This document was written primarily for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>✓ Grade 9 Knowledge &amp; Employability English Language Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Audience</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alberta Education, Government of Alberta

2018–2019

Knowledge & Employability

Knowledge & Employability English Language Arts 9 Assessment

Highlights

Distribution: This document is posted on the Alberta Education website.

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You can find provincial achievement test-related materials on the Alberta Education website.

Additional topics of interest are found in the General Information Bulletin.
This document contains assessment highlights from the 2019 Grade 9 Knowledge & Employability English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test.

Assessment Highlights provides information about the overall test, the test blueprint, and student performance on the provincial achievement test that was administered in 2019. Also provided is information on student performance at the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence on selected items from the 2019 Grade 9 Knowledge & Employability English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test. This information is intended for teachers and is best used in conjunction with multi-year and detailed school reports that are available to schools via the Stakeholder File Exchange (SFX). Assessment Highlights for all provincial achievement test subjects and grades are posted on the Alberta Education website every year in the fall.

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The 2019 Grade 9 Knowledge & Employability English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test

This report provides teachers, school administrators, and the public with an overview of the performance of those students who wrote the 2019 Grade 9 Knowledge & Employability English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test. It complements the detailed school and jurisdiction reports.

How many students wrote the test?
A total of 1,263 students in Alberta wrote the 2019 Grade 9 Knowledge & Employability English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test.

What was the test like?
The 2019 Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test had two parts:

Part A: Writing consisted of a Persuasive Essay-writing Assignment worth 35 marks (35% of the total mark). The Persuasive Essay-writing Assignment provided students with a context (situation) and a collection of materials that students could use if they wanted to.

Part B: Reading consisted of 50 multiple-choice questions worth 65 marks (65% of the total mark). The reading selections were from fiction, non-fiction, drama, poetry, and visual media.
How well did students do?

The percentages of students meeting the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence in 2019 are shown in the graphs below. Out of a total possible score of 100 (parts A and B), the provincial average was 62.8%. The results represented in this report are based on scores achieved by all students who wrote the test, including those in French Immersion and Francophone programs.

2018 Achievement Standards: The percentage of students in the province that met the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence on the 2018 Grade 9 Knowledge & Employability English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test (based on those who wrote).

2019 Achievement Standards: The percentage of students in the province that met the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence on the 2019 Grade 9 Knowledge & Employability English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test (based on those who wrote).
Part A: Writing—2019 Test Blueprint

The blueprint for Part A: Writing identifies the scoring/reporting categories by which student writing is assessed and by which 2019 summary data are reported to schools and school authorities; it also provides a description of the writing assignments and the achievement standards.

Description of Writing Assignment

The writing assignment requires students to respond to a prompt that provides a given context (situation) and a collection of materials that students may use, if they wish. These materials may include graphics, quotations, and short literary excerpts. Students may use ideas from previous experience and/or reading. Students are to respond by writing a persuasive essay.

Reporting Category

**Content** *(selecting ideas and details to achieve a purpose)*
Students respond to a given topic by writing an essay. Students establish their purpose, select ideas and supporting details to achieve the purpose, and communicate in a manner appropriate to their audience.

**Organization** *(organizing ideas and details into a coherent whole)*
Students organize their ideas to produce a unified and coherent narrative that links events, details, sentences, and paragraphs.

**Sentence Structure** *(structuring sentences effectively)*
Students control sentence structure and use a variety of sentence types, sentence beginnings, and sentence lengths to enhance communication.

**Vocabulary** *(selecting and using words and expressions correctly and effectively)*
Students choose specific words and expressions that are appropriate for their audience and effective in establishing a voice/tone that will help to achieve their purpose.

**Conventions** *(using the conventions of written language correctly and effectively)*
Students use conventions accurately and effectively to communicate.

Standards

Student achievement in each reporting category will be described according to the following descriptors:

- Excellent
- Proficient
- Satisfactory
- Limited
- Poor
- INS (insufficient)

- These scoring categories are weighted to be worth twice as much as the other categories.
Part A: Writing—2019 Student Achievement

In 2019, 74.5% of students who wrote the Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test achieved the acceptable standard on Part A: Writing and 4.8% of students who wrote the test achieved the standard of excellence. These results are consistent with previous administrations of Part A: Writing of the provincial achievement test.

Student Achievement by Assignment and Reporting Category

The chart below illustrates the percentage of students achieving writing standards for each writing assignment and reporting category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay-writing Assignment</th>
<th>Reporting Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Standard</td>
<td>Score*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient / No Response</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Scores of 4.5, 3.5, 2.5, and 1.5 occur only when local marks and central marks are averaged.
**Part A: Writing—Commentary on 2019 Student Achievement**

In the 2019 scoring session, teachers from throughout the province scored 1,263 student test booklets. Teachers who marked the tests were generally pleased with the quality of most papers. Students who wrote Part A: Writing of the 2019 Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability English Language Arts Achievement Test achieved an average of 19.7 out of a raw score of 35. The provincial average on the Essay-writing Assignment was approximately 56.3%.

**Essay-writing Assignment**

In the 2019 Essay-writing Assignment, students were required to respond to a prompt that provided a context and a collection of materials that students could use, if they wished. Students were to respond in the form of a persuasive essay. The wording of the assignment, in posing the question “Should the number of school days in a week be reduced from five days to four days?” and inviting students to “Write a persuasive essay for the school’s principal detailing your point of view about the proposal,” encouraged students to bring their knowledge and experiences to their writing.

Training for the marking session always emphasizes the need to look at the strengths of the writer and to mark only what is written. When marking, markers conscientiously examined the “Focus” section of the scoring categories to orient themselves to distinctions within the scoring criteria as well as the various scoring descriptors in each scoring scale in order to arrive at judgments regarding the qualities of a response. Markers conscientiously used their exemplar documents to support the scoring criteria in distinguishing among scoring categories. Each response is to be reviewed according to each category in the scoring criteria. Every effort is made to score each response in a valid and reliable manner.

Students responded to the prompt bringing their prior knowledge and experience into their writing. Teachers who took part in the marking session noted that many students were adept at listing the pros and cons related to the issue and added background knowledge to the content of the writing. They also noted that generally, the writing demonstrated clear introductions and ideas and details that were relevant and supported the responses, which tended to strengthen the writing.

The following excerpts contain examples from responses that achieved “Satisfactory” scores:

- “I think giving the students a four day week is a bad idea because it could effect their future education/job.”
- “Thirdly, the students will have more time on weekends to study, do homework and to complete projects.”
- “As well as it being rushed it would also be more tiring and there would be more home work.”
In responses such as those from which these excerpts were taken, students explored the topic in a clear and plausible manner. The writer’s point of view was evident and, for the most part, students approached the topic from one side of the issue. The ideas and details provided were appropriate, and supporting details tended to be relevant, but general in nature. The introduction was functional and a focus was generally maintained. The conclusion was related to the focus. Ideas were developed in a discernible order, although coherence tended to falter at times. Transitions tended to be mechanical and generally connected ideas within sentences but less so between paragraphs. Also evident in such student responses was sentence structure that was generally controlled. Sentence type and sentence length were sometimes varied, and there was some variety of sentence beginnings. Words and expressions were generally used appropriately. The tone or voice created by the writer was evident, and it was noted that the topic engaged the students. Generally correct use of conventions was seen, although errors occasionally reduced the clarity and flow of the response.

The following excerpts contain examples from responses that achieved “Proficient” or “Excellent” scores.

• “Having five days of school helps get our young adults to feel what it’s like in the real world working five days a week and getting up early in the morning.”

• “This would mean some kids would have to drop out of the activities that they like doing, because, the activities they’re in are most likely not going to change their timing just so the student can attend.”

• “As a student I believe that the five day weeks are very useful for us students. The five day weeks allow us to get the learning that we need for our education so that we can thrive when we graduate.”

In responses such as those from which these excerpts were taken, students demonstrated work in which the exploration of the topic was adept and/or logical or insightful and/or discerning. The introductions were purposeful or engaging, and the conclusions reinforced or enhanced the focus. Sentence structure was consistently controlled and sentence type, length, and beginnings were consistently varied. Words and expressions were well-chosen and supported or enhanced the writer’s position. Few errors in conventions were evident, and any errors that were present rarely reduced the clarity and flow of the response.
Part B: Reading—2019 Test Blueprint and Student Achievement

In 2019, 68.8% of students who wrote the Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test achieved the acceptable standard on Part B: Reading, and 18.8% of students who wrote achieved the standard of excellence.

Student achievement on Part B: Reading of the 2019 Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test averaged 33.1 out of a total score of 50 (66.2%).

The blueprint on the following page shows the reporting categories and language functions by which 2019 summary data are reported to schools and school authorities and the provincial average of student achievement by both raw score and percentage.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting Category</th>
<th>Language Function</th>
<th>Provincial Student Achievement (Average Raw Score and Percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informational</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying and Interpreting Ideas and Details</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.0/17 (70.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students construct meaning by recognizing explicit or implicit ideas and details and make inferences about the relationships between ideas, details, and events.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting Text Organization</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.3/4 (57.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students identify and analyze the author’s use of genre. Students identify and analyze the author’s choice of form, text features, organizational structure, style, literary techniques, and conventions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associating Meaning</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.4/8 (67.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students use contextual clues to determine the denotative and connotative meaning of words, phrases, and figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, hyperbole, idioms, irony, symbolism).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesizing Ideas</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.4/21 (63.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students draw conclusions and make generalizations by integrating information in order to identify the tone, purpose, theme, main idea, point of view, or mood of a passage.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial Student Achievement (Average Raw Score and Percentage)</td>
<td>16.8/25 (67.2%)</td>
<td>16.3/25 (65.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part B: Reading</td>
<td>Total Test Raw Score = 33.1/50 (66.2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part B: Reading—Commentary on 2019 Student Achievement

The following is a discussion of student achievement on Part B: Reading of the 2019 Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test. Sample questions are provided to highlight the levels of achievement of students who met the acceptable standard, students who met the standard of excellence, and students who did not meet the acceptable standard.

Students were presented with a variety of Informational and Narrative/Poetic texts, which included an excerpt from a book, a short informational article, a cartoon, a poem, an excerpt from a graphic novel, a tour schedule, and a magazine article.

In the content area of **Identifying and Interpreting Ideas and Details**, students were expected to construct meaning by recognizing explicit or implicit ideas and details and making inferences about the relationships between these ideas and details.

Multiple-choice question 5 required students to locate a key detail in a tour schedule.

5. Based on the tour schedule, the evening of Day 5 will be spent in

   A. Banff
   B. Jasper
   C. Calgary
   D. Kamloops

3.7% of the students chose A
11.7% of the students chose B
1.6% of the students chose C
83.0% of the students chose D (correct answer)

Approximately 88.6% of students who met the acceptable standard answered this question correctly, as did about 94.1% of students who met the standard of excellence.
In the content area of **Interpreting Text Organization**, students were expected to identify and analyze the author’s use of genre. Students identified and analyzed the author’s choice of form, organizational structure, style, literary techniques, text features, and conventions.

Multiple-choice question 1 required students to understand the use of an asterisk to identify specific information in a poster.

1. In context, the asterisk (*) next to the price ($19.99*) indicates that
   
   A. the music downloads are free  
   B. the pop is included in the price  
   C. delivery is not part of the order  
   D. GST needs to be added to the cost

24.5% of the students chose A  
12.0% of the students chose B  
10.9% of the students chose C  
52.4% of the students chose D (correct answer)

Approximately 57.4% of students who met the acceptable standard answered this question correctly, as did about 75.3% of students who met the standard of excellence.

In the content area of **Associating Meaning**, students were expected to use contextual clues to determine the connotative and denotative meanings of words, phrases, and figurative language.

Multiple-choice question 45 required students to identify the word closest in meaning to a given word from context, in an excerpt from a magazine article.

45. The word closest in meaning to “rigorous” (line 20) is
   
   A. urgent  
   B. difficult  
   C. effective  
   D. reasonable

20.0% of the students chose A  
47.3% of the students chose B (correct answer)  
17.6% of the students chose C  
14.5% of the students chose D

Approximately 53.1% of students who met the acceptable standard answered this question correctly, as did about 76.5% of students who met the standard of excellence.
In the content area of Synthesizing Meaning, students were expected to make generalizations by integrating information from a selection in order to identify the purpose, theme, main message, point of view, or mood of the selection.

Multiple-choice question 37 required students to integrate information to draw a conclusion related to a topic in a paragraph planner.

9. The phrase that best describes the topic of the paragraph being planned is

A. food choices
B. pizza preferences
C. personal preferences
D. Canada’s best-loved foods

6.4% of the students chose A
72.3% of the students chose B (correct answer)
15.8% of the students chose C
5.3% of the students chose D

Approximately 79.5% of students who met the acceptable standard answered this question correctly, as did about 95.3% of students who met the standard of excellence.
Provincial Achievement Testing Program Support Documents

The Alberta Education website contains several documents that provide valuable information about various aspects of the provincial achievement testing program. To access these documents, go to the Alberta Education website. Click on one of the specific links to access the following documents.

Provincial Achievement Testing Program General Information Bulletin

The General Information Bulletin is a compilation of several documents produced by Alberta Education and is intended to provide superintendents, principals, and teachers with easy access to information about all aspects of the Provincial Achievement Test Program. Sections in the bulletin contain information pertaining to schedules and significant dates; security and test rules; test administration directives, guidelines, and procedures; calculator and computer policies; test accommodations; test marking and results; field testing; resources and web documents; forms and samples; and Provincial Assessment Sector contacts.

Subject bulletins

At the beginning of each school year, subject bulletins are posted on the Alberta Education website for all provincial achievement test subjects for grades 6 and 9. Each bulletin provides descriptions of assessment standards, test design and blueprinting, and scoring guides (where applicable) as well as suggestions for preparing students to write the tests and information about how teachers can participate in test development activities.

Examples of the standards for students’ writing

For provincial achievement tests in grades 6 and 9 Knowledge & Employability English Language Arts and Français/French Language Arts, writing samples are designed for teachers and students to enhance students’ writing and to assess this writing relative to the standards inherent in the scoring guides. The exemplars documents contain sample responses with scoring rationales that relate student work to the scoring categories and scoring criteria.

Previous provincial achievement tests and answer keys

All January provincial achievement tests (parts A and B) for Grade 9 semestered students are secured and must be returned to Alberta Education. All May/June provincial achievement tests are secured except Part A of grades 6 and 9 Knowledge & Employability English Language Arts and Français/French Language Arts. Unused or extra copies of only these Part A tests may be kept at the school after administration. Teachers may also use the released items and/or tests that are posted on the Alberta Education website.
Parent guides
Each school year, versions of the Alberta Provincial Achievement Testing Parent Guide for grades 6 and 9 are posted on the Alberta Education website. Each guide answers frequently asked questions about the Provincial Achievement Test Program and provides descriptions of and sample questions for each provincial achievement test subject.

Involvement of teachers
Teachers of grades 6 and 9 are encouraged to take part in activities related to the Provincial Achievement Test Program. These activities include item development, test validation, field testing, and marking. In addition, arrangements can be made through the Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia for teacher in-service workshops on topics such as interpreting provincial achievement test results to improve student learning.