

**Civics**  
Open

# A Letter of Concern About a Local Issue

## The Task

This task was designed to encourage students to apply their knowledge and skills in the area of active citizenship. Students were asked to examine and analyse a local issue of community and personal interest and to write a letter expressing their concern about the matter. The letter had to analyse at least two perspectives on the issue and propose a reasonable and convincing solution to the problem.

To monitor their work, students were encouraged to use the organizer, checklists, and template that were provided to them (see the appendices to the Teacher Package, reproduced on pages 39–40 of this document).

The intended audience was a person or persons in a position of power or influence with respect to the selected issue.

The final product was a formal letter of concern, addressed to an appropriate figure, that analysed a local issue from at least two perspectives and proposed a reasonable solution to the problem.

Students were also to submit a bibliography reflecting their research, although this element was not evaluated as part of the final product.

## Expectations

This task gave students the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the following selected expectations from two strands: Purposeful Citizenship and Active Citizenship.

*Students will:*

1. describe how their own and others' beliefs and values can be connected to a sense of civic purpose and preferred types of participation;
2. analyse a current public issue that involves conflicting beliefs and values, describing and evaluating the conflicting positions;
3. articulate clearly their personal sense of civic identity and purpose, and understand the diversity of beliefs and values of other individuals and groups in Canadian society;
4. communicate their own beliefs, points of view, and informed judgements, and effectively use appropriate discussion skills (e.g., persuasion, negotiation);
5. demonstrate an ability to research questions and issues of civic importance, and to think critically and creatively about these issues and questions;
6. participate effectively in a civil action or project of interest to them and of importance to the community (e.g., attend public hearings, plan religious or cultural event, join special interest group, write letters to editor).

### **Prior Knowledge and Skills**

To complete this task, students were expected to have some knowledge or skills relating to the following:

- various types of civic action and their relative effectiveness and appropriateness in different situations
- the responsibilities of municipal and provincial governments
- the inquiry process
- developing arguments and points of view
- detecting bias in sources (e.g., editorials, letters to editor)
- writing persuasively and effectively
- using peer and self-assessment checklists during the writing process to improve their work
- using a word-processing program (optional)
- accessing the Internet and using search engines effectively (optional)
- developing bibliographies

*For information on the process used to prepare students for the task and on the materials, resources, and equipment required, see the Teacher Package reproduced on pages 36-40 of this document.*

### Task Rubric – A Letter of Concern About a Local Issue

Expectations*	Criteria	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<b>Knowledge/Understanding</b>					
<b>The student:</b>					
1, 2	– demonstrates understanding of a current civic issue (i.e., through an explanation of why the chosen issue is of concern to the community)	– demonstrates limited understanding of the issue	– demonstrates some understanding of the issue	– demonstrates considerable understanding of the issue	– demonstrates a high degree of understanding of the issue
<b>Thinking/Inquiry</b>					
<b>The student:</b>					
2, 3, 5	– demonstrates the ability to analyse critically two different perspectives on the chosen issue – uses effective inquiry skills in identifying and clarifying both the issue and the potential solution	– conducts critical analysis with limited ability – uses inquiry skills with limited effectiveness	– conducts critical analysis with some ability – uses inquiry skills with some effectiveness	– conducts critical analysis with considerable ability – uses inquiry skills with considerable effectiveness	– conducts critical analysis with a high degree of ability – uses inquiry skills with a high degree of effectiveness
<b>Communication</b>					
<b>The student:</b>					
3, 4	– writes effectively for the purpose, using clear and persuasive language and a tone that elicits a positive response	– uses language and tone with limited effectiveness	– uses language and tone with some effectiveness	– uses language and tone with considerable effectiveness	– uses language and tone with a high degree of effectiveness

Expectations*	Criteria	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<b>Application</b>	<b>The student:</b>				
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- makes connections between personal concerns and community interest by proposing a realistic and reasonable solution that takes into account the effect on the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- makes connections with limited effectiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- makes connections with some effectiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- makes connections with considerable effectiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- makes connections with a high degree of effectiveness</li> </ul>

\*The expectations that correspond to the numbers given in this chart are listed on page 12.

*Note:* A student whose overall achievement at the end of a course is below level 1 (that is, below 50%) will not obtain a credit for the course.