preposition that requires the object pronoun "me"; "then" → "than" because the sentence is making a comparison.)

42. Open-Response — **Sample strong answer:** *The road was closed because of construction. We had to take a long detour through the countryside, which made us nearly an hour late.* (Strong: run-on split cleanly into two complete sentences while preserving the full meaning.)

43. A — Option A correctly capitalizes "September" (proper noun for a month) and "Canadian" (adjective from a proper noun) while leaving "history" lowercase (a common noun, not a course title). Option B fails to capitalize September. Option C incorrectly capitalizes "Chapter" and fails to capitalize "Canadian." Option D incorrectly capitalizes "Class."

44. D — The sentence describes a series of past actions ("stopped," "continued"). To match the past-tense verbs on either side, the missing word must also be past tense: "took." Option A is present, option B is present singular, and option C ("taking") would be incorrect because the parallel structure requires a finite past-tense verb, not a participle.

45. C — Option C correctly punctuates dialogue: opening quotation marks before "Where," a question mark inside the quotation marks before the speaker tag, a period after "Dad," and a properly punctuated second sentence in quotation marks. The other options either omit the question mark, misplace the punctuation, or fail to use quotation marks properly.

46. Extended Writing — **Sample Level 3 response benchmark:** A strong opinion response takes a clear stand (early language learning OR focus on reading/math first OR a balanced position) in the opening paragraph, develops at least two well-reasoned arguments in body paragraphs with specific examples (brain development at young ages, future opportunities, foundational literacy needs, cognitive overload), briefly acknowledges an opposing view, and closes with a thoughtful concluding sentence. Length: approximately four paragraphs. Wandering between both sides without committing loses marks on Ideas.

47. Extended Writing — **Sample Level 3 response benchmark:** A strong narrative response opens with a specific small object (a key, a coin, a photograph) clearly described so the reader can picture it. The story builds through a clear arc — finding or noticing the object, discovering its significance, and resolving

with a moment of insight. Strong responses use sensory detail and show how the object's importance grew through the story's events. Length: approximately three to five paragraphs. The strongest responses pick a small, specific object and let its meaning emerge slowly rather than announcing it up front..