

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 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. Read what you actually said, not what you meant to say.

- 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

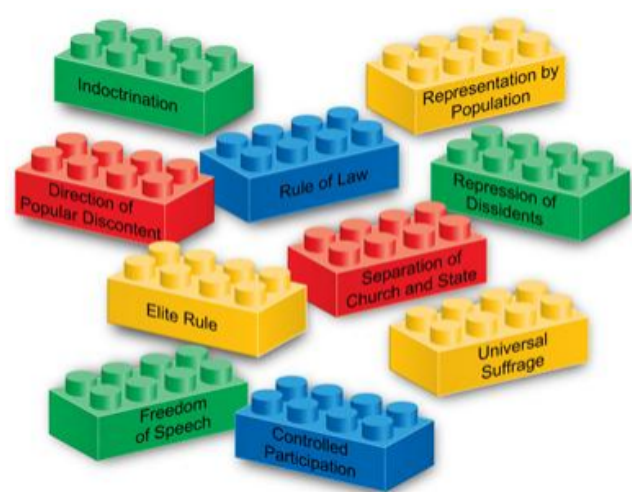
Make sure that you are familiar with the scoring criteria that will be used to mark your writing assignments in the diploma examination.

◆ **Assignment I: Understanding and Evaluating Key Course Concepts**

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 learned 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.

Another Example: Assignment 1 from January 2017



Which characteristic(s) of economic systems is/are the most important to a capitalist economy?

Write a response in which you must

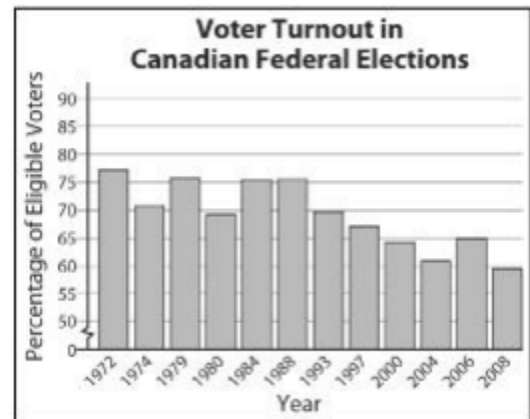
- **identify** the characteristic(s) of economic systems that is/are the most important to a capitalist economy
- **explain** why the characteristic(s) is/are the most important
- **support** your response using your understanding of social studies

◆ Assignment II: Interpretation of Sources and Defending a Position

Source 1



Source 2



Source 3



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.

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.

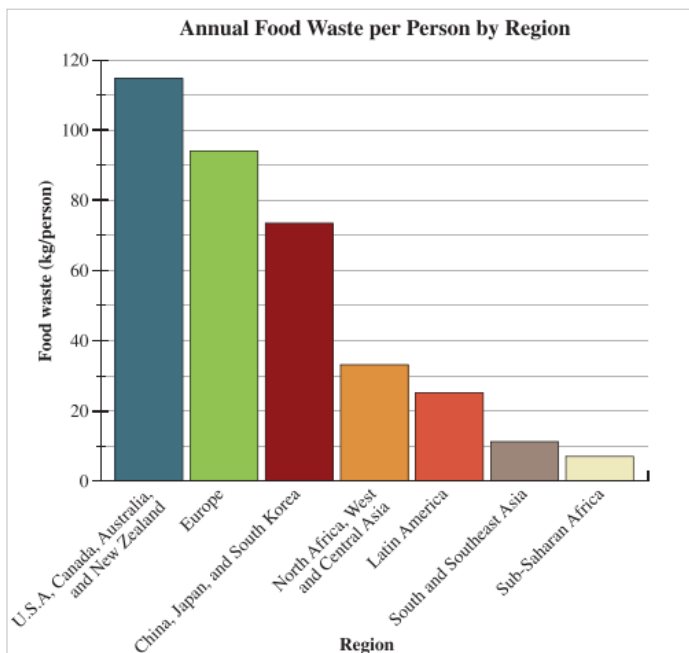
- Considering the sources presented, what do you think should be the role of individuals in society?

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.

Another Example: Assignment II from January 2017

Source I



Source II



Dec, 2012 – London, Ontario. Idle No More protesters block highway to draw attention to Aboriginal demands.



What does each of the three sources presented on pages 6 and 7 communicate about the role of individuals in society?

AND

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

Write a response in which you must

- **interpret** each source to **identify** what the source tells you about the role of individuals in society
- **explain** and **defend** your position on what the role of individuals in society should be
- **support** your interpretations and position by referring to the sources and to your understanding of social studies

◆ 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.

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.

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 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.

Should the Alberta government make the use of snow tires mandatory?

Citizen I



Alberta winters are known for extreme cold, heavy snowfall, and icy roads. All drivers should be required to use snow tires during the winter months. Making winter driving safer will save lives and millions of dollars in health-care spending and property damage. Laws banning distracted driving have created safer roads for drivers. Legislation for mandatory snow tires is the next logical step.

Citizen II



How citizens choose to deal with challenging winter roads should be left to the individual. Many purchase snow tires, while others simply adjust their driving to suit the conditions. Licensed drivers should have the ability to operate vehicles safely without the government imposing needless rules and costs on them.

Citizen III



Snow tires are a good idea, but the government should focus on educating citizens to drive appropriately for the conditions. Just because you have snow tires doesn't mean that you can drive like it is summertime. Road-conditions awareness and positive incentives, such as reduced insurance rates for drivers who have snow tires, will make winter roads safer.

Should the Alberta government make the use of snow tires mandatory?

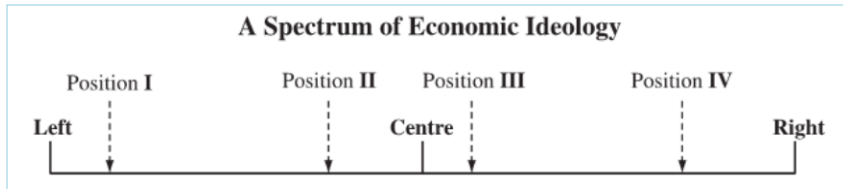
Write a response in which you **must**

- **explore** the issue of making the use of snow tires mandatory
- **analyze** various points of view on the issue
- **explain** and **defend** your position on the issue
- **support** your point of view using your understanding of social studies

Reminders for Writing

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

Questions 1 to 4 are based on the following diagram.



There is an accompanying video for this booklet.

(From the Social 30-2 library on screencast.com)

- Which of the following positions on the economic spectrum **most strongly** supports the politics and practices of collectivism?
A. Position I B. Position II C. Position III D. Position IV
- From the time of the New Deal in the 1930s, through the 1970s, the United States experienced an ideological shift from
A. Position I to the left C. Position III to the right
B. Position II to the right D. Position IV to the left
- With which of the following statements would the perspectives represented at all four positions on the spectrum **most likely** agree?
A. Government must establish an economic system that promotes national prosperity.
B. Governments must use economic policies to minimize income inequalities among citizens.
C. Government regulations that limit the freedoms of large-scale corporations must be eliminated.
D. Government must remove barriers to international trade to provide consumers with access to the lowest-cost goods and services.
- Historically in Canadian federal elections, the political parties that have formed the federal government have aligned **most closely** with which two positions on the spectrum?
A. Position I and Position II C. Position II and Position III
B. Position I and Position IV D. Position III and Position IV

Question 5 is based on the following list.

Proposed Reforms	
Proposal W	Nationalize fossil fuel production in order to regulate prices and reduce consumption.
Proposal X	Reduce corporate and personal taxation rates in order to stimulate economic expansion.
Proposal Y	Require persons receiving unemployment benefits to enroll in job skills enhancement programs to make themselves more employable.
Proposal Z	Lower the age at which citizens become eligible to receive government pension benefits in order to encourage early retirements.

- In Canada, a person with right-wing ideological beliefs would **most likely** oppose which two of these proposed reforms?
A. Proposal Q and Proposal X C. Proposal X and Proposal Y
B. Proposal W and Proposal Z D. Proposal Y and Proposal Z

Questions 6 to 9 are based on the following points of view.

Point of View I

We do not allow just anyone to fly a passenger jet, perform surgery, or design a bridge because we know those tasks should be done by those qualified to do them. So why do we handle political decision making differently? Why do we allow the masses to be the ultimate political authority in a country? They are easily swayed by empty promises and slick campaigns. A far better process for leadership selection is a natural process in which the most able individual demonstrates ability, takes charge, and “pilots” the country just as we expect the most able persons to pilot our airplanes.

Point of View II

History has shown that when political power is in the hands of the elite citizens, they will base their decisions on protecting their power and ensuring that their needs are met. If we hire people to fix our car or repair an appliance, they are accountable for doing a good job. If they don’t, they will soon be out of work. The same rules should apply to our political leaders. They have to be held accountable to the people; otherwise the people could suffer years of incompetent leadership. After all, it is the people who “hire” political leaders to make decision for them.

6. Point of View I suggests that citizens in democratic states
- A. lack the ability to choose the best political leaders
 - B. want to be led by responsive, honest political leaders
 - C. fail to appreciate the benefits provided by living in a democracy
 - D. believe that a democratic state is the best way to ensure public security
7. Which of the following examples would be **most appropriate** to support the ideas expressed in the first sentence of Point of View II?
- A. In the 1930s, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin employed secret police to eliminate persons perceived to be a threat to his leadership.
 - B. In the early 1930s, the democratically elected government in Germany was unable to prevent a sudden and massive rise in unemployment rates.
 - C. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, American President Franklin Roosevelt used massive government spending to reduce hardship caused by economic collapse.
 - D. In 1970, after a radical group in Québec took political hostages, the Canadian government invoked the War Measures Act to give police powers to arrest persons suspected of aiding the radicals.
8. Persons holding the differing points of view presented would nevertheless agree that
- A. poor political leadership puts citizens at risk
 - B. competitive processes ensure the selection of the best political leaders
 - C. the common person is not capable of responsible political decision making
 - D. the best political leaders are those who impose the fewest regulations on the people
9. Which of the following rows identifies the way in which a person who highly values equality and liberty would **most likely** respond to the ideas expressed in both points of view?

Row	Ideas in Point of View I	Ideas in Point of View II
A.	With agreement	With agreement
B.	With disagreement	With disagreement
C.	With agreement	With disagreement
D.	With disagreement	With agreement

Questions 10 to 12 are based on the following excerpt

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. —That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, —That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness.

—*The United States Declaration of Independence* —1776

10. Which of the following beliefs about the structure of society is consistent with the ideas presented in the excerpt?
- A. It is necessary to use violence to overthrow a government that becomes unpopular by abusing its power.
 - B. People are best able to determine for themselves which individuals should be trusted with the power to create laws.
 - C. It is for the benefits of society that the authority to rule be a hereditary position in order to create consistency and stability.
 - D. Civilization has corrupted society and therefore a strong authoritative government is necessary to maintain control.
11. In context, the first sentence of the excerpt suggests that rights and freedoms
- A. must be protected by a collective group
 - B. can be limited during times of domestic crisis
 - C. are fundamental elements that individuals possess
 - D. are granted to those who hold an elite position in society
12. Which of the following philosophers would be **least likely** to support ideas presented in the excerpt?
- A. John Locke
 - B. Thomas Hobbes
 - C. John Stuart Mill
 - D. Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Questions 13 to 16 are based on the following sources.

Source I

A taxation system based on the theory of taking from the rich to give to the poor results in frustration and stagnation. It penalizes the enterprising, the efficient, the vigorous and the thrifty without, in the long term, benefiting those who lack these qualities. High rates of taxation, which go beyond the need for government's general support and the maintenance of public services reduce labor's incentive to work, management's incentive for efficient operation and the willingness of investors to undertake new risks. The consequences are a diminution*in the number of new enterprises and lowered productivity in the enterprises already existing. This in turn means fewer jobs and a lowered standard of living for all citizens.

*diminution—reduction

—from *Fallacies of Socialism*

Source II



John Collins, 1962

13. The writer of Source I suggests that people differ in the degree to which they
- share their wealth with those less fortunate
 - demonstrate characteristics associated with self-reliance
 - consume the goods and services produced in the marketplace
 - obey the laws of the country when conducting business transactions
14. A supporter of the classical liberal ideas of Adam Smith would **most likely** respond to the point of view expressed in Source I with
- approval, because the writer identifies the negative consequences of high rates of taxation
 - approval, because the writer recognizes the need for government regulation of the economy
 - disapproval, because the writer assumes that governments will spend taxation revenue inefficiently
 - disapproval, because the writer appears to support the formation of labor unions to protect the rights of workers.
15. The central message of source II is that socialist states
- project an image of themselves that differs greatly from the reality that their citizens experience.
 - are successful at producing consumer goods but not successful at protecting the government
 - are successful at eliminating poverty but not successful at addressing rapid increases in the price of consumer goods
 - claim to protect the rights of workers while at the same time allowing unemployment rates at high levels
16. Which row identifies the point of view expressed by each source?

Row	Source I	Source II
A.	Critical of collectivist economic systems	Critical of collectivist economic systems
B.	Critical of collectivist economic systems	Supportive of collectivist economic systems
C.	Supportive of collectivist economic systems	Critical of collectivist economic systems
D.	Supportive of collectivist economic systems	Supportive of collection economic systems

Questions 17 to 19 are based on the following list.

Reforms implemented by Robert Owen, a Factory Owner in Scotland in the 19 th Century	
I	No children employed under the age of ten
II	Children 3 years of age or older have the opportunity to attend school
III	Maximum 12-hour working day for adults
IV	Fines imposed for drunkenness
V	Streets paved and street cleaning introduced

17. The Reforms listed in the list would **most accurately** be considered to be
- fascist.
 - socialist
 - capitalist.
 - communist
18. A supporter of Adam Smith's ideas would view Reform III with
- Disapproval, because a limit is being placed on the potential maximum profits
 - Disapproval, because forcing workers to work longer than eight hours a day is abusive
 - Approval, because a limited working day allows workers opportunities for leisure activities
 - Approval, because workers would have enough time to be activity involved in workplace decision making

76. With which of the following points of view would a person who values collectivism **most likely** agree?
- A. When the needs of society are in conflict with the needs of an individual, the need of society must have priority.
 - B. There are almost no situations in which the government is justified in taking away the freedom of choice from individuals.
 - C. The main purposes of government are to guarantee that people have the right to own property and to ensure that this right is never taken away.
 - D. History has shown that little good has ever come from societies in which the common good is more important than competition among individuals.
77. Which of the following situations **most strongly** represents an example of citizens demonstrating collective responsibility?
- A. Citizens in a community set up a neighborhood patrol to watch for and report any suspicious or criminal activity to authorities.
 - B. A gathering of citizens at a city hall meeting becomes unruly when groups on opposing sides of an issue begin shouting down each other's speakers.
 - C. During a severe snowstorm in an isolated community, several local merchants agree to double the price for snow shovels and other snow-removal hardware.
 - D. In a small city, garbage collection is turned over from city-operated trucks with city employees to a large corporation that promises to reduce collection costs.

ANSWER KEY

- | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. A | 27. B | 53. B |
| 2. D | 28. A | 54. A |
| 3. A | 29. D | 55. A |
| 4. C | 30. D | 56. A |
| 5. B | 31. B | 57. D |
| 6. A | 32. B | 58. D |
| 7. A | 33. A | 59. C |
| 8. A | 34. A | 60. C |
| 9. D | 35. A | 61. C |
| 10. B | 36. A | 62. A |
| 11. C | 37. A | 63. B |
| 12. B | 38. A | 64. A |
| 13. B | 39. B | 65. A |
| 14. A | 40. A | 66. B |
| 15. A | 41. B | 67. B |
| 16. A | 42. C | 68. A |
| 17. B | 43. A | 69. C |
| 18. A | 44. D | 70. A |
| 19. A | 45. B | 71. A |
| 20. C | 46. C | 72. A |
| 21. D | 47. C | 73. B |
| 22. B | 48. B | 74. C |
| 23. A | 49. B | 75. B |
| 24. C | 50. C | 76. A |
| 25. A | 51. A | 77. A |
| 26. D | 52. D | |