

# Grade 9 Parent Guide

Alberta Provincial Achievement Testing  
Including French Immersion Subjects



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**This document was written primarily for**

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Students

Teachers

Administrators

Parents                      ✓                      Grade 9

General Audience

Others

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**2025–2026 Grade 9 Parent Guide**

Distribution: This document is posted on the [Alberta Education and Childcare website](#).

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Please note that if you cannot access one of the direct website links referred to in this document, you can find provincial achievement test-related materials on the [Alberta Education and Childcare website](#).



# Questions Frequently Asked About the Provincial Achievement Testing Program

Each year, students in Grade 9 write provincial achievement tests in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students who are registered in French immersion programs write a French form of mathematics, science, and social studies tests in addition to French Language Arts and English Language Arts tests.

Grade 9 students who are receiving instruction in a Knowledge and Employability (K&E) program of study will write a provincial achievement test developed specifically for that program of study. Translated forms of the K&E mathematics, science, and social studies provincial achievement tests are available for students receiving their instruction within Francophone or alternative French-language programs. Students in Grade 6 also write provincial achievement tests. Parents often ask the following questions about the Provincial Achievement Testing Program as their children prepare to write provincial achievement tests.

## **What are the purposes of the provincial achievement tests?**

The purposes of the provincial achievement tests are to determine if students are learning what they are expected to learn; to report to Albertans how well students have achieved provincial standards at given points in their schooling; and to assist schools, school authorities, and the province in monitoring and improving student learning.

## **Who is expected to write the tests?**

All students registered in grades 6 and 9 or those in their sixth or ninth year of schooling are expected to write the tests for their grades.

## What tests are administered and when?

Grade 9 provincial achievement tests are to be administered on specific dates in accordance with Alberta Education's schedules.

Subject		Official Time*	Month
English Language Arts	<i>Part A: Writing</i>	120 min	May
	<i>Part B: Reading</i>	75 min	June
French Language Arts (immersion students)	<i>Part A: Writing</i>	120 min	May
	<i>Part B: Reading</i>	75 min	June
K&E English Language Arts	<i>Part A: Writing</i>	80 min	May
	<i>Part B: Reading</i>	75 min	June
K&E Mathematics		75 min	June
K&E Science		75 min	June
K&E Social Studies		75 min	June
Mathematics/Mathématiques	<i>Part A</i>	30 min	June
	<i>Part B</i>	80 min	June
Science/Sciences		75 min	June
Social Studies/Études Sociales		80 min	June

\*All students may use up to twice the official time, if needed.

## What do the provincial achievement tests assess?

Alberta's provincial achievement tests are aligned with the provincial curriculum or programs of study. No single test can assess everything. The clearest picture of students' growth and development is gained when a wide variety of assessment information is considered. The provincial achievement tests provide part of the picture. In addition, classroom teachers use many different assessment strategies throughout the school year to gain information about what students are learning.

## How are provincial achievement tests developed?

Classroom teachers from across the province are involved at every stage of the test development and implementation process, including:

- writing, revising, and reviewing questions
- administering field tests
- validating test forms
- validating French translations
- validating scoring guides
- confirming standards
- administering the tests
- marking students' written responses

## **What are test accommodations?**

Alberta Education provides alternative test formats and/or administration conditions for students with special test-writing needs in order to allow these students to do their best. Test accommodations may include Braille, sign language, use of a reader or scribe, and recorded responses. Students who regularly use aids of this type in the classroom to support their learning may make use of these accommodations when writing one or more of their provincial achievement tests. More information can be found in the [\*Provincial Achievement Testing General Information Bulletin\*](#).

## **How can parents help their children prepare for the tests?**

It is important that children feel relaxed and comfortable when they write any test, including provincial achievement tests. Children's feelings about a test are very much influenced by what adults close to them say about those tests. Parents can be of most help to their children by encouraging them to relax and do their best, just as students would when writing any test.

## **How can teachers prepare their students for writing the tests?**

Alberta Education discourages test rehearsal and coaching. Provincial achievement tests are like any other test students would normally write. The best preparation for students to write the provincial achievement tests is effective instruction based on the full range of learning outcomes in the Alberta programs of study.

## **How are the provincial achievement tests marked?**

All provincial achievement tests, except the language arts writing tests, are machine scored. The written-response component of the language arts test is marked centrally, in July, by classroom teachers who have been nominated by their superintendents. These teachers are trained by and work under the supervision of Alberta Education staff.

Alberta Education encourages teachers to mark provincial achievement tests using the scoring guides and exemplars that are provided to them each year. Locally awarded marks on the language arts written-response tests that are submitted to Alberta Education will be used as the first reading of a student's response. The papers will then be marked centrally as the second reading. Both marks contribute to the student's final mark. In the event of a discrepancy between the two marks, papers will receive 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.

Marks for each machine-scored provincial achievement test are provided to teachers, who are expected to report the preliminary results to parents in June.

Although no single test can provide a comprehensive picture of a student's achievement, preliminary results can assist parents in more timely and better understanding of their child's achievement when used in conjunction with more information gained from various classroom assessments.

## How should provincial achievement test results be communicated and used?

In late September, Alberta Education makes available copies of the Individual Student Profile (ISP) of each student to the staff of the school where the student wrote the provincial achievement tests (see samples on pages 5 and 6). PAT Results Individual Student Profile (ISP) Reports are available in the Provincial Approach to Student Information (PASI) system. Schools are responsible for forwarding ISPs to parents using the following options: forwarding PDFs of the ISPs electronically via school systems; printing the PAT Results ISP Reports for mailing; or signing up parents for access to their child's *myPass* account. Students and parents will be able to access the PAT Results ISP Reports as needed via *myPass*.

School staff, in consultation with their school council, should look at the school report to see what patterns and trends are evident in the results and to determine how the school's programs might be improved. The principal, teachers, parents, and community can look at these results in relation to past results, along with school and district assessments and other information about students and programs. They can use this information to provide the best possible learning opportunities for their students.

Similarly, it is helpful if the school board and the jurisdiction look at the school authority report to see how district-wide programs can be improved for students.

It is also important for Alberta Education to examine the provincial results to see whether changes are needed in provincial programs or policies.

Used in these ways, the test results support continuous improvement in program planning and in teaching. This helps to ensure that as many students as possible achieve provincial standards.

## How should school councils use provincial achievement test results?

In collaboration with the school staff, a school council should review the provincial achievement test results. Questions such as the following may serve as a starting point:

- What are the strengths of our school?
- What are the areas requiring growth?
- What factors could be contributing to our school's performance?
- What trends in provincial achievement test results can we identify for our school over the past several years?
- What are our local achievement targets for this year?
- What plans can we develop to address the areas requiring growth and to help students to do their best?

## Should schools be ranked according to their results on provincial achievement tests?

Alberta Education **does not support** comparisons of schools or school authorities based on provincial achievement test scores. Rather, in evaluating a school, people should consider a variety of factors that are relevant to that school. Alberta Education emphasizes the importance of provincial standards, local targets, and past performance as the basis for examining the test results and planning instructional programs.

# Sample—Individual Student Profile (ISP)

## Grade 9 Achievement Tests – June 2018

### Individual Student Profile

#### Parent Copy

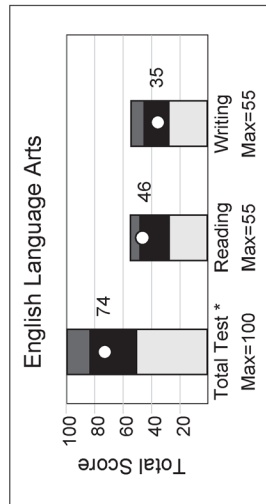
Student Name:  
Alberta Student Number:  
School of Writing:  
School Authority:



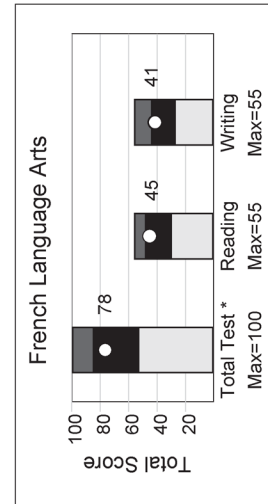
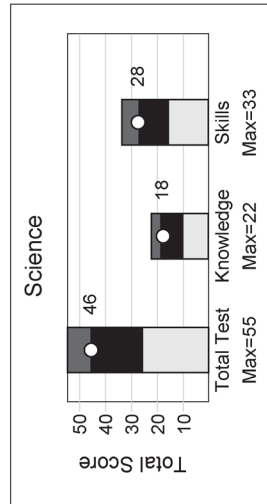
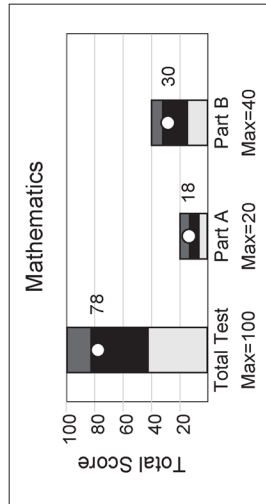
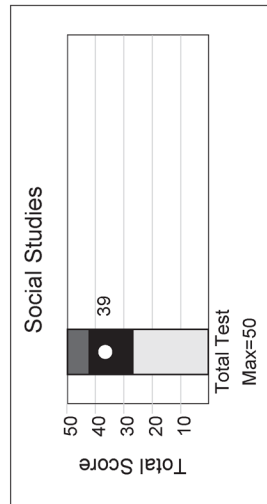
#### Explanatory Notes

The point on each bar graph indicates the score obtained by the student on the total test and on each of the two components of the test.

The shaded regions indicate the range of scores at the Standard of Excellence (dark grey region), the Acceptable Standard (black region), and below the acceptable standard (light grey region).



\* Reading and Writing are weighted equally in the calculation of the total score.



\* Reading and Writing are weighted equally in the calculation of the total score.



## Grade 9 Achievement Tests – June 2018

Student Name:  
Alberta Student Number:  
School of Writing:  
School Authority:

### Individual Student Profile

#### Parent Copy

Student's Results			Range of Scores Within Each Standard <sup>1</sup>		
Subject	Component	Score	Standard Achieved	Acceptable Standard	Standard of Excellence
English Language Arts	Total Test <sup>2</sup>	74/100	Acceptable	51-81	82-100
	Reading	46/55	Acceptable	28-45	46-50
	Writing	35/55	Acceptable	28-43	44-55
Mathematics	Total Test <sup>3</sup>	78/100	Acceptable	42-80	81-100
	Part A	18/20	Excellence	8-14	15-20
	Part B	30/40	Acceptable	17-32	33-40
Social Studies	Total Test <sup>4</sup>	39/50	Acceptable	27-42	43-50
Science	Total Test	46/55	Excellence	26-45	46-55
	Knowledge	18/22	Acceptable	10-18	19-22
	Skills	28/33	Excellence	16-26	27-33
French Language Arts	Total Test <sup>2</sup>	78/100	Acceptable	54-84	85-100
	Reading	45/55	Acceptable	32-48	49-50
	Writing	41/55	Acceptable	28-43	44-55

The table above provides the student's scores for each subject and for the components of that subject. Also included is the range of scores that define each standard.

<sup>1</sup> These standards reflect provincial expectations.

<sup>2</sup> Reading and Writing reporting categories are weighted equally in the calculation of the total score for English Language Arts and French Language Arts.

<sup>3</sup> Part A is worth 20% and Part B is worth 80% in the calculation of the total score for Grade 9 Mathematics.

<sup>4</sup> Provincial standards are only set on the total test.

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## Test Descriptions and Sample Questions

The Grade 9 provincial achievement tests are designed to reflect the nature and aims of the learning outcomes that are prescribed in provincial programs of study and to assess the achievement of these outcomes. More information about these provincial programs of study is available in [Parents](#).

Descriptions of the Grade 9 provincial achievement tests have been included to give you a first-hand look at what provincial achievement tests are all about.

### Sample questions

To view provincial achievement tests sample questions, visit the [Practice Tests](#) web page.

# English Language Arts

## Test descriptions

*Part A: Writing* consists of two writing assignments—one narrative or essay and one functional. The official time for the test is 120 minutes; however, students have up to 240 minutes to complete the test should they need it. For the first 10 minutes, students have time to discuss both assignments with classmates, in groups of two to four, or to think alone about the writing prompts. Students will engage in this discussion without teacher participation. During this discussion time, students may record their ideas on the planning spaces. The official test time provides students with time for discussing, planning, drafting, and revising both writing assignments. Students may use commercially published dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries, and thesauri only when completing *Part A: Writing*.

*Part B: Reading* consists of 55 questions based on reading selections from fiction, nonfiction, drama, poetry, and visual media. The official time for the test is 75 minutes; however, students have up to 150 minutes to complete the test should they need it. Students are not allowed to use a dictionary, a thesaurus, or other reference material when writing *Part B: Reading*.

For more information, see the [Grade 9 English Language Arts Subject Bulletin](#).

# French Language Arts

## Test descriptions

*Part A: Writing* consists of two writing assignments—one expressive and one functional. The official time for the test is 120 minutes; however, students may have up to 240 minutes to complete the test should they need it. For the first 10 minutes, students have time to discuss both assignments with classmates, in groups of two to four, or to think alone about the writing prompts. Students will engage in this discussion time without teacher participation. During this discussion time, students may record their ideas on the planning spaces provided. The official test time provides students with time for discussion, planning, drafting, and revising both writing assignments. Students may use commercially published dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries, and thesauri only when completing *Part A: Writing*.

*Part B: Reading* consists of 55 questions based on reading selections from fiction, nonfiction, drama, poetry, and visual media. The official time for the test is 75 minutes; however, students have up to 150 minutes to complete the test should they need it. Students are not allowed to use a dictionary, a thesaurus, or other reference material when doing *Part B: Reading*. See [Appendix](#) for information on new French spelling.

For more information, see the [Bulletin d'information, Français/French Language Arts 9e année](#) (French version only).

# Mathematics / Mathématiques

## Test descriptions

The *Grade 9 Mathematics Provincial Achievement Test* consists of two parts: *Part A* and *Part B*.

*Part A* contains 20 questions and represents 20% of the overall test score. *Part A* assesses students' foundational skills and fluency in mental math, estimation, algebra, square roots, exponent laws, and arithmetic operations on rational numbers, without the use of calculators. The official time for *Part A* is 30 minutes; however, each student may have up to 60 minutes to complete this part of the test should they need it.

*Part B* contains 40 questions and represents 80% of the overall test score. Manipulatives and a scientific calculator may be used; however a graphing calculator is not permitted. The official time for *Part B* is 80 minutes; however, each student may have up to 160 minutes to complete this part of the test should they need it.

The items are created from the specific outcomes contained within each of the following four strands of the Grade 9 Mathematics Program of Studies: Numbers, Patterns and Relations, Shape and Space, and Statistics and Probability. Test items are also categorized in terms of three levels of item complexity: low, moderate, and high.

For more information, see the [Grade 9 Mathematics Subject Bulletin](#).

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## Science/Sciences

### Test description

The *Grade 9 Science Provincial Achievement Test* consists of 55 questions. The official time for the test is 75 minutes; however, students have up to 150 minutes to complete the test should they need it. In addition to knowledge, the skills of initiating and planning, performing and recording, and analyzing and interpreting will be assessed within the five strands of the program of studies: Biological Diversity, Matter and Chemical Change, Environmental Chemistry, Electrical Principles and Technology, and Space Exploration.

For more information, see the [Grade 9 Science Subject Bulletin](#).

## Social Studies/Études Sociales

### Test description

The *Grade 9 Social Studies Provincial Achievement Test* consists of 50 questions 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 questions are 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 upon which three to four questions are based. Knowledge and understanding outcomes and skills and processes outcomes are integrated throughout the test. Values and attitudes outcomes are best assessed in the context of the classroom.

The official time for the test is 80 minutes; however, students have up to 160 minutes to complete the test should they need it. Students are not allowed to use a dictionary, a thesaurus, or other reference material.

For more information, see the [Grade 9 Social Studies Subject Bulletin](#).

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## Contacts

If you have additional questions or comments about provincial achievement testing, please speak with your child's teacher or school principal, or connect with Provincial Achievement Testing:

### Hours

8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (open Monday to Friday, closed statutory holidays)

Test format, content, confirming standards, marking, and results reporting

Email: [edc.pats@gov.ab.ca](mailto:edc.pats@gov.ab.ca)

Test security, rules, scheduling, and policy issues

Email: [exam.admin@gov.ab.ca](mailto:exam.admin@gov.ab.ca)

### Address

Early Years Assessments and Provincial Achievement Tests

Alberta Education and Childcare

6th Floor 44 Capital Boulevard

10044 108 Street

Edmonton, Alberta T5J 5E6



# Appendix

## New French spelling

As of January 2008, all French-language Alberta Education documents have been published in accordance with the new spelling rules adopted by the *Conseil supérieur de la langue française* of France in 1990.

These new rules apply to approximately 2 000 words in the French language. Even though these new rules have been officially approved, they are not mandatory. During this transition period, which could last many years, both spellings are admitted. Neither spelling, traditional or new, is wrong. Consequently, no student who uses either spelling convention, even within a given written assignment, is to be penalized. This holds true for all school work, as well as for all written responses in the French-language provincial achievement tests and diploma exams.

The key new rules follow:

- 1. The elements of compound numbers are all joined by a hyphen.**
  - a. Traditional spelling: deux cent quarante-sept
  - b. New spelling: deux-cent-quarante-sept
- 2. The circumflex accent is no longer used on *i* and *u*.**
  - a. Traditional spelling: connaître, coûter, août, maîtrise
  - b. New spelling: connaitre, couter, aout, maitrise
- 3. The grave accent replaces the acute accent before a syllable having a silent e.**
  - a. Traditional spelling: événement, crèmerie, céleri
  - b. New spelling: évènement, crèmerie, cèleri
- 4. The hyphen is removed from compound words having a prefix, such as *entre-* and *contre-*, and in words borrowed from other languages.**
  - a. Traditional spelling: entre-temps, contre-exemple, auto-école, basket-ball
  - b. New spelling: entretemps, contrexemple, autoécole, basketball
- 5. The second element of compound words is now pluralized when the word is used in the plural.**
  - a. Traditional spelling: des brise-glace, des cure-dent, des après-midi
  - b. New spelling: des brise-glaces, des cure-dents, des après-midis