

**Alberta Provincial
Achievement Testing**

**Subject
Bulletin**
2008 – 2009

GRADE

9

Social Studies 2007 Program of Studies

This document was written primarily for:

Students	
Teachers	✓ Grade 9 Social Studies
Administrators	✓
Parents	
General Audience	
Others	

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You can find achievement test-related materials on the Alberta Education website at www.education.alberta.ca.

At the home page, click on the tab *Teachers*; then click on the link *Provincial Testing*. Next click on the link *Achievement Tests* and then click on one of the specific links listed under the *Achievement Tests* heading.

Additional topics of interest are found in the *General Information Bulletin*.

Grade 9 Social Studies Pilot Assessment

General Description

The Grade 9 Social Studies Pilot Achievement Test consists of a multiple-choice component (worth 70% of the test total) and a written-response component (worth 30% of the test total).

Multiple-Choice Component

The multiple-choice component consists of 50 multiple-choice questions based upon outcomes in the 2007 Program of Studies and is developed to be completed in 80 minutes. The test has two booklets: a *Sources Booklet* containing source materials and a *Questions Booklet* containing corresponding questions. Students record their answers to all multiple-choice questions on a tear-out, machine-scorable answer sheet.

The multiple-choice questions are based upon the two General Outcomes in the 2007 Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies: **9.1 Issues for Canadians: Governance and Rights** and **9.2 Issues for Canadians: Economic Systems in Canada and the United States**.

The pilot test is divided into sections based on Specific Outcomes in the Program of Studies. Each Specific Outcome has either one or two sets of issues-centred sources in the *Sources Booklet* upon which three to eight multiple-choice questions are based.

Knowledge and Understanding and Skills and Processes outcomes are integrated throughout the pilot test.

Values and Attitudes outcomes, which may be observable in some students' responses, are best assessed in the context of the classroom.

Students may **not** use a dictionary, a thesaurus, or other reference materials when writing the test.

If a word that warrants definition is used on the test, it will be defined on the page in the *Sources Booklet* on which it appears.

Written-Response Component

The written-response component consists of one writing assignment which is developed to be completed in 40 minutes. The writing assignment is anchored within the issue(s) presented in one source set in the *Sources Booklet* that relates to a given Specific Outcome upon which there are corresponding multiple-choice questions.

Students will be required to consider various viewpoints and perspectives on the issue(s) and either take and defend a position or present a decision or solution by addressing the implications of the issue(s) for citizenship, identity, and quality of life in Canada. Students record their response to the writing assignment on the pages provided in the *Questions Booklet*.

The total test administration time of two hours provides students with time for completing each of the multiple-choice questions and for planning, drafting, and revising the writing assignment. Students may take an additional 30 minutes to complete the test if necessary.

Students may do their writing using a computer. For information about using word-processing technology to complete the written-response component of the achievement test, see the *General Information Bulletin*.

Description of Social Studies Pilot Assessment Standards

The following statements describe what is expected of Grade 9 students at the *acceptable standard* and the *standard of excellence*, based on outcomes in the 2007 Program of Studies. These statements represent examples of the standards against which student achievement is measured.

It is important to remember that one test cannot measure all the outcomes in the Program of Studies. These statements were drafted during the 2007–2008 pilot and will be subject to confirmation of standards in 2009.

<i>Acceptable Standard</i>	<i>Standard of Excellence</i>
Students who meet the <i>acceptable standard</i> in Grade 9 Social Studies are able to • understand how the branches of Canada’s federal political system work together in order to attempt to meet the needs of all Canadians • recognize the impact that recognition of individual and collective rights has had upon legislative processes in Canada • identify factors related to immigration policies in Canada (i.e., economic, political, health, security) and recognize the benefits of immigration • differentiate between the principles and practices of market and mixed economies in Canada and the United States • acknowledge interrelationships among consumerism, quality of life, and political decision making in Canada and the United States • demonstrate critical and creative thinking to determine the validity of information and form personal judgments on issues • interpret timelines, maps, charts, and graphs to understand historical events and issues and to analyze geographic information • exercise skills of decision making and problem solving by applying strategies to solve problems and deal with issues • communicate clearly in writing to express viewpoints regarding an issue	Students who meet the <i>standard of excellence</i> in Grade 9 Social Studies are also able to • appreciate the complexities underlying issues related to decision making and accountability in Canada’s federal political and judicial systems • apply their understandings of the bases underlying recognition of individual and collective rights to contemporary situations • view immigration issues from multiple perspectives and consider the global, national, and provincial implications of immigration • evaluate the impact government intervention in the economies of Canada and the United States has upon citizens’ quality of life • critically analyze how consumerism and political decisions provide both opportunities for and limitations on how citizens can impact quality of life • synthesize ideas from multiple sources to gain a broad understanding of diverse viewpoints and perspectives • place people and events in different contexts of time and place and examine correlations and causal relationships • predict outcomes, explore new ideas and options, use facts and reasons, and evaluate choices and/or plans of action • present ideas in a persuasive and engaging manner by accommodating diverse points of view and making reasoned comments relating to topics of discussion

Multiple-Choice Component

The blueprint below shows the reporting categories and test sections by which questions are classified and reported to schools and school authorities. The number of questions in each reporting category is approximate.

Blueprint for Multiple-Choice Component

	Knowledge and Understanding ¹	Skills and Processes ²	Number (Percentage) of Questions
The Political and Judicial System (9.1.4, 9.1.5)³ Students examine the structure of Canada's federal political system and analyze the role of citizens and organizations in Canada's justice system by exploring and reflecting upon questions and issues regarding - how federal laws are passed - branches of the federal government - selection of MPs and Senators - accountability of MPs and Senators - the role of federal political parties - the role of media in political issues - lobby groups and government decisions - extent to which political and legislative processes meet the needs of Canadians - participation in Canada's justice system - citizens' legal roles and responsibilities - the <i>Youth Criminal Justice Act</i>	4 (8%)	7 (14%)	11 (22%)
Individual and Collective Rights (9.1.6, 9.1.7)³ Students critically assess the impact of the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i> on legislative processes in Canada and how increased demand for recognition of collective rights has impacted legislative processes in Canada by exploring and reflecting upon questions and issues regarding - recognition of individual rights - exercising individual rights - conditions in the workplace - rights and responsibilities of citizens - recognition of collective rights - the needs of Francophone minorities - the needs of Francophones in Québec - the rights of official language minorities - how the <i>Indian Act</i> recognizes the status and identity of Aboriginal peoples - Treaty 6, Treaty 7, and Treaty 8 - legislation and Métis cultures and rights	4 (8%)	7 (14%)	11 (22%)
Immigration (9.1.8)³ Students critically assess how legislative processes address issues of immigration by exploring and reflecting upon questions and issues regarding - factors influencing immigration policies - changes to Canadian policies on immigration and refugees - immigration and Aboriginal peoples - provincial immigration policies - immigration policies in Québec - immigration policies and the <i>Charter</i> - how Canada benefits from immigration	3 (6%)	5 (10%)	8 (16%)
Economic Decision Making (9.2.4)³ Students analyze principles and practices of market and mixed economies by exploring and reflecting upon questions and issues regarding - principles of a market economy - government intervention - Canada's mixed economy - the role of consumers in market and mixed economies - consumer individual and collective identity - the economic impact of labour unions - government intervention in the economy in Canada and in the United States - the basic economic question of scarcity	3 (6%)	5 (10%)	8 (16%)
Consumerism, Quality of Life, and Political Decision Making (9.2.5, 9.2.6)³ Students critically assess the relationship between consumerism and quality of life in Canada and the United States and the interrelationship between political decisions and economic systems by exploring and reflecting upon questions and issues regarding - indicators of quality of life - individual consumer behaviour - how marketing affects consumerism - consumerism and quality of life - consumerism as a power of a collective - consumerism and economic growth - values underlying social programs - economic platforms of political parties - political party philosophies and platforms - the underground economy - environmental issues and quality of life	5 (10%)	7 (14%)	12 (24%)
Number (Percentage) of Questions	19 (38%)	31 (62%)	50 (100%)

¹**Knowledge and Understanding**—includes the breadth and depth of information, concepts, evidence, ideas, and opinions fundamental to decision making as identified in the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies (2007).

²**Skills and Processes**—the application of critical and creative thinking, historical thinking, geographic thinking, decision making, problem solving, and media literacy to relevant situations as identified in the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies (2007).

³Bolded numbers in parentheses cross-reference specific outcomes in the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies (2007).

Written-Response Component

The writing assignment consists of a written prompt that requires students respond to an issue identified in the assignment. The assignment includes a page labelled *Planning* as well as lined pages for student writing.

For the writing assignment, students are asked to produce only one copy of their work. They are encouraged to make revisions and corrections directly on this copy. Because of the limited testing time, students benefit most from spending their time composing and revising their work rather than from perfecting a “good copy.”

Important Reminders

Students whose responses are completely unrelated to the issue presented in the writing assignment will be marked accordingly under **Significance of the Issue**. The bullets regarding students’ understanding of the relevance of the issue should be applied in accordance with the context established in each student’s writing. If the marker can discern **no evidence of an attempt to address the task** presented in the assignment, a mark of **Insufficient** will be awarded in the **Significance of the Issue** scoring category.

Written-Response Achievement Descriptors

Please note that the descriptors of levels of student achievement in the scoring guide for 2008–2009 are evaluative words rather than numbers. In order to continue to maximize fairness for all students, as well as maintain consistency across all grade levels, the achievement descriptors in the Grade 9 Social Studies scoring guide will be identified by specific words. These specific words will be used to describe a student’s level of achievement in each scoring category.

The achievement descriptors correspond to the values of the numbers that are used to calculate student marks. The scoring criteria statements, which are used to assess student work, inform markers of the level of student achievement in each scoring category at each achievement level.

Classroom teachers are encouraged to discuss and use the scoring criteria, including the achievement level descriptors, with their students during the year. When student writing is marked centrally, these achievement level descriptors will be used.

School and school authority reports will be produced using both the achievement level descriptors and numeric values. Individual Student Profiles (ISPs) will report numeric values and achievement of standards.

The achievement level descriptors and their numeric equivalents are:

Excellent = 5/5
Proficient = 4/5
Satisfactory = 3/5
Limited = 2/5
Poor = 1/5

Blueprint for Written-Response Component

The blueprint for the written-response component identifies the scoring/reporting categories by which student writing is assessed and by which summary data are reported to schools and school authorities; it also provides a description of the writing assignment and the achievement standards.

Scoring/Reporting Categories	Description of Writing Assignment	Achievement Standards
Significance of the Issue (recognizing the relevance of an issue to citizenship and identity in Canada) Students respond to an issue by writing a paragraph or paragraphs. Students establish their understanding of the issue and acknowledge the viewpoints, perspectives, and/or values of others regarding the issue. Personal Judgments* (choosing a position or proposing a solution to an issue) Students advocate a personal position or solution, present arguments or ideas in support of their position or solution, and consider the implications of their decision. Supporting Evidence* (selecting examples and presenting detailed information to validate arguments or ideas presented) Students support their arguments or ideas with relevant and accurate social studies examples. Clarity of Communication (expressing ideas clearly and coherently using the conventions of written language) Students focus, develop, and communicate their ideas using words and expressions correctly and effectively. *These scoring categories are weighted to be worth twice as much as the other categories.	Students will “identify the relevance of an issue” by either developing informed positions and respect for the positions of others to construct their own points of view, taking and supporting a position on the issue, providing evidence in support of the chosen position based on knowledge and understanding gained from engagement in the Program of Studies, and presenting their thoughts clearly or engaging in problem solving and conflict resolution by examining possible solutions advocated by others to arrive at and defend an informed personal decision, providing evidence in support of the chosen decision based on knowledge and understanding gained from engagement in the Program of Studies, and presenting their thoughts clearly. The writing assignment will be conceptually anchored within the issue(s) raised in one source set pertaining to General Outcome 9.1 or General Outcome 9.2 and focuses on one of the Knowledge and Understanding¹ specific outcomes: Canada’s federal political system (9.1.4),² Canada’s justice system (9.1.5), the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i> (9.1.6), recognition of collective rights (9.1.7), emerging issues of immigration (9.1.8), principles and practices of market and mixed economies (9.2.4), consumerism and quality of life (9.2.5), or the interrelationship between political decisions and economic systems (9.2.6). Students will expand upon the issue(s) to address the implications for quality of life, citizenship, and identity—core concepts of the K–12 Program of Studies—by applying Skills and Processes³ such as critical and creative thinking (9.S.1), historical thinking (9.S.2), geographic thinking (9.S.3), decision making and problem solving (9.S.4), written and visual literacy (9.S.8), and media literacy (9.S.9). While student achievement of Values and Attitudes outcomes may be observable in some students’ responses, these outcomes are best measured in the context of the classroom.	Student achievement in each scoring/reporting category will be described according to the following achievement descriptors: Excellent Proficient Satisfactory Limited Poor Insufficient

¹**Knowledge and Understanding**—includes the breadth and depth of information, concepts, evidence, ideas, and opinions fundamental to decision making as identified in the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies (2007).

²Bolded numbers in parentheses cross-reference specific outcomes in the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies (2007).

³**Skills and Processes**—the application of critical and creative thinking, historical thinking, geographic thinking, decision making, problem solving, and written, visual, and media literacy to relevant situations as identified in the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies (2007).

Local Marking

Classroom teachers are encouraged to assess students' writing, using the scoring guide contained in this bulletin, before returning the tests to Alberta Education. All papers are scored centrally in Edmonton in July.

Locally awarded scores submitted to Alberta Education will be used as the first reading of a student's response. Local markers are to use the **"For Teacher Use Only"** section on the back of the test booklet to record their scores by filling in the appropriate circles. The "School Code" and "ACCOMMODATIONS USED" sections should also be completed. If a teacher wants to know how his or her locally awarded scores compare with the scores that the tests received when scored centrally, then he or she must create a three-digit identification number and enter it in the section labelled **"ID No."** on the back of each student booklet. It is important that no two teachers from the same school create and use the same identification number.

To facilitate fair and valid assessment of all students during both local and central marking, **teachers must not** mark or write in student booklets. Teacher-created scoring sheets, which may be used during local marking, are **not** to be included in student test booklets.

To assess locally those students with special test writing needs, specifically a scribed response (test accommodation 5) or a taped response (test accommodation 10), teachers are to refrain from scoring the **Clarity of Communication** scoring category for the writing assignment.

Teachers have approximately two weeks to return the tests to Alberta Education. The papers will then be scored centrally by Alberta Education as the second reading. Both sets of scores contribute to the student's final mark. In the case of a discrepancy between the two sets of scores, papers will be adjudicated by a third reading, which will determine the final scores that the paper is awarded. In this way, valid and reliable individual and group results can be reported.

Papers that are not assessed locally by teachers will be scored centrally only once. At least once a day, all central markers mark a copy of the same paper for inter-rater reliability.

After central marking has been completed and school reports have been sent to the schools, teachers who submitted their scores with an identification number will receive a confidential report on their marking. This report is called the Local Marker Report and includes the locally awarded scores, the centrally awarded scores, third-read scores if applicable, and the final scores assigned.

To support local marking, Alberta Education provides, along with the test materials, samples of student writing that exemplify the scoring criteria and levels of student achievement. These exemplars are not to be shared with students and must be returned to Alberta Education with the tests.

A total score for a student's writing may be calculated by the procedure on the next page.

To determine a student's mark, convert the word descriptors to the following numeric values:

Excellent = 5
 Proficient = 4
 Satisfactory = 3
 Limited = 2
 Poor = 1

Multiple-Choice Score

1. Total the number of correct responses out of a raw score of 50.
2. Multiple the raw score number by 1.4 to calculate the weighted score out of 70.

Written-Response Score

1. Assign a score of 1 to 5 for each of *Significance of the Issue, Personal Judgments, Supporting Evidence, and Clarity of Communication.*
2. Multiply the scores for *Personal Judgments* and *Supporting Evidence* by 2, as these categories are worth twice as much as the other categories.

Maximum score possible = 30

Total Test Score

Add the weighted multiple-choice score and the weighted written-response score.

Total Test Score	
Multiple-Choice Score	___/70 (70%)
+ Writing-Response Score	___/30 (30%)
= Total Score	___/100 (100%)

Note: Teachers may make a photocopy of a student's *written response ONLY* from the test for inclusion in a portfolio of the student's work for the year. Copies can also be made for parents who request them.

Information for Teachers Participating in Central Marking

Learner Assessment will contact superintendents in the spring for their nominations of markers. The teachers selected will reflect proportional representation from the various regions of Alberta.

To qualify for nomination by a superintendent, a prospective marker must satisfy ALL the following conditions:

- ☒ have a valid permanent Alberta Teaching Certificate
- ☒ have taught the 2007 Program of Studies within the past year
- ☒ be currently employed by a school authority or private school
- ☒ be present on all scheduled days

Markers will be contacted in May, and the list of markers will be finalized no later than the middle of June. Group leaders will meet the day before the marking session for training.

Each year, many more teachers are nominated to mark than are needed. There must be a balance of first-time and experienced markers; regional representation by zone, school authority, and school; and gender balance when markers are selected. Unfortunately, not everyone whose name is submitted is selected.

Because the time allotted for marking is limited, markers are often asked to mark on Saturday and Sunday. The marking floor is open from 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., and markers are expected to be available to mark during those hours.

Scoring Guide for 2008–2009

Significance of the Issue (5 marks)

Dimensions of Thinking: 9.S.1, 9.S.4, 9.S.8, 9.S.9*

<i>Focus</i> When marking the discussion of the Significance of the Issue appropriate for the Grade 9 Social Studies writing assignment, the marker should consider the quality of the student's • understanding of the relevance of the issue to citizenship, identity, and quality of life in Canada • acknowledgement of the viewpoints, perspectives, and/or values of others	
Excellent E	• The student's understanding of the relevance of the issue is insightful. • The student explores various viewpoints, perspectives, and/or values in a deliberate manner.
Proficient Pf	• The student's understanding of the relevance of the issue is thoughtful. • The student explores various viewpoints, perspectives, and/or values in a purposeful manner.
Satisfactory S	• The student's understanding of the relevance of the issue is logical. • The student explores various viewpoints, perspectives, and/or values in a straightforward manner.
Limited L	• The student's understanding of the relevance of the issue is incomplete. • The student explores various viewpoints, perspectives, and/or values in a superficial or ambiguous manner.
Poor P	• The student's understanding of the relevance of the issue is minimal. • The student explores various viewpoints, perspectives, and/or values in an abrupt or uninformed manner.
Insufficient INS	• The marker can discern no evidence of an attempt to address the task presented in the assignment, or the student has written so little that it is not possible to assess Significance of the Issue.

*Cross-references to specific **Skills and Processes** outcomes in the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies (2007).

Student work must address the task presented in the assignment. Responses that are completely unrelated to the issue presented in the writing assignment will be awarded a mark of **Insufficient**.

Personal Judgments (10 marks)

Dimensions of Thinking: 9.S.1, 9.S.2, 9.S.3, 9.S.4, 9.S.8*

<i>Focus</i>	
When marking Personal Judgments appropriate for the Grade 9 Social Studies writing assignment, the marker should consider the quality of the student's • choice of position OR proposed solution regarding the issue • arguments related to the position OR ideas regarding the solution presented • awareness of the implications of the position OR solution advocated	
Excellent E	• The student's choice of position OR proposed solution is perceptive. • The arguments OR ideas presented by the student are convincing. • The student demonstrates an astute awareness of the implications of the position OR solution advocated.
Proficient Pf	• The student's choice of position OR proposed solution is sound. • The arguments OR ideas presented by the student are considered. • The student demonstrates a sensible awareness of the implications of the position OR solution advocated.
Satisfactory S	• The student's choice of position OR proposed solution is appropriate. • The arguments OR ideas presented by the student are predictable. • The student demonstrates an adequate awareness of the implications of the position OR solution advocated.
Limited L	• The student's choice of position OR proposed solution is vague and/or simplistic. • The arguments OR ideas presented by the student are imprecise and/or lacking. • The student demonstrates a limited awareness of the implications of the position OR solution advocated.
Poor P	• The student's choice of position OR proposed solution is confused and/or undeveloped. • The arguments OR ideas presented by the student are inaccurate and/or overgeneralized. • The student demonstrates a questionable awareness of the implications of the position OR solution advocated.
Insufficient INS	• The response has been awarded an INS for Significance of the Issue.

* Cross-references to specific **Skills and Processes** outcomes in the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies (2007).

Note: Personal Judgments and Supporting Evidence are weighted to be worth twice as much as the other categories.

Supporting Evidence (10 marks)

Dimensions of Thinking: 9.S.1, 9.S.2, 9.S.3, 9.S.4, 9.S.8*

<i>Focus</i>	
When marking Supporting Evidence appropriate for the Grade 9 Social Studies writing assignment, the marker should consider the quality of • the student's selection of evidence relative to the issue • the depth, breadth, and accuracy of the evidence provided • the student's integration and application of evidence to the arguments OR ideas presented	
Excellent E	• The student has judiciously selected evidence pertinent to the issue. • The evidence provided is precise and/or comprehensive, and essentially free of factual errors. • The student has skillfully incorporated the evidence chosen in order to reinforce arguments OR ideas presented.
Proficient Pf	• The student has adeptly selected evidence significant to the issue. • The evidence provided is specific and/or elaborated, and contains few factual errors. • The student has competently incorporated the evidence chosen in order to strengthen arguments OR ideas presented.
Satisfactory S	• The student has generally selected evidence applicable to the issue. • The evidence provided is general and/or narrow in scope, and may contain occasional factual errors. • The student has sufficiently incorporated the evidence chosen in order to support arguments OR ideas presented.
Limited L	• The student has selected evidence that is insufficient or tenuously related to the issue. • The evidence provided is vague, contradictory, and/or mere reiteration of information studied or content contained in the test, and may contain frequent factual errors. • The student has inconsistently incorporated the evidence chosen which reduces the merit of arguments OR ideas presented.
Poor P	• Evidence selected by the student, if present, is ineffective and/or tangentially related to the issue. • The evidence, where provided, is scant, obscure, extraneous, and/or simply copied from the test, and may contain numerous and glaring factual errors. • The student has haphazardly incorporated what evidence has been chosen which does not validate any arguments OR ideas presented.
Insufficient INS	• The response has been awarded an INS for Significance of the Issue.

*Cross-references to specific **Skills and Processes** outcomes in the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies (2007).

Note: Personal Judgments and Supporting Evidence are weighted to be worth twice as much as the other categories.

Clarity of Communication (5 marks)
Dimensions of Thinking: 9.S.8*

<i>Focus</i>	
When marking Clarity of Communication appropriate for the Grade 9 Social Studies writing assignment, the marker should consider the quality of the student's • organization and development of the response • correct and effective control of mechanics (e.g., spelling, punctuation, capitalization) and usage (e.g., social studies terminology, subject-verb/pronoun-antecedent agreement, pronoun reference)	
Excellent E	• The response is effectively focused and fluently developed. • The quality of the writing is enhanced because it is essentially free of errors in usage and/or mechanics.
Proficient Pf	• The response is clearly focused and coherently developed. • The quality of the writing is sustained because it contains only minor errors in usage and/or mechanics.
Satisfactory S	• The response is functionally focused and logically developed. • The quality of the writing is acceptable because lapses in usage and/or mechanics do not detract from overall clarity.
Limited L	• The response is weakly focused and uncertainly developed. • The quality of the writing is reduced because it contains frequent errors in usage and/or mechanics.
Poor P	• The response is largely unfocused and unclearly developed. • The quality of the writing is minimized because it contains numerous and glaring errors in usage and/or mechanics.
Insufficient INS	• The response has been awarded an INS for Significance of the Issue.

*Cross-reference to a specific **Skills and Processes** outcome in the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies (2007).

Preparing Students for the Social Studies Pilot Test

Suggestions for Preparing Students

The best way to prepare students for writing the pilot achievement test is to teach the Program of Studies well and to ensure that students know what is expected. Many of the skills and attitudes that support test writing are, in fact, effective skills and strategies for approaching all kinds of learning tasks.

Teachers are encouraged to familiarize their students with the types of questions that will appear on the test. Samples of questions will be available at workshops conducted throughout the province by Learner Assessment in conjunction with the Regional Professional Development Consortia.

All Sources and Questions test booklets are secured and must be returned to Alberta Education.

Beginning in 2010, released items will be mailed to school administrators every second year in the fall.

Teachers should also familiarize students with the scoring guide in this bulletin. With instruction, students may be able to use this guide effectively when evaluating their own writing or that of peers.

Samples of student writing will be available at workshops conducted throughout the province by Learner Assessment in conjunction with the Regional Professional Development Consortia.

Teachers are also encouraged to share the following information with their students to help them prepare for the Grade 9 Social Studies Pilot Achievement Test.

Suggestions for Writing the Pilot Test

Multiple-Choice Component

- You may **not** use a dictionary, a thesaurus, or other reference materials when writing the test.
- *Budget your time wisely.* Recommendations are provided in the test regarding the amount of time you should spend on each component.
- *Work through the test using the strategies that work best for you.* You should either
 - read the sources and think carefully about them before you try any of the multiple-choice questions associated with the sources **OR**
 - read the questions first and then read the sources, keeping in mind the questions you will need to answerEach set of multiple-choice questions is ordered according to the sequence in which the sources are presented. For example, the answer to the first question will likely deal with the first source, and so on. Questions relating to the set of sources as a whole will appear at the end of the set of questions.
- *Feel free to write or highlight in either of the test booklets.* Identifying key words of the questions or features of the sources in this way may help you to more easily determine an answer.
- *Consider all forms of information provided.* Information will be presented in words, charts, pictures, graphs, maps, or cartoons.
- *Take the time to review the source(s) that is/are referred to in a question.* Sources contain key details that will help you determine the correct answers to questions. It is always worthwhile to re-read the source(s) referenced and to consider the meanings of the source(s) (independently and in the context of the source set as a whole).

- *When answering “best answer” questions, be sure to carefully read all four alternatives (A, B, C, and D) before choosing the answer that you think is best.* These questions will always include a bold-faced qualifier such as **best**, **most strongly**, or **most clearly** in their stems. More than one of the alternatives (A, B, C, and/or D) may be, to some degree, correct, but one of the alternatives will be “best” in that it takes more of the information into account or can be supported most strongly with reference to the information.
- *Work from partial knowledge when it is appropriate to do so.* Read all the choices and see which one best fits the answer. If a correct or best answer does not become obvious fairly quickly, you may want to eliminate the answers that seem least appropriate and then use your judgement to select an answer from those that remain.
- *Double-check to make sure that you have answered every multiple-choice question.*
- *Read all the instructions carefully and do what the assignment asks you to do.* The time you spend thinking about the assignment is time well spent. Many students find that highlighting or underlining key words helps them to focus on what is expected.
- *Plan your writing using the pages provided.* You should choose a planning strategy that helps you to focus your ideas.
- *Keep in mind the characteristics of effective writing.*
 - Awareness of audience (appropriateness of tone and use of correct language)
 - Completeness of information (enough detail to fulfill the purpose)
 - Relevance of information (all details pertain to the purpose)
 - Clarity of information (all details are specific and easily understood by the reader)
- *Proofread your work and correct errors directly on your first draft.* You may double-space your writing if you think it will allow you to make corrections more easily.

Written-Response Component

- *Plan your time carefully.* Read the assignment carefully and *think* about what you are being asked to do; *plan* your writing so that it is focused, unified, and coherent; and *proofread* your writing.

Opportunities to Participate in Test Development Activities

Field Testing

All Achievement Testing Program test questions are field tested before use. By “testing” the test questions, students who write field tests have an opportunity for a practice run at writing portions of an achievement test. As well, the teachers have an opportunity to comment on the appropriateness and quality of the test questions.

Request forms for Grade 9 Social Studies and Études Sociales 9^e année field tests are sent out to schools in late August for both the January and the May–June administrations of field tests. **In the 2008–2009 school year, field tests will be administered only in classrooms where instruction is based on the 2007 Program of Studies.** Principals and teachers who wish to participate in the field-testing program must complete and return request forms to the Field Test Coordinator at field.test@gov.ab.ca.

Once the completed request forms are received by Learner Assessment, classes will be selected to ensure that a representative and sufficiently large sample of students from across the province take part in the field test. Every effort will be made to place field tests as requested; however, because field tests are administered to a prescribed number of students, it may not be possible to fill all requests. Once the field tests are placed, a confirmation letter of test placements will be sent to each principal with memos to the teachers who will be participating in the field testing.

For further information about achievement field testing, see the *Field Testing* section of the *General Information Bulletin*.

Working Groups

Teacher involvement in the development of provincial achievement tests is important because it helps to ensure the validity and appropriateness of the assessments.

To be selected to participate in a development activity, teachers must be nominated by their superintendent. To ensure that selected working group members have appropriate subject matter training and teaching experience, nominees are asked to complete an *Achievement Testing Program Working Group Application Form* and forward it to Learner Assessment, through their superintendent, at the time of their nomination. A sample of that form is included in the Appendix.

Test Development

Teacher working groups are used throughout the test development process to create raw forms of test questions and to review and revise draft forms of provincial achievement tests. These working groups usually meet for one or two days, two or three times per year. Occasionally, these meetings are held on weekends.

To be eligible to serve on a test development working group, a teacher must currently be teaching Grade 9 Social Studies and must have a minimum of two years of experience teaching the course.

Each year, Learner Assessment invites superintendents to nominate teachers to participate in test development and/or test review activities in the coming school year. In September, a letter will be sent to superintendents inviting them to nominate teachers to participate in test development and/or test review activities in the 2008–2009 school year.

Teachers who are interested in participating in a working group should ask their school administrator for an *Achievement Testing Program Working Group Application Form*. A sample of that form is included in the Appendix on the next page.

Appendix

Achievement Testing Program Working Group Application Form

Surname: _____	School: _____
First Name: _____	Address: _____
Address: _____	_____
_____	_____
Phone: () _____	Phone: () _____
Fax: () _____	Fax: () _____
E-mail: _____	E-mail: _____

Current teaching assignment/grade(s) and subject(s)	
Previous teaching experience – grade(s) and subject(s)	
Academic history and background (e.g., degrees and areas of specialization)	
Previous Alberta Education working group experience	
Other professional experience	

Please check the boxes below that identify the grade level(s) and type(s) of working group(s) you are interested in pursuing.

Grade Level	Type of Working Group, by Subject ¹									
	Test Review ²					Item Development ²				
	MA	ELA	FR/FLA	SCI	SS	MA	ELA	FR/FLA	SCI	SS
Grade 3										
Grade 6										
Grade 9										
Grade 9 KE³										

¹MA (Mathematics), ELA (English Language Arts), FR (Français), FLA (French Language Arts), SCI (Science), SS (Social Studies)

²In 2008–2009, no working groups are planned in the grades and/or subject areas that are shaded grey.

³KE (Knowledge and Employability)

Learner Assessment Contacts

Test administration, security, rules, and scheduling

Michele Samuel, Director
Examination Administration
Michele.Samuel@gov.ab.ca

Online test administration

Ken Marcellus, Director
Online and IT Services
Ken.Marcellus@gov.ab.ca

Test accommodations

Pamela Klebanov, Coordinator
Special Cases and Accommodations
Pamela.Klebanov@gov.ab.ca

Test design, development, scoring, and reporting

Jo-Anne Hug, Director
Achievement Testing Program
Jo-Anne.Hug@gov.ab.ca

Harvey Stables, Examination Manager
Grade 9 Humanities
Achievement Testing Program
Harvey.Stables@gov.ab.ca

Test materials shipping and receiving

Sylvia Lepine, Manager
Marking Centre
Sylvia.Lepine@gov.ab.ca

Maureen Milne, Examiner
Grade 9 Humanities
Achievement Testing Program
Maureen.Milne@gov.ab.ca

Field testing

Amanda Jackman, Coordinator
Field Testing
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Learner Assessment

Mailing Address:

Learner Assessment
Alberta Education
44 Capital Boulevard
10044 108 Street
Edmonton AB T5J 5E6

Telephone: (780) 427-0010

For a toll-free connection, dial (780) 310-0000

Fax: (780) 422-4200

Alberta Education website:

www.education.alberta.ca