

Grades 6 and 9 Social Studies Pilot Achievement Tests
Questions and Answers

1. **Will there be achievement tests for the new Grade 6 and 9 programs of study (2007) in the 2008/2009 school year?**

Yes. Achievement tests that assess these new programs of study are being developed and will be pilot tested in January and June 2009 for Grade 9 and in June 2009 for Grade 6. Students who receive social studies instruction that is based on the new programs of study will be expected to write the pilot achievement tests. Those following the old programs of study (1989 or 1990) will be expected to write the old program's achievement tests.

2. **How do I register students to write the pilot achievement tests?**

Registration of students will be done on the Extranet. The default for students will be the old program of studies. Registrations on the Extranet must indicate those students who are writing the pilot achievement tests. Registration must be done during timelines outlined in the *Schedules and Significant Dates Section* of the *Achievement Testing General Information Bulletin*. The *Information Bulletin* may be viewed online at: <http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/achievement/achievementbulletin>.

3. **Will the pilot Grades 6 and 9 social studies achievement tests be available in French?**

Yes.

4. **Will students have access to test writing accommodations for the pilot achievement tests?**

Yes. Students will have access to all accommodations applicable to every other achievement test. Granting of accommodations must adhere to the guidelines in the *Achievement Testing General Information Bulletin*.

5. **Will the pilot tests be written on the same day as the achievement tests for the old program of studies?**

Yes. The tests are scheduled on the same day and will begin at the same time. However, administration time for the pilot tests will be longer. In Grade 6, the test for the old program will be 60 minutes. The pilot test will be 90 minutes. In Grade 9, the time allotted for the achievement test for the old program will be 75 minutes, while the pilot test will be 120 minutes long. During each achievement test, students will still be granted an additional 30 minutes of test writing time if they need it.

To view the achievement test schedule, please refer to the *Schedules and Significant Dates Section* of the *Achievement Testing General Information Bulletin* at: <http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/achievement/achievementbulletin>.

6. Will the new social studies achievement tests have the same format as the old ones?

No. In Grade 6, the old test has 50 multiple-choice questions, while the new has 45. In Grade 9, the old test has 55 questions and the new has 50.

The main change in the format of the social studies achievement tests is the addition of a written response component. On the pilot achievement tests, multiple-choice will be worth 70% of the total test score and the written response will be worth 30%.

7. Will the written response part be administered at a different time than the multiple-choice questions?

No. The written response component will be written at the same time as the multiple-choice. In Grade 6, the written response will be in the same booklet as the multiple-choice questions. In Grade 9, students will receive two booklets – one containing multiple-choice and one written response question, and one booklet of source reading material.

8. Will results on the pilot tests be publicly reported?

Results will be included on school and school authority reports. However, they will not be included as part of Accountability Pillar reports. This means that the public, including organizations like the Fraser Institute, will not have access to this information. Individual Student Profiles (ISP) will also be distributed to inform parents of their child's performance on the pilot test.

9. Are schools expected to participate in mandatory preliminary reporting of results to parents for the pilot social studies achievement tests?

Preliminary reporting of results will not be required. However, if schools wish to report preliminary results to parents, keys and overlays for multiple-choice questions will be provided to facilitate local marking. Draft scoring guides and exemplars for the written component will also be provided.

10. Why is Alberta Education reporting the results of the pilot achievement tests?

Although implementation of the new programs of study is optional in 2008/2009 (mandatory in 2009/2010), the majority of schools are following the new programs of study.

Given the size of the student population receiving instruction in the new programs of study, it is beneficial to provide results to schools and school jurisdictions. Results can be used to inform social studies programming and improve student learning.

11. Are sample questions available for the new achievement tests?

Because they are new tests, no sample items are available. However, detailed information about these new achievement tests is available in *Subject Bulletins* posted on Alberta Education's website at:

<http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/achievement/bulletins.aspx>

12. Are there workshops given about achievement tests, including the new social studies tests?

Yes, several workshops have already been scheduled during the 2008/2009 school year. If you wish to request a workshop, please contact your local Professional Development Consortium.

13. Will students be able to write the pilot Grade 9 social studies achievement test online?

Yes. This new test will be available online, along with all other Grade 9 achievement tests.

14. How can teachers become involved in test development and marking of the new achievement tests?

A nomination letter for teacher markers will be sent to superintendents in March. More working group teachers are also needed for item development that will be done throughout the school year. As well, teachers will be needed for standard setting in the spring of 2009.

15. Who can I contact for more information about the new social studies achievement tests?

For Grade 6, please contact Robyn Pederson, Exam Manager, at Robyn.Pederson@gov.ab.ca. For Grade 9, please contact Harvey Stables, Exam Manager, at Harvey.Stables@gov.ab.ca. Both Harvey and Robyn can also be reached by phone at (780)427-0010 (toll-free connection by first dialing 310-0000).