



Grade 9
Subject Bulletin
Social Studies

Alberta Provincial Achievement Testing 2019–2020

This document was written primarily for:

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

Alberta Education, Government of Alberta

2019–2020

Social Studies 9 Subject Bulletin

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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](#).

Grade 9 Social Studies Provincial Achievement Test

General description

The *Grade 9 Social Studies Provincial Achievement Test* consists of 50 multiple-choice questions based on outcomes in the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies. 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 on the two general outcomes in the 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 test is divided into sections based on specific outcomes in the program of studies. Each specific outcome has either one or two sets of issue-centred sources in the Sources Booklet on which three to four multiple-choice questions are based.

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

Values and Attitudes outcomes 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.

The test is developed to be completed in 80 minutes; however, students have up to 160 minutes to complete the test should they need it.

Grade 9 Social Studies provincial 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 [Social Studies K–9 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 of the outcomes in the program of studies.

Acceptable standard	Standard of excellence
<p>Students who meet the acceptable standard in Grade 9 Social Studies are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know basic features of Canada’s federal political system to determine the impact that lawmaking processes, the branches of government, members of Parliament and senators, political parties, the media, and lobby groups have on citizens • identify some roles and responsibilities—including jury duty, knowing the law, and advocacy—that citizens and organizations have in Canada’s justice system and understand the intent of the Youth Criminal Justice Act • recognize some of the ways in which the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms fosters recognition of individual rights in Canada, affects conditions in the workplace, and impacts citizens • understand some of the historical factors related to recognition of collective rights in Canada and acknowledge some of the political implications of exercising these rights for Francophones and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples • identify basic factors related to immigration and refugee policies in Canada (e.g., economic, political, health, and security) and recognize some of the benefits of immigration 	<p>Students who meet the standard of excellence in Grade 9 Social Studies are also able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluate the extent to which lawmaking processes, the branches of government, members of Parliament and senators, political parties, the media, and lobby groups in Canada’s federal political system meet the needs of all Canadians • appreciate how the effectiveness of Canada’s justice system is dependent on the participation of citizens and organizations to ensure that the enforcement of laws, such as the Youth Criminal Justice Act, is fair and equitable • determine the impact that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms has had on the legislative process in Canada by assessing the extent to which individual rights are guaranteed to all citizens • assess how increased demand for recognition of the collective rights of Francophones and Aboriginal peoples has impacted the legislative process in Canada by applying understandings of historical events to contemporary issues • examine the provincial, national, and global implications of immigration from multiple perspectives and make judgments regarding how legislative processes in Canada address emerging issues of immigration

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Acceptable Standard	Standard of Excellence
<p>Students who meet the acceptable standard in Grade 9 Social Studies are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know basic features of market and mixed economies by understanding the roles of government, consumers, and labour unions, and how the basic economic problem of scarcity is addressed by the economic systems of Canada and the United States • consider some of the basic indicators of quality of life to analyze the impact that consumerism, marketing, and social programs have on the economies of Canada and the United States • understand that political decisions and economic systems are interrelated in terms of how political parties, the underground economy, and environmental issues impact quality of life in Canada and the United States • demonstrate critical and creative thinking when examining issues from differing viewpoints and/or perspectives in order to formulate a personal viewpoint • interpret diagrams, 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 anticipating the impact of prospective approaches to resolving issues • comprehend the content of media messages and recognize points of view represented 	<p>Students who meet the standard of excellence in Grade 9 Social Studies are also able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluate the impact that government intervention in market and mixed economies has on citizens' quality of life by analyzing the principles and practices on which the economic systems of Canada and the United States are based • critically analyze the societal values that underlie individual consumer behaviour and the provision of social programs in Canada and the United States to determine how consumerism impacts quality of life • examine key elements of political party platforms, the underground economy, and environmental concerns to assess the interrelationship between political decisions and the economic systems of Canada and the United States • think critically and creatively when synthesizing ideas from multiple sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of diverse viewpoints and perspectives • analyze ideas from a variety of sources to examine issues in different contexts of time and place and discover correlations and causal relationships • utilize problem-solving and decision-making strategies to predict outcomes, explore new ideas, and evaluate choices and/or plans of action • evaluate the authority and authenticity of media messages and examine the differing values, lifestyles, and points of view represented

Test blueprint

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

Reporting Category	Knowledge and Understanding ¹	Skills and Processes ²	Number (Percentage) of Questions
<p>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 on questions and issues regarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • how political and legislative processes meet the needs of Canadians • participation in Canada’s justice system • citizens’ legal roles and responsibilities • the Youth Criminal Justice Act 	<p>4 (8%)</p>	<p>7 (14%)</p>	<p>11 (22%)</p>

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.

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.

³Bolded numbers in parentheses refer to specific outcomes in the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies to which the reporting categories are cross-referenced.

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Reporting Category	Knowledge and Understanding ¹	Skills and Processes ²	Number (Percentage) of Questions
<p>Individual and Collective Rights (9.1.6, 9.1.7)³ Students critically assess the impact of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms on legislative processes in Canada and how increased demand for recognition of collective rights has impacted legislative processes in Canada by exploring and reflecting on questions and issues regarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Indian Act recognizes the status and identity of Aboriginal peoples • Treaty 6, Treaty 7, and Treaty 8 • legislation and Métis cultures and rights 	<p>4 (8%)</p>	<p>7 (14%)</p>	<p>11 (22%)</p>

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.

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.

³Bolded numbers in parentheses refer to specific outcomes in the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies to which the reporting categories are cross-referenced.

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Reporting Category	Knowledge and Understanding ¹	Skills and Processes ²	Number (Percentage) of Questions
<p>Immigration (9.1.8)³ Students critically assess how legislative processes address issues of immigration by exploring and reflecting on questions and issues regarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Charter • how Canada benefits from immigration 	<p>3 (6%)</p>	<p>5 (10%)</p>	<p>8 (16%)</p>

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.

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.

³Bolded numbers in parentheses refer to specific outcomes in the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies to which the reporting categories are cross-referenced.

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Reporting Category	Knowledge and Understanding ¹	Skills and Processes ²	Number (Percentage) of Questions
<p>Economic Decision Making (9.2.4)³ Students analyze principles and practices of market and mixed economies by exploring and reflecting on questions and issues regarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 problem of scarcity 	<p>3 (6%)</p>	<p>5 (10%)</p>	<p>8 (16%)</p>

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.

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.

³Bolded numbers in parentheses refer to specific outcomes in the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies to which the reporting categories are cross-referenced.

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Reporting Category	Knowledge and Understanding ¹	Skills and Processes ²	Number (Percentage) of Questions
<p>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 on questions and issues regarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>5 (10%)</p>	<p>7 (14%)</p>	<p>12 (24%)</p>
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.

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.

³Bolded numbers in parentheses refer to specific outcomes in the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies to which the reporting categories are cross-referenced.

Preparing Students for the *Grade 9 Social Studies Provincial Achievement Test*

Suggestions for preparing students

The best way to prepare students for writing the provincial achievement test is to teach the Grade 9 Social Studies 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 sources and questions that will appear on the test by working through questions from previously released provincial achievement tests.

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

Released items from previously secured *Grade 9 Social Studies Provincial Achievement Tests* are available on the Alberta Education [website](#).

Special-format practice tests

To provide students an opportunity to practise provincial achievement test-style questions and content in Braille, audio, large print, or coloured print versions, Alberta Education has made special-format practice tests available. Tests are offered in all subjects with a corresponding provincial achievement test. Alberta schools with registered Alberta K–12 students may place orders for these tests. Braille tests are available in English, and by request, in French. All tests are provided free of charge, but limits may be placed on order volumes to ensure access for everyone.

For more information or to place an order, contact

Laura LaFramboise
Distribution Coordinator, Examination Administration
780-641-9116 or Laura.LaFramboise@gov.ab.ca.

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

Suggestions for writing the test

- You may **not** use a dictionary, a thesaurus, or other reference materials when writing the test.
- Read each source set and think about each question.
- 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 answer.

Each 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 related 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 determine an answer.
- *Consider all forms of information provided.* Information will be presented in a variety of ways, such as news articles, charts, pictures, graphs, maps, and 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 reread the source(s) referenced and to consider the meaning 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 bolded qualifier such as **best**, **most strongly**, **most directly**, 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 judgment to select an answer from those that remain.
- *Check to make sure that you have answered every multiple-choice question.*

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

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 the Provincial Assessment Sector, 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.

***NEW** 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 jurisdictions. 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 regional representation by zone, school authority, and school. Unfortunately, not everyone whose name is submitted will be selected.

Contacts 2019–2020

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Inquiries about special cases, provincial
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Inquiries about field testing
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Office hours:
Monday through Friday, 8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
The office is open during the lunch hour.

***NEW**

***NEW**

***NEW**