

TIRÉ À PART

3^e année du 2^e cycle
5^e secondaire

Topics for every occasion 5



 **ÉDITIONS
MARIE
FRANCE**

Marthe Blanchet

Topics for Every Occasion

5

*Subject ideas
for various written and oral situations*

Topics for Every Occasion 5

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FOREWORD

Providing different writing and oral situations is necessary in every classroom to help students develop their writing and oral skills. Diversifying topics within these situations is equally important to encourage personal expression and creativity.

If varying the situations by having students write short paragraphs, compositions, letters, articles, poems, song lyrics, design posters or flyers and do orals, debates or discussions seems like a relatively simple task, finding a wide range of topics within each one is not often the case. It is not always easy for the teacher to come up on a regular basis with a list of topics that are both diversified and interesting to the class as a whole. *Topics for Every Occasion* seeks to help teachers in this task by suggesting varied topics in an array of writing and oral situations.

Teachers can of course transform any given topic to meet the class' interests and/or needs more fully. With their teacher's approval, the students can do the same, provided it increases their overall motivation by making the writing or oral exercise more enjoyable for them.

The topic suggestions can therefore be used as proposed or in whichever way needed to make written and oral expression a more fulfilling and pleasant classroom experience for students and teachers alike.

The author

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ESL CORE PROGRAM AND COMPETENCIES

Learning English gives the ESL students access to a wealth of information and entertainment available in the media. It also broadens their opportunity to communicate with people who speak the language in Quebec, Canada and throughout the world and so enables them to construct their understanding of other cultures and their world-view.

The Secondary Cycle Two ESL program builds on language skills learned in the Secondary Cycle One ESL program as it continues to improve the students' ability to use English and help them become competent language learners. It focuses on the continued and further development of the three competencies found in the elementary school and the Secondary Cycle One programs:

- *The student interacts orally in English.*
- *The student reinvests understanding of texts* (by using any form of English communication i.e. spoken, written or visual).
- *The student writes and produces texts.*

From autonomous and confident second language Secondary Cycle One learners, the Secondary Cycle Two ESL students continue to develop accuracy and fluency to become more efficient and competent second language learners and communicators as they further develop those competencies.

The Secondary Cycle Two ESL program is based on the communicative approach, strategy-based learning, cooperative learning and cognitive approaches to language learning. As in the elementary school and the Secondary Cycle One programs, the evaluation at the Secondary Cycle Two level has a double purpose, namely to support learning and recognize the competencies.

Previously, the secondary school objective-based program taught listening, speaking, reading and writing skills separately for specific purposes. The new ESL program transcends the sum of those skills by developing the three competencies within an interactive learning environment. Unlike the former individually-taught skills, the three competencies draw upon each other as their reinvestment is carried through each other.

To maximize the development of each of the three competencies, certain conditions must ideally be put into place:

- Cooperation and interactive collaboration in a trusting, supportive and respectful classroom environment are required between the students and their English teacher to better develop communicative competence.
- A positive and stimulating English class environment where an array of visual and auditory stimuli, material resources and human support and feedback are a must to properly immerse the learner and help him/her attain an increasingly better command of English.
- The active participation of the students in the management of their language development and evaluation of their competencies supported by the encouragement and guidance of the teacher are also crucial in the English learning process.

Topics for Every Occasion helps the core and enriched ESL students to focus mostly on the development of the third competency brought forth by the new ESL program by which they will develop additional means to communicate. Where the core students' focus is on attaining eventual written accuracy and effectiveness throughout the development of the competency, the enriched students' interest lies in the further pursuit and enrichment of their already high level of written proficiency. *Topics for Every Occasion*, also touching the other two competencies, is clearly competency-oriented:

- The students are prompted to *interact orally in English* through the various proposed oral and debate/discussion topics.
- When asked to rewrite lyrics to well-known songs the students work *on reinvesting their understanding of texts*.
- The various popular and information-based writing situations geared towards different audiences and purposes, give the students the incentive and opportunity to expand their knowledge of internal and external features of texts and *write and produce* meaningful and creative *texts* of their own.

Worked on at a core level or at a more enriched level, the *Topics for Every Occasion* writing and oral activities are a step toward making the ESL present-day students more aware of their responsibilities, namely:

- to build and develop an inventory of resources, proper learning strategies and monitoring skills to become more proficient in English
- and
- to get personally, actively and interactively involved in their lifelong language learning experience.



Whenever needed and if your teacher doesn't provide you with specific ones, refer to these general guides for writing a composition:

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A COMPOSITION

TITLE

- Write the title of the composition on the first line.
- Space the title so that it is in the middle of the line.
- Capitalize the first and last words and all other words except short prepositions (at, in, on...), conjunctions (and, but, nor, or...) and articles (a, an, the).
- Do not put a period at the end of the title.

BODY OF THE COMPOSITION

- Skip a line between the title and the body of the composition.
- Indent the first word of each paragraph.
- The title is not part of the body of the composition. You must introduce your subject at the beginning of the composition and not depend on the title being at the top.
- Each new important idea you introduce and develop warrants the starting of a new paragraph.
- The concluding paragraph should summarize your topic or add a new idea.
- If a word must be divided at the end of a line, do so between syllables. Use a hyphen at the end of the first line.
- Write complete sentences.
- Write the composition the length asked for by your teacher. **If the writing pages provided in this booklet are insufficient, use their flip side for added space.**
- Write as legibly as possible in a neutral color: black or blue. Remember that you are writing something that somebody else will read.
- Proofread your composition. Grammar and spelling mistakes distract from the content.

Choose one of the three following composition topics where the simple past is mostly used. Follow the suggested content development.

THE... MOMENT OF MY LIFE

Setting the scene

Our lives are often uneventful until one specific event occurs and disrupts its usual calmness. Narrate a true or imagined incident where an unexpected turn of events stirred up special feelings.

Body of the message

- Select one the following: *happiest, saddest, funniest...* and insert it into the title space,
- narrate the event as it happened,
- create as much suspense and excitement as warranted by your story,
- emphasize the moment when the usual flow of your daily routine was momentarily disrupted,
- describe the feelings and emotions you experienced throughout the event and
- conclude with a surprise ending.

PEOPLE IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Setting the scene

Different times, different ways... Examine the life of people during the Middle Ages.

Body of the message

- Research on this specific historical time (ca 500AD-1500AD) and write about: the king, the doctors, the women, the commoners,* the *feudal system*,** the knights, the monks*** and the nuns, the castles, the cathedrals, the monasteries, the crusades, the weapons, the jousts**** and the tournaments, the clothing, the food, the activities...

* *Bailiffs (the agent of a landlord or landowner), craftsmen, servants and peasants.*

** *System where the peasants gave taxes to their lords and the lords gave taxes to their kings.*

*** *Men who are members of a brotherhood living in a monastery and devoted to a discipline prescribed by their order.*

**** *The joust is a type of medieval sport which consisted of two horses charging at each other from opposite directions with a rider holding a sharp lance.*



PEOPLE IN THE EARLY 1900'S

Setting the scene

People living at the beginning of the 20th century weren't surrounded by so much advanced technology as we are. Their life was simpler but interesting all the same. Look into this period more closely.

Body of the message

- Research on this specific historical time (1900-1950) and write about: the 1st and 2nd world wars,* the government and politics, famous historical moments, world issues, important and famous people, important discoveries, the schooling system, job opportunities, women's lives, leisure activities, family life, fashion, music, books, movies...

* *The First World War: 1914-1918 – The Second World War: 1939-1945*



SPÉCIMEN



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Read about the basic meaning and form of the simple future tense:

THE SIMPLE FUTURE TENSE

The simple future tense is used to talk about an event that occurs in the future.

There are two ways to express the future.

- You can use:
- **will** + infinitive
 - **be** (simple present) + **going to** + infinitive

will + infinitive

I	}	will eat, play...
you		
he		
she		
it		
we		
you		
they		

be + going to + infinitive

I	am	}	going to eat, play...
you	are		
he	is		
she	is		
it	is		
we	are		
you	are		
they	are		



Choose one of the two following composition topics where the simple future is mostly used. Follow the suggested content development.

MY LIFE 20 YEARS FROM NOW

Setting the scene

What life are you striving for? What will you be doing in the not-so-distant future?

Body of the message

- Write about:

- the profession or job you will have (i.e. what it is; what it entails: responsibilities, job description...; where you will work; for whom you will work...),
- the private life you will have (e.g. the family you will have, the house you will own...),
- the personal goals you will achieve (e.g. studies you will accomplish, languages you will learn...),
- the hobbies and pastimes you will have (e.g. the sports you will practice, the music you will listen to or play, the pets you will raise...),
- the social life you will have (e.g. the friends you will have, the outings you will do, the trips you will go on...) and
- the spiritual life you will have (e.g. the religion you will practice, the meditation you will do...).

LIFE ON ANOTHER PLANET

Setting the scene

With astronauts venturing further and further into space, it will not be long before humans will inhabit other planets. Imagine what life will then be like.

Body of the message

- Explain why humans will have to resort to finding other planets to live on besides Earth,
- name a few planets that will be human friendly,
- list the advantages and disadvantages that will be associated with living on another planet,
- list the possible problems interplanetary or intergalactic travelling will create,
- describe the new challenges we will face,
- describe the jobs, food, fashion, houses, general lifestyle... we will have,
- say if living far from Earth will be easy to cope with or adjust to and
- say how you will personally react to moving to another planet if it happens during your lifetime.



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Read about the basic meaning and form of the imperative form:

THE IMPERATIVE FORM

The imperative form is used to:

- Give commands (e.g. Open the door!),
- Make polite requests (e.g. Give me the bill, please.).
- Give directions (e.g. Turn left at the corner.).

The simple form of a verb is used in imperative sentences. The understood subject is **you** (meaning the person the speaker is talking to):

e.g. (You) pass me the salt.

NOTE

The negative imperative form is built with **Don't** + the simple form of a verb:

e.g. Don't walk on the grass.

