



Grade 9 Assessment Highlights English Language Arts

Alberta Provincial Achievement Testing **2021–2022**

This document was written primarily for

Students

Teachers ✓ Grade 9 English Language Arts

Administrators ✓

Parents

General Audience

2021–2022 English Language Arts 9 Assessment Highlights

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This document contains assessment highlights from the *2022 Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test*.

Assessment highlights provide information about the overall test, the test blueprints, and student performance on the provincial achievement test. Also provided is commentary on student performance at the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence. This information is intended for teachers and is best used in conjunction with the multi-year and detailed school reports that are available to schools. **Assessment highlights reports** for all provincial achievement test subjects and grades are **posted on the Alberta Education website every year** in the fall.

The examination statistics that are included in this document represent both French and English writers. If you would like to obtain English-only statistics or French-only statistics that apply to your school, please refer to your detailed reports, which are available on the Stakeholder File Exchange (SFX).

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The 2022 Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test

This report provides teachers, school administrators, and the public with an overview of the performance of all students who wrote the 2022 Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test. It complements the detailed school and jurisdiction reports.

How many students wrote the test?

A total of 28 956 students in Alberta had results reported provincially for both parts of the 2022 Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test. Security breaches occurred over the last few days of the 2021–2022 PAT administration window. To maintain the validity and comparability of provincial results, students most likely impacted by these security breaches have been excluded from the provincial cohort.

What was the test like?

The 2022 Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test had two parts that were weighted equally.

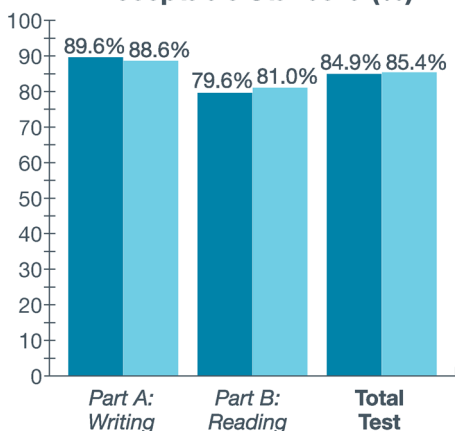
Part A: Writing consisted of a Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment (worth 35 marks) and a Functional Writing Assignment (worth 20 marks) for a total of 55 marks. The Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment provided students with a topic and some graphic and textual prompts to which they were to respond in the format of either a narrative or an essay. The Functional Writing Assignment required students to respond to a specific situation by writing a business email to a specific audience.

Part B: Reading consisted of 55 multiple-choice questions based on 10 reading selections that were either informational or narrative/poetic in nature.

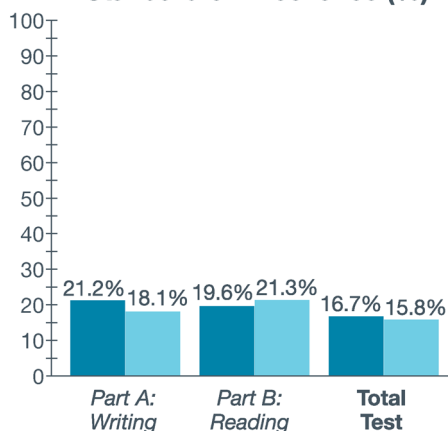
How well did students do?

The percentages of students meeting the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence in 2022 are consistent with 2019, as shown in the graphs below. Out of a total possible score of 110 (parts A and B) on the test, the provincial average on the test was 71.8 (65.3%).

Percentage of Students Meeting the Acceptable Standard (%)



Percentage of Students Meeting the Standard of Excellence (%)



2019 Achievement Standards: The percentages of students in the province that met the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence on the 2019 Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test (based on results reported provincially)

2022 Achievement Standards: The percentages of students in the province that met the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence on the 2022 Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test (based on results reported provincially)

Part A: Writing—Test Blueprint

The blueprint for *Part A: Writing* identifies the scoring/reporting categories by which student writing is assessed and by which 2022 summary data are reported to schools and school authorities. It also provides a description of the writing assignments and the achievement standards on the *Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test*.

Assignment I—Narrative or Essay Writing

Writing Assignment and Scoring/Reporting Category	Description of Writing Assignment	Achievement Standards
<p>Content* (2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1, 3.3, 4.1, 4.3)** (selecting ideas and details to achieve a purpose) Students respond to a given topic by writing a narrative or an essay. Students establish their purpose, select ideas and supporting details to achieve their purpose, and communicate in a manner appropriate to their audience.</p>	<p>The Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment requires students to respond to a prompt that consists of a topic as well as a collection of materials that students may use if they wish. These materials include graphics, quotes, and short literary excerpts. Students may use ideas from previous experience and/or reading. Students are to respond by writing a narrative or an essay.</p>	<p>Student achievement in each scoring/reporting category is identified by the following descriptors:</p>
<p>Organization* (3.1, 3.3, 4.1, 4.3)** (organizing ideas and details into a coherent whole) Students organize their ideas to produce a unified and coherent narrative or essay that links events, details, sentences, and paragraphs, and that supports their purpose.</p>		Excellent
		Proficient
		Satisfactory
		Limited
		Poor
<p>Sentence Structure (4.1, 4.2)** (structuring sentences effectively) Students control sentence structure and use a variety of sentence types, sentence beginnings, and sentence lengths to enhance communication.</p>		Insufficient
<p>Vocabulary (4.1, 4.2)** (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.</p>		
<p>Conventions (4.2)** (using the conventions of written language correctly and effectively) Students use conventions accurately and effectively to communicate.</p>		

*These scoring categories are weighted to be worth twice as much as the other scoring categories.

**Numbers in parentheses refer to outcomes in the Grade 9 English Language Arts Program of Studies to which the scoring categories are cross-referenced.

Assignment II—Functional Writing

Writing Assignment and Scoring/Reporting Category	Description of Writing Assignment	Achievement Standards
<p>Content* (2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.3)** (thought and detail) Students develop, organize, and evaluate ideas for a specified purpose and audience.</p> <p>Content Management* (4.1, 4.2)** (using the conventions of written language correctly and effectively) Students communicate accurately and effectively by selecting words and phrases appropriate to their purpose. Students demonstrate control of sentence structure, usage, mechanics.</p>	<p>The Functional Writing Assignment requires students to write to a specified audience in the context of a business email.</p>	<p>Student achievement in each scoring/reporting category is identified by the following descriptors:</p> <p>Excellent</p> <p>Proficient</p> <p>Satisfactory</p> <p>Limited</p> <p>Poor</p> <p>Insufficient</p>

*These scoring categories are weighted to be worth twice as much as the other scoring categories.

**Numbers in parentheses refer to outcomes in the Grade 9 English Language Arts Program of Studies to which the scoring categories are cross-referenced.

Part A: Writing—2022 Student Achievement

In 2022, 88.6% of all students who had results reported provincially for the *Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test* achieved the acceptable standard on *Part A: Writing*, and 18.1% of all students who had results reported provincially achieved the standard of excellence.

Student achievement by assignment and scoring/reporting category

The following charts illustrate the percentages of students achieving writing standards for each writing assignment and scoring category.

Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment

		SCORING / REPORTING CATEGORY				
		Content	Organization	Sentence Structure	Vocabulary	Conventions
Writing Standard	Score*	% of Students	% of Students	% of Students	% of Students	% of Students
Excellent	5.0	3.6%	3.5%	4.6%	4.8%	4.9%
	4.5	5.6%	5.6%	6.3%	6.5%	7.2%
Proficient	4.0	18.3%	17.7%	21.5%	21.8%	23.4%
	3.5	16.9%	16.9%	17.2%	17.8%	16.9%
Satisfactory	3.0	36.1%	36.5%	34.3%	39.6%	29.1%
	2.5	9.0%	9.2%	7.9%	5.2%	8.3%
Limited	2.0	7.9%	8.2%	6.3%	3.1%	8.0%
	1.5	1.1%	0.9%	0.8%	0.3%	0.9%
Poor	1.0	1.1%	0.9%	0.8%	0.4%	0.9%
Insufficient / No Response	0	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%

*Scores of 4.5, 3.5, 2.5, and 1.5 occur only when local marks and central marks are averaged. In 2022, 21 253 (73.4% of the total of 28 956) papers were marked locally, and these scores were submitted to Alberta Education. Papers with discrepant scores were given a third reading. The third-reading rescore rate was 7.6%.

Functional Writing Assignment

		SCORING / REPORTING CATEGORY	
		Content	Content Management
Writing Standard	Score*	% of Students	% of Students
Excellent	5.0	5.2%	5.6%
	4.5	6.0%	7.1%
Proficient	4.0	17.8%	21.1%
	3.5	13.7%	15.2%
Satisfactory	3.0	30.7%	30.1%
	2.5	10.3%	8.2%
Limited	2.0	12.1%	9.3%
	1.5	1.7%	1.2%
Poor	1.0	1.7%	1.2%
Insufficient / No Response	0	0.9%	0.9%

*Scores of 4.5, 3.5, 2.5, and 1.5 occur only when local marks and central marks are averaged. In 2022, 21 253 (73.4% of the total of 28 956) papers were marked locally, and these scores were submitted to Alberta Education. Papers with discrepant scores were given a third reading. The third-reading rescore rate was 7.6%.

Part A: Writing—Commentary on 2022 Student Achievement

During the 2022 scoring session, 170 teachers from throughout the province scored 28 956 student test booklets. Teachers who marked the tests were generally pleased with the quality of most papers. Students who had results reported provincially for *Part A: Writing of the 2022 Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test* achieved an average of 36.2 out of a total raw score of 55 (65.8%). The provincial average on the Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment was 23.1 out of 35 (66.0%), and the provincial average on the Functional Writing Assignment was 13.0 out of 20 (65.0%).

Throughout the 2022 marking session, every effort was made to reward student strengths where evident rather than to critique what was missing or speculate on what a student should have added or included. When marking student responses, markers were encouraged to conscientiously return to the “**Focus**” section of the scoring categories to consider the extent to which each student had demonstrated competence in the criteria listed. There were several scoring descriptors in each scoring category to be assessed in order to arrive at judgments regarding the qualities of a response. Markers were encouraged to review—at the start of each marking day—each assignment and the prompt materials provided in the test booklet with the expectation that many students’ ideas regarding the assignments were informed by details within the prompts. Occasionally, markers needed to re-read a response to appreciate what a student had attempted and, in fact, accomplished. All markers acknowledged that student responses were first drafts.

Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment—Observations from Standards Confirmation and Central Marking 2022: General Impressions

In the **Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment**, students were required to “Write either a narrative or an essay about **the importance of gratitude in an individual’s life.**” This assignment was accessible for students at all levels of achievement. The **literary prompts**—that included quotations by Oprah Winfrey, Valerie Rickel, Eckhart Tolle, Helen Keller, Thomas Merton, and Albert Schweitzer—provided many students with a variety of ideas to explore. In both narrative and essay responses, students often discussed the value of showing gratitude in enabling a person to be respected, gain confidence, and build character. In some responses, students examined how being grateful can be difficult, particularly for those facing challenging circumstances, how appreciating each day and seeing the good in one’s life is important, how gratitude helps a person to view the world positively without complaint, and how gratitude benefits society as a whole. In other responses, students reflected on the lasting impact on individuals who have received gratitude from others. The **visual prompts**—that included one individual expressing appreciation for the assistance with homework provided by another individual, a group of hockey players who are grateful for the opportunity to raise money for a donation to a children’s hospital, two individuals talking about being grateful for living in Canada, an individual who appreciates the natural beauty of the environment, and three individuals commemorating those who fought to preserve the freedom of others—also offered students a variety of ideas to explore. In both narrative and essay responses, many students commented on how showing gratitude involves the desire to help others, contribute to those less fortunate, and promote the well-being of others. Other students emphasized the value of appreciating and conserving the beauty of the natural world, honouring the sacrifices of individuals who have lost their lives in defense of others, and being aware of the impact of showing gratitude on others. Still others discussed the benefits of being grateful in providing a person with feelings of contentment and optimism. In most responses, students were successful in presenting their ideas regarding the importance of gratitude in an individual’s life.

As in other years, some students chose to support their ideas with a discussion of the topic in relation to the lives of renowned athletes (such as Muhammad Ali, Michael Jordan, Michael Phelps, Wayne Gretzky, Connor McDavid, and Sidney Crosby) and popular celebrities (such as Ice Cube, Eminem, Prince, Selena Gomez, and Justin Timberlake). Others connected the topic to aspects of the lives of notable individuals including Malala Yousafzai, Barack Obama, Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, Terry Fox, Neil Armstrong, Helen Keller, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, and Mother Teresa. Other students cited examples from literary works including *The Golden Compass*, *The Wild Children*, *Touching Spirit Bear*, *The Giver*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Ender’s Game*, *The Princess Bride*, *The Hunger Games*, *Twelfth Night*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Of Mice and Men*.

The **Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment** provided each student with the opportunity to successfully demonstrate his or her attainment of text creation outcomes in the Program of Studies. Most students succeeded in meeting the achievement standards expected of students in the Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment on *Part A: Writing of the 2022 Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test*.

Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment—Observations from Standards Confirmation and Central Marking 2022: Qualities of Student Writing That Met the Acceptable Standard

In both narrative and essay responses that received a score of **“Satisfactory”** in **“Content,”** many students approached the topic by presenting ideas regarding how people are “thankful” for being provided with “basic needs such as food and shelter,” having the opportunity to “attend school and make friends,” and living in a country “where human rights are protected.” Other students examined the qualities of individuals who are not grateful for aspects of their daily lives, and commented on the detriments of being “selfish and not caring for others,” taking “people for granted,” feeling “greedy and always wanting more,” and experiencing “disapproval from other people.” Most students acknowledged that showing gratitude involves seeing “the positive side of things,” being “concerned about the feelings of others,” and feeling satisfied with “the things achieved in life.” Still other students examined the need to have compassion for others, be accountable for one’s actions, and offer support when necessary in order to strengthen relationships with others.

In narrative and essay responses scored **“Satisfactory”** in **“Content,”** the exploration of the topic was clear and/or logical and the student’s purpose was evident. Relevant and/or generic details were provided to support appropriate and/or predictable ideas, and the writing was straightforward and/or generalized and occasionally appealed to the reader’s interest. The **“Organization”** of such responses was characterized by a functional introduction that established a focus that was generally sustained, events and/or details that were developed in a discernible order, transitions that mechanically connected events and/or details within and/or between sentences and/or paragraphs, and a mechanical and/or moralistic closure that was related to the focus. Student responses scored **“Satisfactory”** in **“Sentence Structure,” “Vocabulary,”** and **“Conventions”** demonstrated generally controlled and sometimes effective and/or varied sentence structure, general words and expressions that were generally used appropriately, a discernible voice or tone, generally correct use of conventions, and errors that occasionally reduced clarity and/or sometimes interrupted the flow of the response.

Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment—Observations from Standards Confirmation and Central Marking 2022: Qualities of Student Writing That Met the Standard of Excellence

In both narrative and essay responses that received scores of **“Proficient”** or **“Excellent”** in **“Content,”** students often commented on the altruistic character of individuals who express gratitude to others “for even the smallest gesture,” accept people “for who they are without judgement,” and acknowledge “the impact that one’s actions can have on others.” Many students spoke of the interrelationship between showing gratitude and having self-esteem, and speculated on the enduring benefits of showing gratitude on a person’s success in achieving lifelong goals and finding fulfillment in life. Some students purported that the ability to show gratitude defines the individuality of each person. A number of students observed that showing gratitude necessarily entails interactions with others, whereas others commented on the rewards of showing gratitude toward one’s self in living a physically, mentally, and spiritually healthy life. Some students argued that showing gratitude toward others is crucial to gaining maturity, forging bonds with family members, and gaining self-awareness. Others reflected on the guilt and regret that accompany a lack of gratitude, and the challenges of interacting with ungrateful individuals. Still other students drew analogies related to how showing gratitude can have a domino effect on others, provide a route to a destination, serve as a source of light in dark times, or outweigh the negative aspects of life.

In responses scored **“Proficient”** or **“Excellent”** in **“Content,”** students explored the topic in an adept and/or plausible or insightful and/or imaginative manner. The student’s purpose was intentional or deliberate. Ideas presented were thoughtful and/or sound or perceptive and/or carefully chosen. Supporting details were specific and/or apt or precise and/or original. The writing was considered and/or elaborated or confident and/or creative and drew or held the reader’s interest. In **“Organization,” “Proficient”** or **“Excellent”** responses contained a purposeful or engaging introduction that clearly or skillfully established a focus that was capably or consistently sustained. Events and/or details were developed coherently in a sensible or judicious order. Transitions clearly or fluently connected events and/or details within and/or between sentences and/or paragraphs. An appropriate or effective closure was related to the focus. Student responses scored **“Proficient”** or **“Excellent”** in **“Sentence Structure,” “Vocabulary,”** and **“Conventions”** demonstrated consistently controlled and usually or consistently effective and varied sentence structure. Specific or precise words and expressions were used accurately or deliberately. The voice or tone created by the student was distinct or convincing. Minor convention errors rarely, seldom, or in no way reduced clarity or interrupted the flow of the response.

Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment—Observations from Standards Confirmation and Central Marking 2022: Qualities of Student Writing That Did Not Meet the Acceptable Standard

In both narrative and essay responses scored “**Poor**” or “**Limited**” in “**Content**,” students struggled to convey their thoughts clearly and completely. In some responses, students presented naive illustrations of how gratitude “takes a long time to do,” “doesn’t always work the way you want,” or “always has to be done all the time.” In some responses, students quoted randomly from the prompts provided without elaborating on them or connecting them to ideas presented. Some students reduced the topic to a passing reference to “saying thanks,” being “polite,” or showing “kindness.” In other responses, students depicted scenarios in which little context was provided regarding a character’s personality, circumstances, or behaviour in the synopsis of events presented. In such responses, students presented largely unsupported generalizations or randomly recounted elements of experiences that were weakly connected to the importance of gratitude in an individual’s life.

In student responses scored “**Poor**” or “**Limited**” in “**Content**,” the exploration of the topic was tenuous and/or simplistic or minimal and/or tangential, the purpose was vague or insubstantial, and the ideas presented were superficial and/or ambiguous or overgeneralized and/or underdeveloped. Supporting details were imprecise and/or abbreviated or irrelevant and/or scant, and the writing was unsubstantiated and/or incomplete or confusing and/or lacking in validity with little appeal to the reader’s interest. In “**Organization**,” the introduction lacked purpose and/or was not functional or obscure and/or ineffective, and any focus established provided little or no direction and was not sustained or undeveloped. The development of events and/or details was not clearly discernible or was haphazard and/or incoherent. Transitions were lacking and/or indiscriminately used or absent and/or inappropriately used within and/or between sentences and/or paragraphs. Closure was abrupt, contrived, and/or unrelated to the focus or ineffectual and/or missing. “**Sentence Structure**,” “**Vocabulary**,” and “**Conventions**” in responses receiving scores of “**Poor**” or “**Limited**” typically demonstrated a lack of control and little or no variety in sentence structure or sentence beginnings. Imprecise or ineffective words and expressions were used inexactly or inaccurately. The voice or tone created by the student was not clearly established, indistinct, not evident, or indiscreet. Errors in conventions weakened or impaired communication, blurred or severely reduced clarity, and interrupted or impeded the flow of the response.

As in other years, the connection between the assignment and the ideas contained in some student responses was difficult to determine. Markers were to consult with group leaders when drawing conclusions about whether or not a response sufficiently addressed the task presented in the assignment. Most often, there was evidence that students had implicitly addressed the topic and/or prompts, and the responses were assessed accordingly. If, however, extensive examination of a student’s work by both a marker and a group leader led to the conclusion that a response was “**Insufficient**,” then the floor supervisors in consultation with the examination manager made a final judgment.

Functional Writing Assignment—Observations from Standards Confirmation and Central Marking 2022: General Impressions

In the **Functional Writing Assignment**, nearly all students were able to connect the context provided in the “**Situation**” to their own experiences. From the viewpoint of “Peyton Tanner” (“a Grade 9 student who lives in Korgan, Alberta” who recognizes that “volunteering is an important part of personal growth that is beneficial to both those who volunteer and those who receive the service”), the majority of students were able to successfully present ideas regarding the creation of “a Student Volunteer Club at Canyon Heights School in Korgan,” the recruitment of “many students to join this club,” and “the club’s activities.” Many students cited how members of the Student Volunteer Club provide “snow shoveling and lawn mowing for senior citizens, organizing peer-led tutorial sessions, and coordinating after-school activities for younger students.” Some students also included commentary regarding the benefits for radio station CHIC 101.1 FM of promoting the Student Volunteer Club in its broadcasts.

Many students directly referenced information provided in the “**Situation**” regarding how “the individuals in the community who could use the services this club provides may not know it exists” and recognized how “Promotions that reach a large number of community members could increase public awareness of the Student Volunteer Club.” When assessing student responses, markers recognized that, although many students adhered closely to the information provided in the test booklet, doing so was acceptable given the manner in which the assignment was framed primarily within outcomes specified in **General Outcome 3: Managing Ideas and Information**. The extent to which these guidelines were analyzed and particularized to achieve the student’s purpose in the “**Assignment**”—to “Write a business email to Mr. Nathan Malette, general manager of radio station CHIC 101.1 FM, requesting that the station promote the Student Volunteer Club in its broadcasts” and to “Provide enough information to convince Mr. Malette of the benefits of the services provided by the members of the Student Volunteer Club”—distinguished the quality of student responses.

Most students were able to successfully present ideas aimed at encouraging Mr. Malette to consider the beneficial impact of the Student Volunteer Club on members of the community. Some students commented on the skills acquired by students who are members of the club such as effective time management, strong interpersonal communication, and the ability to work well with others—skills that will serve them well in adulthood. In other responses, students elaborated on the benefits for senior citizens in having snow shovelled in winter and the lawn mown in summer, for peers to receive assistance with learning through tutorial sessions, and for younger students to participate in enrichment activities after school. In addition, some students included anecdotal illustrations of individuals who have made use of services provided by the club, particularly family members, teachers, and community members, or have shared personal experiences documenting the impact of being a member of the club on their lives.

As in other years, markers were to acknowledge that there was no prescribed length for responses to the Functional Writing Assignment. While some students concisely fulfilled the requirements of the task, others elaborated more fully on ideas that they presented. Such brevity or embellishment was neither beneficial nor detrimental in and of itself, and markers were to take into account the overall effectiveness of each response when assessing its quality. Some students single-spaced the body of the email while others used double-spacing. These issues specifically were not to be viewed as detrimental to the quality of student work and were not to be penalized in the assessment of **“Content Management.”**

The **Functional Writing Assignment** provided each student with the opportunity to successfully demonstrate his or her attainment of text creation outcomes in the Program of Studies. Most students succeeded in meeting the achievement standards expected of students in the Functional Writing Assignment on *Part A: Writing* of the *2022 Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test*.

Functional Writing Assignment—Observations from Standards Confirmation and Central Marking 2022: Qualities of Student Writing That Met the Acceptable Standard

Students whose responses received a score of **“Satisfactory”** in **“Content”** typically recognized that “the purpose of the Student Volunteer Club at Canyon Heights School is to provide services to members of the community” as well as “to provide hands-on volunteer experience for students.” Many students highlighted the benefits for the recipients of the services provided by the club—such as “children that can take part in playing games,” “students [who] could get help with homework,” and “seniors who can’t do it themselves can have their sidewalk shoveled and lawn mowed”—as well as the benefits for members of the club—such as “gaining more self-confidence,” “building stronger relationships with other students,” and “feeling connected to the community they live in.” Most students understood the need to provide Mr. Malette, general manager of radio station CHIC 101.1 FM, with information that would encourage him “to advertise the club in the radio station’s broadcasts.”

In responses scored **“Satisfactory”** in **“Content,”** students presented appropriate ideas and adequately developed the topic. Relevant information was presented and supported by enough detail to fulfill the purpose of the assignment. An appropriate tone was generally maintained. In responses scored **“Satisfactory”** in **“Content Management,”** words and expressions used were generally accurate and occasionally effective. The writing demonstrated basic control of correct sentence structure, usage, and mechanics and may have contained errors that occasionally impeded meaning.

Functional Writing Assignment—Observations from Standards Confirmation and Central Marking 2022: Qualities of Student Writing That Met the Standard of Excellence

In responses awarded scores of **“Proficient”** or **“Excellent”** in **“Content,”** students often broadened the discussion of the merits the services provided by members of the Student Volunteer Club to the wider implications of “strengthening the relationships and interactions among students in the school” and the “growth of community spirit among residents of Korgan” In some responses, students commented on how “it is unfortunate that so few people in our community are aware of the valuable services provided by club,” how “members of the club gain essential life skills that will be beneficial in adulthood,” and how “it is hoped that these acts of selflessness will be paid forward in promoting goodwill and harmony in society.” In some responses, students argued that “such a club at Canyon Heights School could provide an example for other schools to follow” and that “members of the club will be role models for other students to follow.” Still other students concluded that “the connections made between members of the club and recipients of the club’s services could forge bonds that might have a lifelong impact.”

Student responses scored “**Proficient**” or “**Excellent**” in “**Content**” were characterized by ideas that were thoughtful or perceptive, and development of the topic was generally effective or clear and effective. Significant or pertinent information was presented, and this information was substantiated or enhanced by specific or precise details that fulfilled the purpose of the assignment. An appropriate tone for the addressee was clearly or skillfully maintained. In responses scored “**Proficient**” or “**Excellent**” in “**Content Management**,” words and expressions used were usually or consistently accurate and effective. The writing demonstrated either competent and generally consistent control or confident and consistent control of correct sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. Any errors present rarely or in no way impeded meaning.

Functional Writing Assignment—Observations from Standards Confirmation and Central Marking 2022: Qualities of Student Writing That Did Not Meet the Acceptable Standard

Students whose responses demonstrated qualities characteristic of “**Poor**” or “**Limited**” scores in “**Content**” sometimes relied on verbatim reiteration of information presented in the assignment with little of their own thinking or development. Other students misconstrued the role of the writer of the email to be that of the principal of Canyon Heights School advocating the need for a Student Volunteer Club at the school or that of a parent wishing to volunteer at the school. In other responses, students misrepresented information when contending that the Student Volunteer Club “could make even more proffits if it did more stuff,” that the “club pays its members for there time,” or that members of the club “might not want to work for free.” In some instances, students mistakenly argued against the need for a Student Volunteer Club or inappropriately contended that a Student Volunteer Club would “be a waist of students time” or “be responsible for damage to other peoples things.” In some instances, students used an inappropriately inflammatory tone in a misguided effort to persuade Mr. Malette to promote the Student Volunteer Club in the radio station’s broadcasts.

In student responses scored “**Poor**” or “**Limited**” in “**Content**,” ideas were superficial, flawed, and/or merely a repetition of the situation presented in the assignment and overgeneralized, misconstrued, and/or essentially a verbatim reiteration of the situation presented in the assignment. Development of the topic was inadequate or ineffective. Information presented was imprecise, undiscerning, and/or simply a restatement of the prompt provided or irrelevant, missing, and/or essentially copied from the prompt provided. Supporting details were insignificant and/or lacking or obscure and/or absent, and the purpose of the assignment was only partially fulfilled or not fulfilled. Some or little awareness of an appropriate tone for the addressee was evident. In responses scored “**Poor**” or “**Limited**” in “**Content Management**,” words and expressions used were vague, inexact, and/or frequently taken from the prompt or inaccurate, misused, and/or essentially quoted from the prompt. The writing demonstrated either limited evidence or a lack of evidence of control of correct sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. Errors that were present may have frequently or severely impeded meaning.

As in other years, the connection between the assignment and the ideas contained in some student responses was difficult to determine. Markers were to consult with group leaders when drawing conclusions about whether or not a response sufficiently addressed the task presented in the assignment. Most often, there was evidence that students had implicitly addressed the topic and/or prompts, and the responses were assessed accordingly. If, however, extensive examination of a student’s work by both a marker and a group leader led to the conclusion that a response was “**Insufficient**,” then the floor supervisors in consultation with the examination manager made a final judgment.

Overall, student responses to both the Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment and the Functional Writing Assignment in *Part A: Writing of the 2022 Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test* were strong. The vast majority of students (88.6%) achieved the acceptable standard, while 18.1% of all students achieved the standard of excellence. Of all students who had results reported provincially for the *Part A: Writing* test, 14.6% did not achieve the acceptable standard.

Part B: Reading—Test Blueprint and 2022 Student Achievement

In 2022, 81.0% of all students who had results reported provincially for the *Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test* achieved the acceptable standard on *Part B: Reading*, and 21.3% of all students who had results reported provincially achieved the standard of excellence. On *Part B: Reading* of the *2022 Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test*, students achieved an average score of 35.0 out of a total possible score of 54 (64.8%).

The blueprint below shows the reporting categories and language functions by which 2022 summary data are reported to schools and school authorities, and it shows the provincial average of student achievement by both raw score and percentage.

Reporting Category	LANGUAGE FUNCTION		Provincial Student Achievement (Average Raw Score and Percentage)
	Informational	Narrative/Poetic	
Identifying and Interpreting Ideas and Details (2.1, 2.2, 2.3)* Students construct meaning by interpreting ideas and details pertaining to setting/atmosphere/context, character/narrator/speaker (actions, motives, values), conflict, and events.			10.2/16 (63.8%)
Interpreting Text Organization (2.2, 2.3)* Students identify and analyze the text creator's choice of genre, form, tone, point of view, organizational structure (e.g., chronology, cause and effect, comparison and contrast), style, diction, rhetorical techniques (e.g., repetition, parallelism), text features (e.g., alliteration, onomatopoeia, imagery, dialogue, flashback, foreshadowing, suspense), and conventions.			7.4/11 (67.3%)

*Numbers in parentheses refer to outcomes in the Grade 9 English Language Arts Program of Studies to which the reporting categories are cross-referenced.

LANGUAGE FUNCTION

Reporting Category	Informational	Narrative/Poetic	Provincial Student Achievement (Average Raw Score and Percentage)
Associating Meaning (2.1, 2.2, 2.3)* Students use contextual clues to determine the denotative and connotative meaning of words, phrases, and figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, irony, symbolism).			7.1/11 (64.5%)
Synthesizing Ideas (2.2)* Students draw conclusions and make generalizations by integrating information in order to identify the tone, purpose, theme, main idea, or mood of a passage.			10.3/16 (64.4%)
Provincial Student Achievement (Average Raw Score and Percentage)	13.6/21 (64.8%)	21.4/33 (64.8%)	Part B: Reading Total Test Raw Score = 54

*Numbers in parentheses refer to outcomes in the Grade 9 English Language Arts Program of Studies to which the reporting categories are cross-referenced.

Part B: Reading—Commentary on 2022 Student Achievement

The following is a discussion of student achievement on *Part B: Reading of the 2022 Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test*, highlighting the achievement of students who met the acceptable standard, students who met the standard of excellence, and students who did not meet the acceptable standard.

In the blueprinting category of **Identifying and Interpreting Ideas and Details**, students were expected to construct meaning by interpreting ideas and details pertaining to setting/atmosphere/context, character/narrator/speaker (actions, motives, values), conflict, and events in ten reading selections. In the three informational texts—two magazine articles and an excerpt from a nonfiction book—students who achieved the acceptable standard were able to recognize interrelationships among ideas and details, identify key elements of information presented, and acknowledge the impact of personal experience on an individual. Students who achieved the standard of excellence additionally illustrated strengths in making inferences regarding the significance of personal reflections on experiences described and in discriminating among details in order to determine those most relevant to an idea under discussion. Students who did not meet the acceptable standard were generally able to identify explicit ideas and details in informational texts, but many encountered difficulty with questions that required recognition of connections among ideas presented or identifying the central focus of details presented. The seven narrative/poetic texts—including two poems, two cartoons, and excerpts from three novels—enabled many students who met the acceptable standard to demonstrate their ability to determine the motivation underlying a character’s actions, recognize how characters interact with others, and identify what details suggest about an individual’s character. In addition, students who achieved the standard of excellence were capable of acknowledging the complexities of interpersonal relationships among characters and appreciating the indelible impact of pivotal events on characters’ lives. Those students who did not meet the acceptable standard, while generally able to recognize causality between directly related events, sometimes struggled with questions involving interpretation of the implicit meaning of ideas pertaining to interactions among characters.

In the section of the *2022 Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test* blueprinting for curricular content pertaining to **Interpreting Text Organization**, students who achieved the acceptable standard were able to identify textual features that include the use of punctuation (such as quotation marks and dashes) and sound devices (such as onomatopoeia) to enhance meaning by writers of informational texts. Students who achieved the standard of excellence were, in addition, able to analyze how the presentation of a writer’s ideas is enhanced through rhetorical choices that include the use of comparison and contrast as well as sentence fragments and repetition. Students who did not meet the acceptable standard demonstrated weaknesses in identifying how the organizational choices employed by the writers of informational texts provide a structure for the development of ideas. In narrative/poetic texts, students who achieved the acceptable standard could typically identify the effects achieved by writers through the development of suspense to enhance the presentation of ideas. Students achieving the standard of excellence could additionally detect elements central to the conflict faced by characters as well as subtleties of tone in interactions among characters. Many students who did not achieve the acceptable standard encountered difficulty with questions that tasked students with recognizing the impact of the writer’s sequencing of events on the development of the central conflict in narrative/poetic texts.

With regard to questions blueprinting in the **Associating Meaning** category, students who achieved the acceptable standard were able to identify the denotative meanings of words and phrases and could recognize metaphorical comparisons in informational texts. Students who achieved the standard of excellence were additionally able to appreciate how connotations of words and phrases reinforce meaning and how metaphorical comparisons enrich the reader’s understanding of the similarities between familiar and unfamiliar experiences. Students who did not achieve the acceptable standard typically struggled with distinguishing the meaning of specific words and phrases presented and showed a limited understanding of figurative language in informational texts. Students who achieved the acceptable standard could generally recognize the use of metaphor, hyperbole, and personification in straightforward narrative/poetic texts. Students who achieved the standard of excellence demonstrated additional strengths in abstracting from figures of speech a deeper understanding of ideas presented by writers of narrative/poetic texts. Students who did not achieve the acceptable standard were often challenged by questions that required the use of contextual clues to determine the meaning of words and phrases and sometimes encountered difficulty identifying figurative comparisons in narrative/poetic texts.

In the blueprinting category of **Synthesizing Ideas**, students achieving the acceptable standard were typically able to identify main ideas in informational texts and determine the central focus of a writer's reflections on personal experiences. Students who achieved the standard of excellence were additionally capable of synthesizing ideas in informational texts in order to formulate conclusions pertaining to the basis for a writer's inclusion of particular content and perceive the overarching ideas of information presented. Many of those students who did not achieve the acceptable standard were able to identify explicit facts presented but frequently found it difficult to answer questions that required synthesis of ideas to arrive at a generalization encapsulating the content of information presented or extrapolation from a writer's reflections on the significance of specific events. In narrative/poetic texts, students who achieved the acceptable standard generally demonstrated the ability to recognize differing viewpoints among characters and determine central themes from events portrayed. Students achieving the standard of excellence could additionally evaluate the effectiveness of characters' choices through the writer's omniscience in exploring their actions and appreciate the main purpose underlying the writer's presentation of events in narrative/poetic texts. Those students who did not meet the acceptable standard often struggled with questions that required formulating conclusions regarding the intended impact on readers of events depicted and were often challenged by questions regarding the resolution of conflict through the events documented in narrative/poetic texts.

Overall, student achievement on *Part B: Reading* of the *2022 Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test* was strong. Most students (81.0%) were able to achieve the acceptable standard on the *Part B: Reading* test, and 21.3% of all students achieved the standard of excellence. Of all students who had results reported provincially for the *Part B: Reading* test, 19.0% did not achieve the acceptable standard.

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 Testing 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 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 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 Testing Program and provides descriptions of and sample questions for, the provincial achievement test in each subject.

Involvement of teachers

Teachers of grades 6 and 9 are encouraged to take part in activities related to the Provincial Achievement Testing 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.