



# **Grade 9 Subject Bulletin Social Studies**

Alberta Provincial Achievement Testing **2025-2026**

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**This document was written primarily for**

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Students

Teachers                      ✓              Grade 9 Social Studies

Administrators              ✓

Parents

General Audience

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***2025–2026 Social Studies 9 Subject Bulletin***

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You can find provincial achievement test-related materials on the [Provincial Achievement Tests](#) web page.

# 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. It is important to remember that one test cannot measure all the components within the learning outcomes in the program of studies.

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 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 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"><li>• 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</li><li>• 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</li><li>• 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</li><li>• 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</li><li>• 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</li><li>• 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</li><li>• 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</li></ul>	<p>Students who meet the standard of excellence in Grade 9 Social Studies are also able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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</li><li>• 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</li><li>• 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</li><li>• 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</li><li>• 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</li><li>• 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</li><li>• 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</li></ul>

(Continued on the next page)

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"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• demonstrate critical and creative thinking when examining issues from differing viewpoints and/or perspectives in order to formulate a personal viewpoint</li> <li>• interpret diagrams, timelines, maps, charts, and graphs to understand historical events and issues and to analyze geographic information</li> <li>• exercise skills of decision making and problem solving by anticipating the impact of prospective approaches to resolving issues</li> <li>• comprehend the content of media messages and recognize points of view represented</li> </ul>	<p>Students who meet the standard of excellence in Grade 9 Social Studies are also able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• think critically and creatively when synthesizing ideas from multiple sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of diverse viewpoints and perspectives</li> <li>• analyze ideas from a variety of sources to examine issues in different contexts of time and place and discover correlations and causal relationships</li> <li>• utilize problem-solving and decision-making strategies to predict outcomes, explore new ideas, and evaluate choices and/or plans of action</li> <li>• evaluate the authority and authenticity of media messages and examine the differing values, lifestyles, and points of view represented</li> </ul>

## Test blueprint

The following blueprint identifies the reporting categories and test sections (curricular content areas) by which questions are classified and reported to schools and school authorities. The number of questions in each reporting category is approximate.

Test Section (Curricular Content Area)	REPORTING CATEGORY		
	Knowledge and Understanding <sup>1</sup>	Skills and Processes <sup>2</sup>	Number (Percentage) of Questions
<b>The Political and Judicial System (9.1.4, 9.1.5)<sup>3</sup></b> 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• how federal laws are passed</li><li>• branches of the federal government</li><li>• selection of MPs and senators</li><li>• accountability of MPs and senators</li><li>• the role of federal political parties</li><li>• the role of media in political issues</li><li>• lobby groups and government decisions</li><li>• how political and legislative processes meet the needs of Canadians</li><li>• participation in Canada's justice system</li><li>• citizens' legal roles and responsibilities</li><li>• the Youth Criminal Justice Act</li></ul>	<b>4 (8%)</b>	<b>7 (14%)</b>	<b>11 (22%)</b>

<sup>1</sup>**Knowledge and understanding**—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

<sup>2</sup>**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

<sup>3</sup>Numbers in parentheses refer to specific outcomes in the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies to which the reporting categories are cross referenced.

(Continued on the next page)

Test Section (Curricular Content Area)	REPORTING CATEGORY		
	Knowledge and Understanding <sup>1</sup>	Skills and Processes <sup>2</sup>	Number (Percentage) of Questions
<b>Individual and Collective Rights</b> (9.1.6, 9.1.7) <sup>3</sup> 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognition of individual rights</li> <li>• exercising individual rights</li> <li>• conditions in the workplace</li> <li>• rights and responsibilities of citizens</li> <li>• recognition of collective rights</li> <li>• the needs of Francophone minorities</li> <li>• the needs of Francophones in Québec</li> <li>• the rights of official-language minorities</li> <li>• how the Indian Act recognizes the status and identity of Aboriginal peoples</li> <li>• Treaty 6, Treaty 7, and Treaty 8</li> <li>• legislation and Métis cultures and rights</li> </ul>	4 (8%)	7 (14%)	11 (22%)

<sup>1</sup>**Knowledge and understanding**—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

<sup>2</sup>**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

<sup>3</sup>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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Test Section (Curricular Content Area)	REPORTING CATEGORY		
	Knowledge and Understanding <sup>1</sup>	Skills and Processes <sup>2</sup>	Number (Percentage) of Questions
<b>Immigration (9.1.8)<sup>3</sup></b> Students critically assess how legislative processes address issues of immigration by exploring and reflecting on questions and issues regarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• factors influencing immigration policies</li> <li>• changes to Canadian policies on immigration and refugees</li> <li>• immigration and Aboriginal peoples</li> <li>• provincial immigration policies</li> <li>• immigration policies in Québec</li> <li>• immigration policies and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</li> <li>• how Canada benefits from immigration</li> </ul>	3 (6%)	5 (10%)	8 (16%)

<sup>1</sup>**Knowledge and understanding**—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

<sup>2</sup>**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

<sup>3</sup>Numbers in parentheses refer to specific outcomes in the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies to which the reporting categories are cross referenced.

(Continued on the next page)

Test Section (Curricular Content Area)	REPORTING CATEGORY		
	Knowledge and Understanding <sup>1</sup>	Skills and Processes <sup>2</sup>	Number (Percentage) of Questions
<b>Economic Decision Making (9.2.4)<sup>3</sup></b> Students analyze principles and practices of market and mixed economies by exploring and reflecting on questions and issues regarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>principles of a market economy</li> <li>government intervention</li> <li>Canada's mixed economy</li> <li>the role of consumers in market and mixed economies</li> <li>consumer individual and collective identity</li> <li>the economic impact of labour unions</li> <li>government intervention in the economy in Canada and in the United States</li> <li>the basic economic problem of scarcity</li> </ul>	3 (6%)	5 (10%)	8 (16%)

<sup>1</sup>**Knowledge and understanding**—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

<sup>2</sup>**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

<sup>3</sup>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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Test Section (Curricular Content Area)	REPORTING CATEGORY		
	Knowledge and Understanding <sup>1</sup>	Skills and Processes <sup>2</sup>	Number (Percentage) of Questions
<b>Consumerism, Quality of Life, and Political Decision Making (9.2.5, 9.2.6)<sup>3</sup></b> 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• indicators of quality of life</li> <li>• individual consumer behaviour</li> <li>• how marketing affects consumerism</li> <li>• consumerism and quality of life</li> <li>• consumerism as a power of a collective</li> <li>• consumerism and economic growth</li> <li>• values underlying social programs</li> <li>• economic platforms of political parties</li> <li>• political party philosophies and platforms</li> <li>• the underground economy</li> <li>• environmental issues and quality of life</li> </ul>	5 (10%)	7 (14%)	12 (24%)
<b>Number (Percentage) of Questions</b>	<b>19 (38%)</b>	<b>31 (62%)</b>	<b>50 (100%)</b>

<sup>1</sup>**Knowledge and understanding**—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

<sup>2</sup>**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

<sup>3</sup>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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# 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.

Released items from previously secured *Grade 9 Social Studies Provincial Achievement Tests* are available on the [Provincial Achievement Tests](#) web page. [Practice tests](#) are also available on the digital assessment platform.

## Special-format practice tests

To give students an opportunity to practice provincial achievement test-style questions and content in Braille, large print, or coloured print versions, Alberta Education and Childcare produces special-format practice tests for all subjects that have a provincial achievement test. Alberta schools with registered Alberta K–12 students may place orders for these tests. Braille versions 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 all students.

For the greatest benefit, special-format practice tests should be written under conditions similar to those of the corresponding provincial achievement test. The same rules regarding the use of resources and devices should be followed.

Braille versions must be returned to Alberta Education and Childcare after use.

More information about special format practice tests can be found in the *General Information Bulletin*. To order special format practice tests, complete this [form](#).

## Suggestions for answering questions

- 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 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 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.

- 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) referred to in a question. Sources contain key details that will help you determine the correct answers to questions. It is always worthwhile to re-read 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 the alternatives 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 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 alternatives 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 question.

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# Opportunities to Participate in Test-development Activities

## Field testing

All provincial achievement test questions are field tested before use. Field testing is a critical process in assessment design with the objective of testing the test items before they appear on a provincial assessment. Field testing ensures that Alberta Education provincial assessments are fair, reliable, and valid. Teachers and students can be reassured that the items on provincial assessments have undergone a rigorous process of development, improvement, and validation.

Field tests provide benefits for teachers and students by exposing them to examples of the style and content of items that may appear on provincial assessments. Through the field-testing experience, students experience provincial assessment rules and procedures, as well as a conventional large-scale standardized writing environment. This exposure and familiarization have the potential to reduce test anxiety.

Teachers can sign up for field testing on the [digital assessment platform](#). A [user guide](#) to signing up for field testing has been developed to answer any questions you may have

**All of the rules and procedures that are specified in the [General Information Bulletin](#) apply to the administration of field tests. Prior to participating in field testing, school staff will be required to attest to a declaration related to assessment confidentiality.**

Detailed information can be found in the [Field Testing Program: Rules and Guide](#).

## 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 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 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.

# Appendix 1

## Example of Grade 9 Social Studies instructions page

Navigate the assessment ▾

Instructions

● Instructions

○ Copyright

○ Credits

Continue to Section One

In the test, the diagram to the left will appear on the left side of the screen. Click on each bulleted item to view its contents.

When you have finished viewing the bulleted items, click on “Continue to Section One” to begin taking the test.

### Grade 9 Provincial Achievement Test

## *Social Studies*

### *Sources and Questions*

#### *Description*

**Time: 80 minutes.** You have up to 160 minutes to complete this test should you need it.

The Grade 9 Social Studies Provincial Achievement Test consists of 13 sets of source materials and 50 machine-scored questions.

#### *Instructions*

- Review the “Try the Tools” instructions.
- The sources and questions can be navigated by clicking on the appropriate selection button on the left side of the screen.
- You may **not** use a dictionary, a thesaurus, or other reference materials.
- Read each question carefully, and choose the **correct** or **best** answer.
- If you change an answer, your test will be automatically updated.
- Answer every question.
- To submit your **final** answers, click the “Submit” button on the left side of the screen and confirm “I want to submit my assessment” when prompted by the pop-up.
- You will **not** be able to return to the test once the test is submitted.

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## Appendix 2

### **Examples of descriptions for text to speech on the *Grade 9 Social Studies Provincial Achievement Test***

This appendix has been prepared by Provincial Assessment, Alberta Education and Childcare. The purpose of this appendix is to provide school staff with examples of the descriptions of diagrams, illustrations, and other visuals used in provincial achievement test text to speech versions, which are available to students as an accommodation. These examples are neither exhaustive nor prescriptive. Test content is shown in black text and descriptions in blue text.

For students who are enrolled with a school and who typically use audio for their coursework, no application is required to receive this accommodation when writing provincial achievement tests.

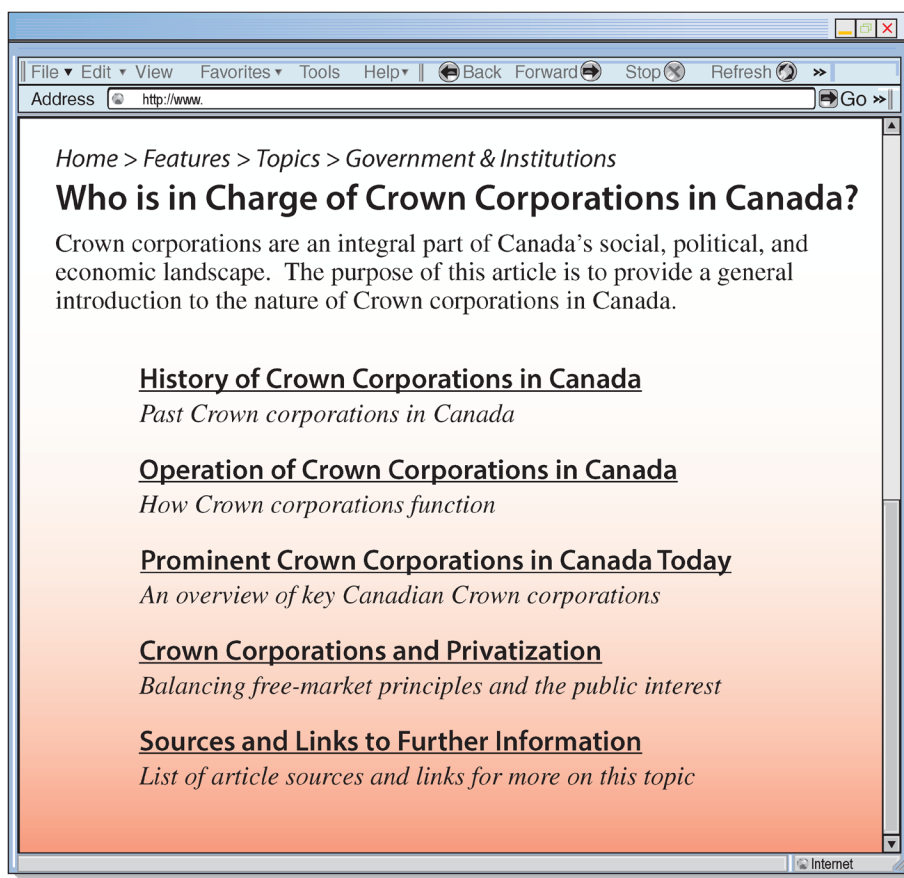
In Grade 9 Social Studies, scripting notes are written to describe sources that contain more than just text. Visual sources are described to maintain fairness for all students. However, some visual sources are not scripted, as students may be required to visually analyze a source to determine trends or extrapolate a conclusion. In these situations, the scripting notes would instruct students to examine the printed or digital version of the test booklet.



The following assignment is a reproduction of how the actual pages from a provincial achievement test were read. The blue text is read, in addition to the black text on the page, as supplemental information for students.

**Source Set**    **X. Questions 35 to 38 in your Questions Booklet are based on the following sources.**

### Source I



Source I is an illustration of an Internet web page which reads, "Home>Features>Topics>Government & Institutions/Who is in Charge of Crown Corporations in Canada?/Crown corporations are an integral part of Canada's social, political, and economic landscape. The purpose of this article is to provide a general introduction to the nature of Crown corporations in Canada." There are five links that follow. The first link reads, "History of Crown Corporations in Canada/Past Crown corporations in Canada." The second link reads, "Operation of Crown Corporations in Canada/How Crown corporations function." The third link reads, "Prominent Crown Corporations in Canada Today/An overview of key Canadian Crown corporations." The fourth link reads, "Crown Corporations and Privatization/Balancing free-market principles and the public interest." The fifth link reads, "Sources and Links to Further Information/List of article sources and links for more on this topic."

[illegible]

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Source Set X. Use the sources on pages 20 and 21 of your Sources Booklet to answer questions 35 to 38.

Question 35. The answer to the question that is presented on the web page in Source I is

- A. wealthy investors
- B. individual citizens
- C. corporate executives
- D. government officials

Question 36. A conclusion that can be drawn from Source I is that Canada's economic system would be **best** placed at either of which two positions on the economic spectrum in Source II?

- A. Position W or Position X
- B. Position W or Position Z
- C. Position X or Position Y
- D. Position Y or Position Z

Question 37. The messages in Source III convey the idea that some Canadians believe Canada's economy should be **most closely** aligned with which position on the economic spectrum in Source II?

- A. Position W
- B. Position X
- C. Position Y
- D. Position Z

Question 38. Which of the following questions identifies an issue **most clearly** evident in the information in all three sources?

- A. Is government ownership of businesses beneficial to society?
- B. Should foreign investors be allowed to own businesses in Canada?
- C. What role do consumers play in determining political decisions in Canada?
- D. Should government provide tax breaks to stimulate economic development?

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# Provincial Assessment Contacts

## Provincial Achievement Tests Help Desk

Email: [EDC.PATS@gov.ab.ca](mailto:EDC.PATS@gov.ab.ca)

## Literacy and Numeracy Screening Help Desk

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

## Provincial Assessment mailing address

Provincial Assessment, Alberta Education and Childcare  
44 Capital Boulevard  
10044 108 Street NW  
Edmonton AB T5J 5E6

Alberta Education and Childcare website: [alberta.ca/education-and-childcare](http://alberta.ca/education-and-childcare)

## Online Assessment (for technical assistance)

Email: [online.assessment@gov.ab.ca](mailto:online.assessment@gov.ab.ca)

Office hours:

Monday through Friday, 8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.