

**Reading Comprehension: (34 pts)**

**Read the text and then answer the questions in your OWN WORDS.**

**The Education GENDER GAP**

Research into gender differences in education has tended to focus on the poor performance of girls in science and maths, virtually ignoring the low achievement of boys in reading and writing. According to Cecilia Reynolds, from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, it has long been recognized that girls did well in literacy and that boys did not, but there was no great concern about this because in the real world, boys were still going to get better jobs and salaries. However, a 2004 study by the Council of Ministers of Education, found that Canadian girls are outperforming boys in literacy skills by a wider margin than previously thought. Among thirteen-year-olds, about ten per cent more girls than boys meet expected targets for literacy, and among sixteen-year-olds, about seventeen per cent more girls write at an age-appropriate level.

As if that wasn't bad enough, recent testing has shown for the first time that the performance gap that once existed between boys and girls in science and maths has now almost disappeared too. Some experts even predict that at some time in the future, girls may actually move ahead of boys in science. According to Paul Cappon, Director General of the Council of Ministers of Education, one of the consequences of this will be to put girls in the lead in relation both to university entrance and to achievement in the labour market. Already, only forty-two per cent of university graduates in Canada are male, and that number is dropping each year.

While experts agree that now is the time to focus on the long-standing gender gap in literacy, their explanations for it, and their solutions, vary widely. In a culture that favours equal opportunity and advocates political correctness, some have found it difficult to discuss this troubling gender gap without entering into the touchy domain of sexism.

Some educators have put the blame directly on policy and its implementation by women teachers, saying that since educational practice has aimed at improving the performance of girls, boys have been forgotten. Cecilia Reynolds has warned that it is important to address any differences between boys and girls without assigning blame. Nevertheless, although she doesn't believe boys were forgotten, she does admit that insufficient attention may have been paid to their different learning needs.

Others have pointed to a more subtle cause, to what Paul Cappon has called the ‘feminization’ of education. Increasingly, teaching is becoming dominated by females as more young women enter the profession and more older men retire, he says. That leaves boys with few male role models in the classroom. “It’s women doing the teaching. Boys in the socialization process will tend to discount the importance of that particular subject area when it’s only women teaching it,” he suggests.

Cappon also thinks the kinds of reading materials available in schools may be better suited to girls than boys. As he points out, the current wisdom is that boys’ reading preferences include factual and instructional material that will help them understand particular areas of interest, whereas girls are attracted to stories that explore interpersonal relationships.

Since there is now concrete evidence of a significant gender divide, there is a growing body of opinion which argues that the only way to ensure equitable treatment of boys and girls is to segregate them. Some schools have used this tactic to improve girls’ performance in science and maths, but with the latest emphasis on literacy and boys, some now say full separation is the only solution.

Leonard Sax, the founder of an organization promoting single-sex education, points to the success of an inner-city school in Montreal which introduced single-sex classrooms five years ago. Since then, absenteeism has dropped and the rate of students going on to college has nearly doubled. Sax, a family doctor and a psychologist, believes that many people in education are paralyzed by a feeling that it’s politically incorrect to talk about innate differences in the ways girls and boys learn. He argues, however, that genetic differences between boys and girls mean that it’s impossible for them both to learn successfully in the same classroom. According to Sax, every substantial choice made in schools benefits one gender and disadvantages another. As an example, he claims that girls hear better than boys and that part of the reason for boys falling behind is simply that they can’t hear the teacher. He also points to research which shows that there are key differences in the way boys and girls respond to confrontation. Girls shrink away from a confrontational teaching style under which many boys would thrive.

What policy makers ultimately decide to do may depend on how far the results of the recent study are judged to be an accurate reflection of the general situation. Cecilia Reynolds emphasizes that gender differences are statistical, with significant numbers of individuals everywhere not following the general trend. Although she does not believe we should be seriously concerned, she does think that in future, parents and teachers will need to pay more attention to what is happening to boys both at home and in the classroom.

**1- Find words in the text that mean the same as: (5 pts)**

Weak, low (p.1): **Poor**

Difference (p.1): **Margin**

Work (p.2): **labour**

Rooted, established (p.3): **long-standing**

Gap (p.7): **divide**

**2- Explain the following words according to their meaning in the text: (5 pts)**

Literacy (p.1): **reading and writing**

Policy (p.4): **Plan of action/ curriculum**

Concrete (p.7): **proven/said**

Equitable (p.7): **fair**

Accurate (p.9) : **precise/thorough**

**3- Are these statements True (T) or False (F)? Answer then justify quoting the text. (7 pts)**

a- In the past, boys' lower literacy skills disadvantaged them professionally.

**False: (1.5) in the real world, boys were still going to get better jobs and salaries.**

b- Newer researches suggest that the gender gap in most school subjects has shrunk.

**True: (1.10-11) the performance gap that once existed ...has now almost disappeared.**

c- Admitting that there are innate differences in the way boys and girls learn is a thorny issue.

**True: (1.19-20) have found it difficult to discuss this troubling gender gap without entering the touchy domain of sexism.**

d- The high proportion of women in teaching is an advantage for boys.

**False: (l. 29-30) few male role models in class  
(l.31) Discount the importance of that particular subject area when it's only women teaching it**

e- Boys and girls can follow the same learning strategies.

**False: (l. 47-48) it's impossible for them both to learn successfully in the same classroom.**

f- Boys and girls react differently in a classroom.

**True: (l. 51-52) there are key differences in the way boys and girls respond to confrontations.**

g- The Gender Gap is a proven and confirmed issue.

**False: (l. 56)gender differences are statistical,...not following the general trend.**

4- Given the title of the text "The Education Gender Gap", briefly summarize the main idea of the text. (20 words) (2 pts)

**The text is about the difference between the academic performance of girls and boys.**

5- What are the three different arguments presented in this article to justify girls' higher performance in most subjects: (4 pts)

**All regulations and curricula are established by women.**

**Girls have more female role models to identify with/to.**

**The reading and discussion topics interest girls more.**

**Girls hear better than boys**

6- What are the two main arguments used by some schools and experts in the field to promote single-sex education? (3 pts)

**To give equal chances to both genders and be fair given the differences in the results**

**Since there are innate differences in the way boys and girls learn.**

7- What conclusion does the article come to? (3 pts)

**This difference is not general and hasn't been proven everywhere. However, Cecilia believes that parents and educators should keep a closer look on teenagers.**

8- The article presents the idea of boys and girls being educated separately to provide all with equal chances of success. Are you in favor of such a proposal? Why/ Why not.

(60 words) (5 pts)

**Personal**

**Vocabulary and Grammar: (36 pts)**

1- Read the passage and circle the best answer. (10 pts)

**1.EVER** since rap music started in 1979 with *Rapper's Delight* by the Sugar Hill Gang, it has **2.BEEN** criticized, praised, and censored.

Survey results released in February 2008 show that 71% of people view rap music as having a negative impact on society. Specifically, rappers have been accused of **3.PROMOTING** unwholesome values and of being poor role **4.MODELS**. This viewpoint has been **5.EXRESSED** by well-known figures such as Tipper Gore, the wife of **6.FORMER** Vice President Al Gore, who was one of the **(7) FIRST** to state, "Rap pollutes the minds of American youth". Critics of rap seize the opportunity to say that rap **(8) DOES** appear to send out troubling messages. **(9) THEY** believe that, through its **(10) LYRICS**, rap music glorifies gang membership, drug use and the mistreatment of women.

How has this perception of rap **(11) RISEN**? To answer this question, **(12) REMEMBER** the rappers who have gained fame. It is clear that **(13) FAR** more "gangsta" rappers have achieved success than rappers with positive messages. Is that because most rappers are inherently "bad", **(14) OR** is this trend simply a result of the market meeting the demand? After **(15), ALL** if no one listens to positive rappers, no one is going to promote them.

**(16) YET** supporters of rap have a different perspective. They maintain that rap does **(17) NOT** advance gang membership, but simply illustrates **(18) WHY** young African Americans turn to gangs in the first place. A gang offers financial security or safety from other gangs. **(19) TO** some in the rap community, their music is a social commentary that accurately **(20) PORTRAYS** the black urban environment. They also claim that the positive efforts of black rappers to eliminate violence from their music and neighborhoods have not received as much publicity as the negative.

- |               |             |              |              |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. a Not      | b If        | c When       | d Ever       |
| 2. a been     | b had       | c said       | d always     |
| 3. a learning | b promoting | c rehearsing | d performing |

4. **a** players            **b** examples    **c** models        **d** people
5. **a** seen                **b** expressed    **c** made            **d** summarized
6. **a** before              **b** early            **c** another        **d** former
7. **a** first                 **b** most            **c** best             **d** worst
8. **a** will                 **b** has             **c** does            **d** should
9. **a** Those               **b** Which          **c** They            **d** When
10. **a** lyrics              **b** lines            **c** words           **d** melodies
11. **a** risen               **b** raised          **c** arisen          **d** arose
12. **a** think              **b** remember     **c** believe        **d** forget
13. **a** far                 **b** one             **c** some            **d** much
14. **a** if                    **b** or               **c** why             **d** how
15. **a** this                **b** it                **c** all               **d** that
16. **a** As                  **b** So               **c** Such            **d** Yet
17. **a** not                 **b** it                **c** no               **d** none
18. **a** why                **b** just             **c** that            **d** whether
19. **a** Over               **b** At               **c** On               **d** To
20. **a** induces            **b** exaggerates   **c** portrays       **d** renews

**2- Complete the sentences with the correct form of the word in brackets: (10 pts)**

- 1- It is **COMPLUSORY**(compel) at school to be **OBEDIENT**(obey) and to have an **EXEMPLARY**(example) attitude.
- 2- While some believe that students who often cheat during exams are **INDUSTRIOUS**(industry), others consider them **MINDLESS**(mind).
- 3- The **\_RENEWAL** (new) of school books and subjects is extremely important in order to promote **INNOVATION**(innovate).

- 4- The **BENEFICIAL** (benefit) effects of sports on the mind ought not to be undermined.
- 5- Students often feel **AGONY** (agonize) and stress before exams.
- 6- It was **DELIGHTFUL** (delight) to be in a school play for the first time.

**3- Rewrite the following sentences using the given prompts. (12 pts)**

- a- I will finish this assignment next week.  
**In 3 weeks I will have finished this assignment.**
- b- The drunken teenagers left the party before the police arrived. (**By the time**)  
**By the time the police arrived, they had left the party.**
- c- I visited Japan once two years ago. (**for**)  
**I haven't been to Japan for 2 years.**
- d- My friends keep chatting when we are together. It really annoys me. (**Always**)  
**My friends are always chatting!**
- e- I am driving a truck for the first time.  
**It's the first time I have driven a truck.**
- f- Mary took the bus every day when she was in Tokyo. (**would**)  
**Mary would take the bus every day when she was in Tokyo.**
- g- We will be working on the new project tomorrow; our boss will arrive then. (**when**)  
**When our boss arrives, we will be working.**
- h- This is the story of a man. His wife suddenly loses her memory. (**relative pronoun**)  
**This is the story of a man whose wife suddenly loses her memory.**
- i- We often work in groups. It is a stimulating experience. (**relative pronoun**)  
**We often work in groups, which is a stimulating experience.**
- j- John was tired and wanted to stop. He had been driving all day. (**relative pronoun**)  
**John, who had been driving all day, was tired and wanted to stop.**
- k- The firm is sending me to New York. I work for this firm. (**relative pronoun**)  
**The firm where I work is sending me to New York.**

l- This is the student. I gave a lift to him this morning. (**relative pronoun**)

**This is the student whom I gave a lift to this morning. (to whom)**

**g. Complete the sentences with the correct preposition: (4 pts)**

- a- Teenagers should always confide .....**TO** ....their parents.
- b- He's never been fond .....**OF**.....martial arts.
- c- My she prides herself .....**FOR**....speaking five languages.
- d- He is credited .....**FOR**.....innovating in the music field.
- e- My enthusiasm for the job derives .....**FROM**..... my dream to become the best.
- f- They are eager .....**TO**.....solve the puzzling mystery.
- g- She really takes .....**AFTER**.....her mother; in pride as much as looks!
- h- Criminals often resort .....**TO**.....smart schemes to escape justice.

***Good Luck!***