A Guide for Students Preparing to Write the Diploma Examination

Social Studies 30–1

Alberta

This document was written primarily for	
Students	✓
Teachers	
Administrators	
Parents	✓
General Audience	

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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 diploma examination-related materials on the Alberta Education and Childcare website.

This guide has been prepared by Provincial Assessment staff at Alberta Education and Childcare. We develop the diploma exams and are involved in the assessment of thousands of high school students each year. The purpose of this guide is to provide students with information that will increase their likelihood of success on the diploma exams in Social Studies 30–1.

Guides for Students for diploma-exam subjects other than Social Studies 30–1, as well as additional materials on how to prepare for diploma exams, can be found on the Alberta Education and Childcare website.

This guide and all other diploma examination-related materials produced by Provincial Assessment staff are identified with the following logo:

Understanding the *Social Studies 30–1 Diploma Examination*

Your school-awarded mark is worth 70% of your final mark in Social Studies 30–1. Your *Social Studies 30–1 Diploma Examination* mark is worth the other 30% of your final mark. Information regarding exceptions to the application of this policy is found in the *General Information Bulletin*.

The *Social Studies 30–1 Diploma Examination* has two parts—*Part A: Written Response* and *Part B: Sources and Questions*.

Part A: Written Response	***Part B: Sources and Questions***
Part A: Written Response requires students to complete two writing assignments. The written-response part of the examination is worth 50% of the total *Social Studies 30–1 Diploma Examination* mark. This examination was developed to be completed in 3 hours; however, you may take up to 6 hours to complete the examination, should you need it.	*Part B: Sources and Questions* consists of 60 questions, each worth 1 mark. These questions provide students with response alternatives, of which only one is correct. The sources and questions part of the examination is worth 50% of the total *Social Studies 30–1 Diploma Examination* mark. This examination was developed to be completed in 2½ hours; however, you may take up to 5 hours to complete the examination, should you need it.

Special accommodations are available to students. For more information, contact your school administration or counselling department.

Preparing for the *Social Studies 30–1 Diploma Examination*

Participate in class

The best way for you to prepare to write the *Social Studies 30–1 Diploma Examination* is to attend class regularly, participate in classroom activities, complete assignments, and learn what the course has to offer. The skills that you practise and the knowledge that you master in the classroom are the same skills and knowledge that you will need to achieve success on the diploma examination.

Keep up-to-date

The goal of the Social Studies 30–1 program is to give you the knowledge and skills that will enable you to become an engaged, active, informed, and responsible citizen. The program of studies includes the concepts of citizenship and identity in the Canadian context, and this is expressed through the emphasis on multiple perspectives and a skills-based, issues-centred approach. The diploma examination reflects the program goals. You need to keep up to date on major world events, which you can achieve by

- engaging in a study of both historical and current events
- thinking about the relationships between ideologies, multiple perspectives, and issues
- discussing important issues

The diploma examination requires you to apply your knowledge and understanding as well as requisite skills and processes of social studies to answer machine-scored questions and to complete the written responses.

Practise

The knowledge and understanding that you gain and the skills and processes that you develop and apply as you work through the course are what will count at examination time. You need to

- think about what you have learned and studied
- make connections between pieces of information
- recognize and understand similarities in actions, events, beliefs, values, and assumptions
- understand the assumptions, beliefs, values, philosophies, and issues that are behind actions, decisions, and statements
- recognize and understand the complex relationships between liberalism and other ideologies
- focus, support, and communicate your ideas
- translate your thoughts and observations about issues into written form

The knowledge and understanding that you acquire and the skills and processes that you build will give you the confidence to focus and communicate your ideas on the diploma examination.

Understand the scoring criteria

Make sure that you are familiar with the **scoring criteria**, because they are used by experienced Social Studies 30–1 teachers to mark your examination. The **scoring criteria** are available in the *Social Studies 30–1 Information Bulletin*. Being knowledgeable about the scoring criteria will also help you to fulfill the writing requirements for the examination.

Suggestions for Completing *Part A: Written Response*

Use your time wisely

Budget your time so that you are able to complete both Assignment I: Source Interpretation and Assignment II: Position Paper. Allow sufficient time to

- read each assignment thoroughly
- think about what the assignment is asking you to do
- plan your responses
- proofread and edit your responses

Read assignments carefully

Before you begin *Part A: Written Response*, take time to read all the instructions and information provided.

For Assignment I: Source Interpretation, you are required to examine three sources and respond in paragraph form. You must interpret each source to demonstrate your understanding of how each source links to liberalism. Also, you must explain one or more of the relationships that exist among all three sources. Be sure to do all parts of the assignment.

For Assignment II: Position Paper, you are required to analyze a source and write a position paper in which you must

- analyze the entire source to demonstrate an understanding of the ideological perspective(s) reflected in the source
- establish and argue a position in response to the question asked
- support your position and arguments using evidence from your knowledge and understanding of social studies

Plan your writing

Planning is important in creating a well-written response. Space for planning is provided in the *Part A: Written Response* examination. You are also permitted to use paper provided to you by the exam supervisor should you need it. Consider the following planning options for both Assignment I: Source Interpretation and Assignment II: Position Paper:

- A complex point-form outline
- A comparison chart
- A list of evidence for Assignment II only, as there is no requirement for evidence in Assignment I

When you plan for Assignment I: Source Interpretation, ask yourself the following questions

- What does each source mean?
- What is the message of the source?
- Does the source support, challenge, or reject aspects of liberalism?
- Have I explained ways in which all three sources relate to each other?

When you plan for Assignment II: Position Paper, ask yourself the following questions:

- What perspective(s) is/are reflected in the source?
- Have I analyzed the entire source?
- Why is/are the perspective(s) important?
- What complexities are associated with the perspective(s) in the source?
- What is my position on the extent to which the perspective(s) in the source should be embraced?
- What argumentation can I use in supporting my position?
- What evidence can I present to strengthen my argumentation?

Remember that even though planning is important, you need to allow enough time for the actual writing of your two responses. The *Part A: Written Response* is designed so that most students can complete it in 3 hours. However, you may take up to **6 hours**, should you need it.

Each assignment has a suggested time limit, as well as a suggested word count range. You may use each of these as a guideline when responding to each written-response assignment. The suggested word count range is not a cap.

Organize and develop your writing

In your writing, present evidence of careful thinking.

For Assignment I: Source Interpretation, do **not** simply restate the information contained within each source—instead, write with intent. Your response must

- involve actual interpretation of the sources
- demonstrate an understanding of liberalism for each source
- explain how all three sources relate to each other

For Assignment II: Position Paper, do **not** just outline various ideological perspectives or retell the story of a historical event—instead, write with a purpose. Your response should

- contain a clear analysis of the entire source
- demonstrate that you understand the ideological perspective reflected in the source
- present argumentation that is orderly, logical, and thorough
- use appropriate evidence to develop and support your position

Proofread your work

Your writing will be marked for what you say as well as how clearly and correctly you say it. Ask yourself these questions as you proofread your work for Assignment I: Source Interpretation:

- Have I carefully interpreted all of the sources?
- Have I demonstrated an understanding of liberalism?
- Have I established a clear relationship(s) among all three sources?
- Is my response in paragraph form and easy to read?

Ask yourself these questions as you proofread your work for Assignment II: Position Paper:

- Have I fully analyzed and demonstrated an understanding of the entire source?
- Is my argumentation consistent, logical, and thorough?
- Is the evidence presented accurate and relevant?
- Is my writing organized and easy to understand?
- Did I use correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar?
- Did I use vocabulary correctly and accurately?
- Will my response convince the reader that my position is valid?

Suggestions for Completing *Part B: Sources and Questions*

The *Social Studies 30–1 Diploma Examination Part B: Sources and Questions* consists of 60 questions, each worth one mark.

These questions provide students with response alternatives, of which only one is correct. There are different types of questions, and each type requires you to apply your knowledge and understanding as well as to use your skills and processes differently.

Understanding and Analysis questions require you to apply your knowledge and understanding as well as to use your skills and processes to address questions that deal with important events, ideas, and people while requiring you to think critically as you analyze information presented to you.

Economist John Maynard Keynes greatly influenced the evolution of economic liberalism by advocating for

- labourers to use collective action to bring about the nationalization of the productive forces of the country and thus ensure sustainable economic growth
- consumers to be informed as to the environmental and labour practices of businesses and make ethical decisions when purchasing goods and services
- corporations to work cooperatively rather than competitively to ensure that the prices for goods and services could be set by their collective decisions
- governments to use fiscal and monetary policies to more closely regulate the economy and thus prevent excessive fluctuations in the economic cycle

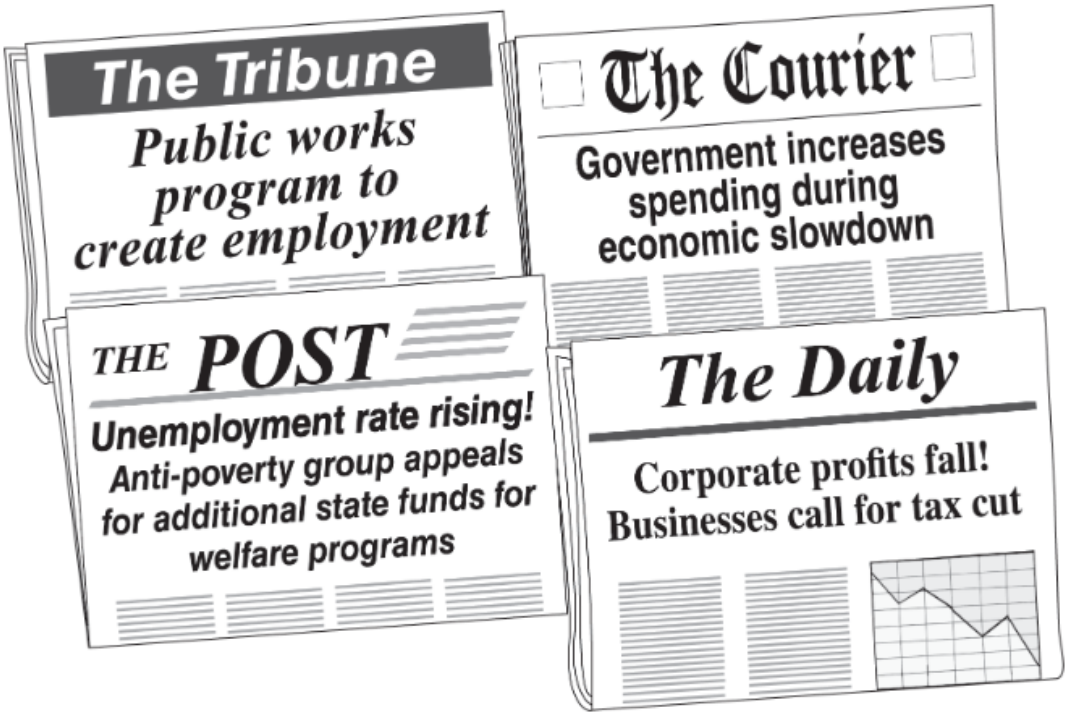
Evaluation and Synthesis questions require you to apply your knowledge and understanding as well as to use your skills and processes to select the "most appropriate" answer or to determine relationships among sources or ideas. When answering these "most appropriate answer" questions, be sure to read all four alternatives carefully before choosing the correct answer.

Some scholars have adamantly argued that individuals in the American government in the eighteenth century, such as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, were significantly influenced by their observations and knowledge of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy to which they had been exposed as members of early colonial American society. These scholars contend that the democratic structures and civil liberties of the United States were developed by these men using their learning of Haudenosaunee Confederacy societies to inform their creation of the foundation documents of the United States. Other scholars dispute such claims, in some cases making the accusation that revisionist history is being created to achieve political aims. These scholars argue that the constitutional foundations for the government of the United States were influenced almost exclusively by ideas that evolved in Western civilization from the time of ancient Greece through the Enlightenment period.

If this source was being considered for use in a research project, it would be **most appropriately** used

- as a summation of the arguments of one side on an important issue
- to identify resources from which research information can be gathered
- as a primary document that can be quoted and cited as historical evidence
- to establish the context for which exploration of an issue can be undertaken

Evaluation and Synthesis questions include in their stems bold-faced qualifiers such as *most*, *mainly*, or *primarily*. Often, all the alternatives are correct to some degree, but one of them is correct because of the context established by the question.



Which of the following issues **most directly** relates to the headlines of all four newspapers?

To what extent should government alter monetary policy to control economic growth?

To what extent should government use fiscal policy as a means of managing the economy?

To what extent should government support failing private industries during recessions?

To what extent should government nationalize industries to mitigate labour reductions?

Carefully read each question and any source material. You may wish to use tools available in Part B examinations administered on the digital assessment platform (e.g., Highlighter, Draw Line, Sticky Note, and Freehand tools) to circle key words and ideas, to cross out choices that you know are wrong, or to write a brief summary of what you have read. Think carefully about what you are reading. For example, ask yourself what the quotation you have just read or the map you have just examined is *really* telling you.

Reminders

Be sure that you know the writing location of your examination.

A dictionary and thesaurus tool is available in *Part A: Written Response* examinations on the digital assessment platform for you to use while writing Part A of the diploma examination.

You are also allowed to use the following print references while writing *Part A: Written Response*:

- an authorized English and/or a bilingual dictionary (students writing in French may use a French-language dictionary)
- a thesaurus
- an authorized writing handbook from the following list:
  - *A Canadian Writer's Reference* (D. Hacker), **2nd edition only**
  - *Checkmate: A Writing Reference for Canadians* (J. Buckley)
  - *English Language Arts Handbook for Secondary Students* (Alberta Education)
  - *Fit to Print: The Canadian Student's Guide to Essay Writing* (J. Buckley)
  - *The St. Martin's Handbook for Canadians* (A. Lunsford et al.)
  - *The Writing Process* (Gehle et al.)

The reference texts used must **not** contain appendices that include social studies content (e.g., historical timelines, the structure of the Government of Canada, Canada's court system, or the structure of international organizations such as the United Nations and NATO).

The following print dictionaries are also authorized for students to use while writing *Part A: Written Response*:

- *Collins Paperback English Dictionary*
- *Collins Robert Paperback French Dictionary*
- *Gage Canadian Dictionary*
- *Harper Collins French Dictionary (French–English)*
- *Le Petit Robert 1*
- *Merriam-Webster's School Dictionary*
- *The Canadian Oxford High School Dictionary*
- *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*
- *The Houghton Mifflin Canadian Dictionary of the English Language*
- *The Oxford Dictionary of Current English*

You will **not** be allowed to use a dictionary, bilingual dictionary, thesaurus, or writing handbook while writing *Part B: Sources and Questions*.

- You can practise answering questions similar to those used on diploma examinations by accessing practice tests using Alberta Education and Childcare's digital assessment platform.
- Make sure that you are familiar with the effective use of the features of the word processor and tools available in the *Part A: Written Response* on the digital assessment platform, well in advance of the examination. Practising will enhance your performance. Be cautious of relying on the program to correct all of your mistakes.
- When completing your written-response assignment, make revisions or corrections directly in your written work.
- Your teacher may have samples of students' writing from past *Social Studies 30–1 Diploma Examinations*. Note that the example responses in the *Examples of the Standards for Students' Writing* documents have been provided for instructional purposes only. If you use sections from these responses when writing the diploma examination, you will be guilty of plagiarism and in breach of examination regulations.
- If you believe that the mark you have received is not appropriate, you may request a rescoring of your examination. Before you apply for a rescoring, be sure to check your *Diploma Examination Results Statement* to see what marks you have been awarded on both parts of the examination. Keep in mind that if you do request a rescore, your new mark, whether it has increased or decreased, will be your final mark. Follow the procedures on your *Diploma Examination Results Statement* to apply for rescoring.

- For more detailed information about the *Social Studies 30–1 Diploma Examination*, see the *Social Studies 30–1 Information Bulletin*.
- If you have questions about the examination that your teacher cannot answer, or if you are a student without a regular classroom teacher, contact Charla Jo Guillaume at Charlajo.Guillaume@gov.ab.ca; Nathalie Langstaedtler at Nathalie.Langstaedtler@gov.ab.ca; or Corey Baker at Corey.Baker@gov.ab.ca.