

IGS 11 Provincial Exam Written Response:

The 'How to Rock It' Guide

The Ministry of Education develops their written response questions from 4 broad themes:

1. Autonomy (independence) and International Involvement
2. Politics and Government
3. Society and Identity
4. Human Geography

Here are the **COMMAND WORDS** that are commonly used for essay questions:

1. **Explain.** This is a straightforward command word that is asking you to make clear the reasons for a situation, or the reasons why a series of events occurred.
2. **Support.** When asked to do this, you are being directed to give points in favour of a certain position. With this type of essay, the thesis is basically given to you in the question and you are just asked to support it with details.
3. **Analyze.** Here you are being asked to examine a topic by considering and discussing each part of section of the topic.
4. **Compare.** When asked to do this, it is generally assumed that you will both compare and contrast the topic. Your task is to give similarities and differences for the topic being discussed.
5. **To what extent?** If these words are used as the command words in a topic, it is assumed that there are two positions possible on the topic. You are expected to weigh the strength of the two sides, and come to a conclusion about which side presents the stronger argument.
6. **Evaluate.** In this situation, you are being asked to make a judgment between two arguments or positions. You are being asked to weigh the arguments on both sides of the question, and come to a conclusion about which side presents the stronger position. Similar to “to what extent?”
7. **Describe.** You must give a detailed description or account of an event, situation, or topic.

The best way to prepare a response is to go through several steps:

1. First, **READ** the question carefully to determine what the question is really asking.
2. Second, **BOX** in the command word, and ensure you understand what it is requiring you to do. Underline key words in the topic to help you with this.
3. Third, **CREATE A CHART** on the planning page of the test, and fill in examples of information that you could use in answering the question.

Below is a list of commonly occurring exam questions.

Historical & Political Questions:

1. “Despite British and American influences, Canada has evolved into an autonomous nation.” **Evaluate** this statement using examples from 1914 to 2000.
2. **Explain** how intolerance has been an issue in Canada since 1914.
3. **Explain** the political, social and economic impact of World War One on Canada.
4. **Explain** how Canadians responded to the Great Depression. (include political, social and economic examples)
5. **To what extent** did World War One and World War Two have an impact on the Canadian home front? Use examples from between 1914-1918 and 1939-1945. Both sides of the argument must be addressed.
6. **Explain** how Canadians at home contributed to the Allied victories during World War One and World War Two.
7. “Canada has created a welfare state that benefits every man, woman and child from cradle to grave.”
Evaluate this statement using examples from the period 1914 to the year 2015. Your answer should consider both sides of the statement.
8. **Explain** how Canada’s identity has been shaped as a result of its involvement in international affairs from 1914 to 2000.
9. **Evaluate** the development of French Canadian and English Canadian relations from throughout the period 1914 to 2000.
10. **Evaluate** the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Federal Government of Canada between 1914 to present.
11. **Describe** Canada’s participation in the United Nations organization from 1945-present.
12. **To what extent** did Canada play a significant role in Cold War Events? Use examples from the period 1945-1990.
13. **Discuss** Canada’s involvement in international organizations from 1945-2000. (Tricky question because you can also discuss how Canada was involved in international events as well!)
14. **Explain** Canada’s changing role in armed conflicts from 1914-2000.

15. **Describe** how the Charter of Rights and Freedoms has had an impact on Canadian society.
16. The concept of human rights has taken on great importance in Canada through the twentieth century. **Evaluate** this statement.
17. **Describe** the evolution of Canada's social safety net from the '1920's to the present, and **assess** its success.
18. **Describe** and **analyze** Canada's immigration policy during the twentieth century

Human Geography Questions

For this section the Ministry likes to throw out ridiculously broad questions (maybe I am a little biased).

1. **Describe** realistic strategies that Canadians could take to reduce their negative impact on land, water and the atmosphere.
2. **Discuss** the impact of global warming on Canada.
3. **Explain** the political, social, and economic challenges in finding solutions to environmental threats that affect Canadians. All three aspects of the questions must be addressed.
4. **Explain** the political, economic and social factors that prevent some developing countries from improving their standards of living (could there be a worse question?).
5. Between 1994-2000, Canada was ranked the top country in the world in which to live, according to the United Nations Human Development Index. Since then, it has consistently been in the top six of the rankings.

Explain the key factors that have allowed Canada to enjoy such a high standard of living compared to nations in the developing world. Your answer must refer to both Canada and the developing world.
6. **Explain** how Canadians can better manage freshwater (wow!).
7. **Describe** Canada's and Canadians' role in attempting to solve poverty problems in developing nations (I am pretty sure this one takes the cake for the worst question ever!).