
Grade 6 Subject Bulletin English Language Arts and Literature

Alberta Provincial Achievement Testing **2023–2024**

This document was written primarily for

Students

Teachers ✓ Grade 6 English Language Arts

Administrators ✓

Parents

General Audience

2023–2024 English Language Arts and Literature 6 Subject Bulletin

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Grade 6 English Language Arts and Literature Provincial Achievement Test

General description

The *Grade 6 English Language Arts and Literature Provincial Achievement Test* is composed of: *Writing* and *Reading*.

Test items are created from the learning outcomes contained within the Grade 6 English Language Arts and Literature curriculum.

Writing

Students may use **print versions** of commercially published dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries, picture dictionaries, and a commercially published thesaurus when completing writing **only**.

Students may do their writing using a computer. For information about using word-processing technology to complete the written components of the achievement test, see the [Provincial Achievement Tests](#) web page.

Reading

Students may **not** use a dictionary, a thesaurus, or other reference materials when completing *Reading*.

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

Writing

Writing may consist of prompts that require students to create personal voice and style through creative and critical thinking.

Writing requires students to write for a specific audience and to fulfill a specified purpose within a given context.

For *Writing*, 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, it is felt that students benefit most from spending their time composing and revising their work rather than from perfecting a “good copy.”

Important reminders

In order to facilitate valid and fair marking for all students during the July marking session, it is important that teachers:

- have students plan their writing only on the page provided;
- follow the procedures for scribing papers, as outlined in the [Provincial Achievement Tests](#);
- follow the procedures regarding classroom materials, as outlined in the [Provincial Achievement Tests](#); and
- not write anything on students' work; for example, marks and rationales awarded at the school, spelling corrections, or interpretations of words and/or sentences written by their students.

Students whose writing is unrelated to the task presented will be awarded a score of **Insufficient**.

Local marking

Before returning the tests to Alberta Education, classroom teachers will be able to mark students' writing using the scoring guides that are provided in the 2024 Scoring Guide, Exemplars, and Rationales that are delivered with the test. All papers will be marked centrally in Edmonton in July.

Locally awarded marks 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 to record their marks by filling in the appropriate circles. The "School Code" and "ACCOMMODATIONS USED" sections should also be completed. If a teacher wants to know how their locally awarded marks compare with the marks that the tests received when marked centrally, then they must create a three-digit identification number and enter it in the section labelled "ID No." It is important that no two teachers from the same school 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.

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

Papers that are not marked locally by teachers will be marked centrally only once. At least once a day, all 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 respective schools, teachers who submitted their marks 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 mark, the centrally awarded mark, a third-read mark if applicable, and the final mark.

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 Conventions and Content.

To support local marking, Alberta Education will provide samples that exemplify the scoring criteria with the test materials. These exemplars are not to be shared with students and must be returned to Alberta Education with the tests. Throughout the school year, teachers can refer to [Examples of the Standards for Students' Writing](#) on the Alberta Education website under Provincial Achievement Tests. Writing by Grade 6 students, along with scoring criteria, is posted at this location. Teachers can also access the rubrics that were used to assess Grade 6 English Language Arts writing under [Scoring Guides](#).



Information for teachers participating in central marking

Provincial Assessment will contact superintendents in the spring to nominate 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 the following conditions:

- have a valid permanent Alberta Professional Teaching Certificate;
- have taught the course within the past three years;
- be currently employed by a school authority or private school; and
- be available 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 and a variety of regional representation by zone, school authority, and school. 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 8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and markers are expected to be available to mark during those hours.

Suggestions for writing the test

Writing

- *Plan your time carefully.* Use all the time available to you to read the assignment carefully and to think about what you are being asked to do; to plan your writing so that it is focused, unified, and coherent; and to proofread your writing.
- *Read and listen to all the instructions carefully and do what the assignments ask you to do.* The time you spend reading and thinking about the assignments is time well spent. Many students find that highlighting or underlining key words in the assignments 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.
- *Use your reference materials.* You are allowed to use print versions of a commercially published dictionary and a commercially published thesaurus for writing only. Use a dictionary to look up the meanings of words that you want to use but are not completely sure about and to ensure that you spell words correctly. Use a thesaurus to find a more precise word for the context you are developing, but be careful not to overuse a thesaurus.
- *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 are related 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 should double-space your writing in order to allow you to make corrections more easily.

Reading

- You may not use a dictionary, a thesaurus, or other reference materials when writing Part B.
- Read each selection and think about each question.
- Read the material using the strategy that works best for you. You should either:
 - read the selection and think carefully about it before you try any of the multiple-choice questions associated with the reading selection;
- **OR**
 - read the questions first and then read the selection, keeping in mind the questions you will need to answer.
- Each set of multiple-choice questions is designed to take you back through the reading selection in a certain way. The questions are ordered according to the location of the answers in the passage. For example, the answer to the first question will likely appear near the beginning of the passage, and so on. Questions relating to the reading selection as a whole will appear at the end of the set of questions.
- Consider all forms of information provided. Information will be presented not only in words but also in visual forms, such as cartoons, pictures, or charts.
- Take the time to reread the lines that are referred to in a question. Many questions contain quotations from the selection with line references indicated. It is always worthwhile to reread the lines that are referenced and to consider the meanings of these lines in both their immediate context in the selection and the context of the selection as a whole.
- When answering “best answer” questions, be sure to carefully read all alternatives before choosing the answer that you think is best. These questions will always include a boldfaced qualifier such as **best**, **most strongly**, or **most clearly** in their stems. All the alternatives are 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 by referring 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 judgment to select an answer from those that remain.
- Double-check to make sure that you have answered every multiple-choice question.
- Test items are created from the learning outcomes contained within the Grade 6 English Language Arts and Literature curriculum.

Opportunities to Participate in Test-development Activities

Field testing

All provincial achievement 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 answering questions that could be used on future provincial achievement tests. As well, teachers have an opportunity to comment on the appropriateness and quality of the test questions.

Students also have an opportunity for a practice run at responding to writing prompts. Their writing could be used to illustrate the standards for student writing for a future provincial achievement test.

Field tests for *Writing* are not marked.

Through the online field-test request system, teachers can create and modify field-test requests and check the status of these requests. Information regarding the field-test process and the request system is available at [Provincial Achievement Tests](#).

Once the completed requests are received by Provincial Assessment staff, 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.

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.

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 the course in question or must have taught the course within the past three years.

Teachers participating in working groups are selected from the working-group nominees approved by superintendents of school authorities. The call for nominations usually occurs in September. However, we will accept further nominations throughout the year. In some subjects, more teachers may be nominated for working groups than are needed. When teachers are selected, there must be a balance of first-time and experienced working-group members and a variety of regional representation by zone, school authority, and school. Unfortunately, not everyone whose name is submitted will be selected.

Contacts 2023–2024

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