Information Bulletin
Social Studies 30–1

Diploma Examinations Program **2026–2027**

Alberta

This document was primarily written for:		
Students		
Teachers	✓	of Social Studies 30–1
Administrators		
Parents		
General Audiences		
Others		

2026–2027 Social Studies 30–1 Information Bulletin

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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.

Introduction

The *Social Studies 30–1 Diploma Examination* is designed to reflect the issues-centred, multiple-perspectives approach and skills-based emphasis of the Social Studies (10-12) Program of Studies. In the Social Studies 30–1 program, the focus is on the key issue of "To what extent should we embrace an ideology?" In addressing this key issue, students will explore four related issues, four general outcomes, and numerous specific outcomes.

Diploma exams will be weighted at 30%, and the school-awarded mark will constitute 70% of a student's final mark.

Teachers are encouraged to share the contents of this bulletin with students.

For further information about program implementation, refer to the Alberta Education and Childcare website.

Examination Security

All diploma examinations will be held secure until they are released to the public by the Minister (i.e., no longer confidential). No secure diploma examination is to be previewed until it is released to the public by the Minister. No secure diploma examination is to be previewed, discussed, copied, or removed from the room in which the examination is being written. However, for the January and June administrations only, teachers will be allowed to peruse the diploma examination for review purposes 1 hour after the examination has started.

For mathematics and science diploma examinations, all diploma examinations must be kept secure before, during, and after administration, without exception.

For humanities diploma examinations, the humanities *Part A: Written Response* examinations in the January and June administrations must be kept secure until after they are administered. All other humanities *Part A: Written Response* examinations, and all humanities *Part B* examinations, must be kept secure before, during, and after administration, without exception.

For more information about teacher perusal and examination security, please refer to the Administering diploma exams web page.

Time Limits on Diploma Examinations

All students may use extra time to write diploma examinations. This means that all students have up to 6 hours to complete *Part A* of the *Social Studies 30–1 Diploma Examination*, and 5 hours to complete *Part B*, if they need it. The examination is nevertheless designed so that the majority of students can complete *Part A* within 3 hours and *Part B* within 2½ hours. The examination instructions state both the designed time and the total time allowed.

Although extra time is allowed for diploma examinations in all subjects, the total time allowed is not the same in all subjects. For more information about accommodations and provisions for students, please refer to the Administering diploma exams web page.

Equating to Maintain Consistent Standards over Time on Diploma Examinations

A goal of Alberta Education and Childcare is to make scores achieved on examinations within the same subject directly comparable from session to session, to ensure fairness to students across administrations.

To achieve this goal, the examination has a number of questions in common with a previous examination. Common (anchor) items are used to find out if the student population writing in one administration differs in achievement from the student population writing in another administration. Common items are also used to find out if the unique items (questions that have never appeared in a previous examination) differ in difficulty from the unique (non-anchor) items on the baseline examination that sets the standard to which all students are held.

A statistical process called equating adjusts for differences in difficulty between examinations. Examination marks may be adjusted depending upon the difficulty of the examination written relative to the baseline examination. Therefore, the resulting equated examination scores have the same meaning regardless of when and to whom the examination was administered. Equated diploma examination marks are reported to students. More information about equating is available on the Administering diploma exams web page.

Because of the security required to ensure fair and appropriate assessment of student achievement over time, *Social Studies 30–1 Diploma Examinations* will be fully secured and will not be released at the time of writing.

Diploma Examinations: Multiple Forms

Some subjects may have two distinct forms (versions) of diploma examinations during major administrations (January and June). Like all other diploma examinations, the two forms are equated to the baseline examination to ensure that the same standard applies to both forms. Both forms adhere to the established blueprint specifications and are reviewed by a technical review committee.

To facilitate the analysis of school-level results, each school receives only one examination form per subject. In subjects offering a translated French-language examination, both forms are administered in English and in French.

For more information, contact the following:

Diploma exam format, content, confirming standards, marking, and results reporting
Diploma.Exams@gov.ab.ca

or

Diploma exam security, diploma exam rules, scheduling, and policy issues
Exam.Admin@gov.ab.ca

How to Get Involved

High-quality diploma examinations are the product of close collaboration between classroom teachers and Alberta Education and Childcare. Classroom teachers from across Alberta are involved in many aspects of diploma examination development, including the development of items; the building, reviewing, administering, and marking of field tests; the reviewing and validating of diploma examinations; the reviewing of support documents; and the marking of diploma examinations.

The development of test items from when they are written until when they appear on an examination takes at least one year. All items on the *Social Studies 30–1 Diploma Examination* are written and/or validated by Social Studies 30–1 teachers from across Alberta. After provincial implementation of the program of studies, items are field tested to ensure their reliability and validity. Diploma examinations are reviewed by editors and translators and validated by working groups that consist of classroom teachers and curriculum staff.

Alberta Education and Childcare values the involvement of teachers and annually asks school authorities for the names of teachers who are interested in being involved in any of the development processes for diploma examinations. Teachers who are interested in developing items, constructing field tests, or reviewing and validating examinations are encouraged to talk to their principals about how they can submit their names for approval to be involved in these processes. Although the call for submissions for working groups occurs each fall, teachers are welcome to have their names submitted at any time.

Teachers may also be nominated by their school authority to mark written-response assignments for humanities and mathematics diploma examinations. The call for nominations of markers occurs in early September (for January and April marking) and again in February (for June, August, and November marking). Teachers who would like to be nominated to mark diploma exams are encouraged to talk to their principals.

Field Testing

Field testing is an essential stage in the development of fair, valid, and reliable provincial examinations. Field testing is a process of collecting data on questions before the questions become part of a diploma examination. Potential diploma examination questions are administered to students in field tests for diploma courses throughout the province to determine the difficulty and appropriateness of the questions. Each field test requires a large student sample to provide the examination developers with reliable information (i.e., statistical data and written validation comments from teachers and students).

How do field tests help teachers and students?

Teachers receive each student's score promptly, gaining useful information about their students' performance. Students benefit from writing a test that duplicates some of the experience of writing a diploma examination. Field tests provide students and teachers with examples of the format and content of questions that may appear on diploma examinations. Finally, because of field testing, students, teachers, and parents can be reassured that the questions on diploma examinations have undergone a rigorous development, improvement, and validation process.

How are field test data used?

The data received from field tests indicate the validity, reliability, and fairness of each question. Questions that meet specific standards are selected for use on future diploma examinations.

Some questions or sets of questions may not initially perform as well as we require. These questions may be revised and tested again in field tests. Revisions are influenced by the written comments of students and teachers, who provide valuable advice about the appropriateness of the questions, the adequacy of writing-time limits, test length, text readability, artwork/graphics clarity and suitability, and question difficulty.

Humanities field tests

Humanities field tests are available in digital format on the digital assessment platform.

Teachers are provided with data on how their students performed. Test items address learning outcomes in the program of studies, which allows teachers to use field test results to learn more about their students' strengths and areas for improvement.

The security of field test items remains vital to the administration of diploma examinations. Participating teachers must commit to maintaining the security of field test items.

More information about field test registration deadlines, administration, and security is available in the *Field Testing Guide 2026–2027* on the Teacher participation in provincial assessments web page.

How can teachers schedule field tests?

Field tests are offered digitally on the digital assessment platform. To schedule a field test, teachers must have a digital assessment platform teacher account.

For information about how to schedule and administer a field test, please refer to the *Field Testing Guide 2026–2027* on the Teacher participation in provincial assessments web page or contact Field.Test@gov.ab.ca.

Detailed instructions for how to schedule a field test can also be found on the digital assessment platform Help web page.

For more information, contact the following:

Diploma exam format, content, confirming standards, marking, and results reporting
Diploma.Exams@gov.ab.ca

or

Diploma exam security, diploma exam rules, scheduling, and policy issues
Exam.Admin@gov.ab.ca

Practice Tests

To give students an opportunity to practise answering questions similar to those used on diploma examinations that address learning outcomes in the program of studies, Alberta Education and Childcare produces practice tests for subjects that have a diploma examination. Students can access these practice tests using Alberta Education and Childcare's digital assessment platform.

Special-format Practice Tests

To give students an opportunity to practise answering questions similar to those used on diploma examinations that address learning outcomes in the program of studies in Braille, large print, or coloured print versions, Alberta Education and Childcare produces special-format practice tests for all subjects that have a diploma examination. 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 diploma examination. 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.

For more information or to place an order, contact Field.Test@gov.ab.ca.

Audio Descriptions

A support document, *Examples of Descriptions Used in Audio-enabled Versions of Humanities Diploma Exams,* has been developed to assist teachers and students planning to use an audio version during the administration of a humanities diploma examination.

A Grade 12 Practice Test (machine scored) and humanities *Part A* (written response) practice tests with text-to-speech enabled can be accessed on Alberta Education and Childcare's digital assessment platform.

Assessment Standards and Practices for Social Studies 30–1

Weightings	**The diploma examination mark constitutes** 30% of a student's final mark while the **school-awarded mark** constitutes 70% of a student's final mark in Social Studies 30–1.
Examination Format and Weightings	The *Social Studies 30–1 Diploma Examination* is made up of two parts: ***Part A: Written Response* (50%)** and ***Part B: Sources and Questions* (50%)**.
Part A: Written Response Assignments, Scoring Categories, and Weightings	**Assignment I: Source Interpretation (20%)** • Interpretation of Sources 12% • Relationships 6% • Communication 2% **Assignment II: Position Paper (30%)** • Analysis of Source 6% • Argumentation 8% • Evidence 8% • Communication 8%
Part B: Sources and Questions	The *Part B: Sources and Questions* component, consisting of 60 questions, each worth 1 mark, is an assessment of students' ability to apply their knowledge and understanding as well as skills and processes achieved in the Alberta Social Studies Kindergarten to Grade 12 Programs of Study. These questions provide students with response alternatives, of which only one is correct. A detailed description of the *Part B: Sources and Questions* blueprint can be found on page 25 of this bulletin.
Examination Writing Time Allowed	**6 hours** is allowed for students to complete the *Part A: Written Response* component. **5 hours** is allowed for students to complete the *Part B: Sources and Questions* component.

Release of Examination Materials

Part A: Written Response for January and June 2027 administrations will be released immediately following the writing of the examination.

Part B: Sources and Questions **will be secured, without exception,** for the January and June 2027 administrations.

Part A: Written Response and Part B: Sources and Questions **will be secured, without exception,** for the November 2026 and April and August 2027 administrations.

Student Assessment

The nature of classroom situations permits teachers to assess students using a broad range of assessment instruments that reflect the Alberta Social Studies Kindergarten to Grade 12 Programs of Study.

Diploma exams are designed to match the program of studies of each subject, but what the diploma exams measure may not be the same in scope as what teachers measure. Diploma exam marks and teacher-awarded marks should reflect the same standard, however, because both assess students based on the same program of studies (curriculum). Alberta Education and Childcare works with teachers to set and maintain the standards of achievement for diploma exams. This information bulletin is intended to assist teachers in understanding the provincial standards for Social Studies 30–1.

A Guide for Students Preparing to Write the Social Studies 30–1 Diploma Examination and *Examples of the Standards for Students' Writing* are posted on the Writing diploma exams web page.

Part A: Written Response

Description

Part A: Written Response, worth 50% of the total diploma examination mark, consists of two writing assignments:

- Source Interpretation
- Position Paper

Authorized references

A dictionary and a thesaurus are available in *Part A: Written Response* examinations on the digital assessment platform for students to use during the administration of *Part A*.

Students writing *Part A: Written Response* are allowed to use the following print references:

- An authorized English and/or a bilingual dictionary (students writing in French may use a French-language dictionary)
- A thesaurus
- A 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*

Students and supervising examiners must ensure that extraneous material is not taken into the examination room.

Suggested word-count ranges

All Part A humanities written-response assignments contain a suggested word-count range. Students can use the suggested word-count range, along with the suggested time limit, as a guideline when responding to the assignment. The range is not a cap.

The suggested word count-ranges below are based on various sources, including the student exemplars chosen for the *Examples of the Standards for Students' Writing*, and on discussions with psychometricians and curriculum staff. They also reflect discussions with teachers during exam development regarding the expectations for each written-response assignment.

Suggested word-count ranges for written-response assignments
Social Studies 30–1 Assignment I: 500–1400 words
Social Studies 30–1 Assignment II: 750–1600 words

Description of Assignment I: Source Interpretation

Assignment I: Source Interpretation requires students to demonstrate their skills of interpretation, analysis, and synthesis when presented with a variety of sources.

The assignment is designed to have students

- interpret three sources to demonstrate an understanding of how each source links to liberalism
- synthesize the relationship(s) that exist among all three sources

Educators can assist students by providing them with synonyms for links, such as *relates*, *connects*, and *pertains*.

Assignment I: Source Interpretation contains a task that will remain **unchanged** from administration to administration. The sources will be different in every administration.

Students are expected to develop a response in paragraph form that reflects the quality of thought and communication expected of students completing Social Studies 30–1. Students are not expected to take a position on any of the sources, nor should they.

Value: 20% of the total examination mark (Parts A and B combined)

Scoring: Scores contribute to the total examination mark in the following proportions:

Interpretation of Sources		12%
Source I	(4%)	
Source II	(4%)	
Source III	(4%)	
Relationships		6%
Communication		2%

Note: Within the *Interpretation of Sources* category, the interpretation of each source will be scored independently. Thus, each of the three sources will be worth 4% for a combined total of 12% assigned to this category.

Zero

Responses that reflect little or no attempt to address the *Interpretation of Sources* category or *Relationships* category may receive a score of zero in that category. Scores of **zero** in both the *Interpretation of Sources* category and *Relationships* category will automatically result in a score of **zero** in the *Communication category*.

No Response

Students who do not provide a response will receive a **no response** score.

Description of Assignment II: Position Paper

Assignment II: Position Paper requires students to demonstrate the skills of analysis, evaluation, and synthesis in response to a written source. Students will be presented with a written source that they must analyze to demonstrate an understanding of the ideological perspective(s) reflected in the source. Students must analyze the entire source.

Assignment II: Position Paper requires students to argue a position taken in response to a question regarding the ideological perspective(s) reflected in a written source. Students must support their position using evidence with a theoretical, historical, contemporary, and/or current-events focus.

Assignment II: Position Paper contains a question that will remain **unchanged** from administration to administration. The written source will be different in every administration.

Students are expected to develop responses in essay form that reflect the quality of logical thought and effective communication expected of students completing Social Studies 30–1.

Value: 30% of the total examination mark (Parts A and B combined)

Scoring: Scores contribute to the total examination mark in the following proportions:

Analysis of Source	6%
Argumentation	8%
Evidence	8%
Communication	8%

Note: If a score of Limited or Poor is assigned to the *Analysis of Source* category, scores for the other three categories are capped, with Satisfactory being the highest possible score. The rationale for this cap is that, in some cases, because the student's *Analysis of Source* is incomplete or lacks depth, the student has not fully completed the assigned task.

Insufficient

Insufficient is a special category. **It is not an indicator of quality.** It is assigned to responses that do not contain a discernible attempt to address the assignment or responses that are too brief to assess in one or more scoring categories.

No Response

Students who do not provide a response will receive a **no response** score.

Social Studies 30–1 *Part A: Written Response* Blueprint

The *Social Studies 30–1 Diploma Examinations* are designed to reflect the Alberta Social Studies Kindergarten to Grade 12 Programs of Study. The blueprint below outlines the design of *Part A: Written Response* and describes the skills to be assessed, the assignments, and the categories of assessment. As well, the blueprint specifies the percentage that each section of the examination contributes to the total mark.

	Description of Skills	Description of Assignments	Assessment Categories
Assignment I	Demonstrate the skills of **interpretation**, **analysis**, and **synthesis** through the application of knowledge and understanding* of social studies.	Students will be presented with three sources. Sources provided may include cartoons, charts, graphs, quotations, photographs, paintings, and maps, all of which link to liberalism.	**20% of Diploma Examination Mark**
		Students will interpret three sources to demonstrate their understanding of how each source links to liberalism. Students will discuss one or more relationships that exist among all three sources.	**Interpretation of Sources /12** **Relationships /6** **Communication /2**
Assignment II	Demonstrate the skills of **analysis**, **evaluation**, and **synthesis** through the application of knowledge and understanding* of social studies.	Students will analyze a source to demonstrate an understanding of the ideological perspective(s) reflected in the source.	**30% of Diploma Examination Mark**
		Students will respond in essay form to a question regarding the ideological perspective(s) reflected in a source. Students will establish, argue, and defend a position. Students will provide supporting evidence. The evidence students use may have a theoretical, historical, contemporary, and/or current-events focus.	**Analysis of Source /6** **Argumentation /8** **Evidence /8** **Communication /8**

* Knowledge and understanding includes ideas, information, concepts, and issues identified and inherent in the Alberta Social Studies Kindergarten to Grade 12 Programs of Study.

Scoring categories and scoring criteria for 2026–2027 Assignment I

Interpretation of Sources (12 marks)

When marking ***Interpretation of Sources***, markers should consider how effectively the student

- interprets each source to demonstrate an understanding of how each source links to liberalism

Note: Students are expected to address **all** three sources.

Excellent **E**	Interpretation of the source is sophisticated, insightful, and precise, demonstrating a perceptive understanding of links to liberalism.
Proficient **Pf**	Interpretation of the source is logical, specific, and adept, demonstrating a sound understanding of links to liberalism.
Satisfactory **S**	Interpretation of the source is adequate, straightforward, and conventional, demonstrating a generalized understanding of links to liberalism.
Limited **L**	Interpretation of the source is incomplete, vague, and simplistic, demonstrating a confused understanding of links to liberalism.
Poor **P**	Interpretation of the source is scant, inaccurate, and irrelevant, and/or the source is copied, demonstrating little or no understanding of links to liberalism.
Zero **Z**	Zero is assigned to a response that fails to meet the minimum requirements of **Poor**.

Note: When "and" is used in the marking criteria as part of a list of descriptors, it is important to note that the writing may contain one or more of the descriptors listed. This applies to both Assignment I and Assignment II.

Relationships (6 marks)

When marking ***Relationships***, markers should consider how effectively the student

- explains the relationship(s) that exist **among** all sources

Note: Students may explain the relationship(s) in one part of the response or the explanation of relationship(s) may be embedded.

Excellent **E**	The explanation of relationship(s) is perceptive and thorough.
Proficient **Pf**	The explanation of relationship(s) is capable and purposeful.
Satisfactory **S**	The explanation of relationship(s) is adequate and straightforward.
Limited **L**	The explanation of relationship(s) is superficial, incomplete, redundant, and of questionable accuracy.
Poor **P**	The explanation of relationship(s) is scant, illogical, and tangential.
Zero **Z**	Zero is assigned to a response that fails to meet the minimum requirements of **Poor**.

Communication (2 marks)

When marking ***Communication***, markers should consider how effectively the student communicates, including control of

- vocabulary
- sentence structure
- mechanics, grammar, and organization

Note: Students are expected to use paragraph form for the response. Consider the proportion of error in terms of the complexity and length of the response for the assigned task.

Excellent **E**	Vocabulary is precise and deliberately chosen. Sentence structure is controlled and sophisticated. The writing demonstrates skillful control of mechanics and grammar and is judiciously organized.
Proficient **Pf**	Vocabulary is appropriate and specific. Sentence structure is controlled and effective. The writing demonstrates capable control of mechanics and grammar and is purposefully organized.
Satisfactory **S**	Vocabulary is conventional and generalized. Sentence structure is controlled and straightforward. The writing demonstrates basic control of mechanics and grammar and is adequately organized.
Limited **L**	Vocabulary is imprecise, simplistic, and inappropriate. Sentence structure is awkward. The writing demonstrates a faltering control of mechanics and grammar and is ineffectively organized.
Poor **P**	Vocabulary is overgeneralized and inaccurate. Sentence structure is uncontrolled. The writing demonstrates a profound lack of control of mechanics and grammar and is haphazardly organized.
Zero **Z**	Zero is assigned to a response that fails to meet the minimum requirements of **Poor**.

Scoring categories and scoring criteria for 2026–2027 Assignment II

Analysis of Source (6 marks)

When marking ***Analysis of Source***, markers should consider how effectively the student analyzes the source to demonstrate an understanding of ideological perspective(s) reflected in the source.

Note: Students may demonstrate their understanding of an ideological perspective(s) in one part of their essay or demonstrate their understanding of an ideological perspective or ideological perspectives throughout.

Excellent **E**	The analysis of the source is insightful and sophisticated; a comprehensive understanding of the ideological perspective(s) is demonstrated.
Proficient **Pf**	The analysis of the source is capable and adept; a sound understanding of the ideological perspective(s) is demonstrated.
Satisfactory **S**	The analysis of the source is conventional and straightforward; a generalized understanding of the ideological perspective(s) is demonstrated.
Limited **L**	The analysis of the source is incomplete and lacks depth; a confused understanding of the ideological perspective(s) is demonstrated.
Poor **P**	The analysis of the source is illogical, tangential, and/or the source is simply copied; a minimal understanding of the ideological perspective(s) is demonstrated.
Insufficient **INS**	Insufficient is a special category. **It is not an indicator of quality.** It is assigned to responses that do not contain a discernible attempt to address the assignment or responses that are too brief to assess in one or more scoring categories.

Argumentation (8 marks)

When marking ***Argumentation***, markers should consider how effectively the student

- establishes a position
- develops one or more arguments based on logic and reason
- establishes a relationship between position taken, argumentation, and the ideological perspective presented in the source

Note: DO NOT evaluate evidence in this category.

Excellent **E**	The position established is convincingly supported by judiciously chosen and developed argument(s). The argumentation is consistent and compelling, demonstrating an insightful understanding of the assignment. The relationship between the position taken, argumentation, and the ideological perspective presented in the source is perceptively developed.
Proficient **Pf**	The position established is persuasively supported by purposely chosen and developed argument(s). The argumentation is logical and capably developed, demonstrating a sound understanding of the assignment. The relationship between the position taken, argumentation, and the ideological perspective presented in the source is clearly developed.
Satisfactory **S**	The position established is generally supported by appropriately chosen and developed argument(s). The argumentation is straightforward and conventional, demonstrating an adequate understanding of the assignment. The relationship between the position taken, argumentation, and the ideological perspective presented in the source is generally developed.
Limited **L**	The position established is confusing and largely unrelated to the argument(s). The argumentation is repetitive, contradictory, simplistic, and based on uninformed belief. The relationship between the position taken, argumentation, and the ideological perspective presented in the source is superficially developed.
Poor **P**	The position established has little or no relationship to the source or argument(s). The argumentation is irrelevant and illogical. The relationship between the position taken, argumentation, and the ideological perspective presented in the source is minimally developed.
Insufficient **INS**	Insufficient is a special category. **It is not an indicator of quality.** It is assigned to responses that do not contain a discernible attempt to address the assignment or responses that are too brief to assess in one or more scoring categories.

Evidence (8 marks)

When marking ***Evidence***, markers should consider how effectively the student uses evidence that

- is relevant and accurate
- reflects depth and/or breadth

Note: Evidence from social studies may include a theoretical, historical, contemporary, and/or current events discussion.

Excellent **E**	Evidence is sophisticated and deliberately chosen. The relative absence of error is impressive. A thorough and comprehensive discussion of evidence reveals an insightful understanding of social studies knowledge and its application to the assignment.
Proficient **Pf**	Evidence is specific and purposeful. Evidence may contain some minor errors. A capable and adept discussion of evidence reveals a solid understanding of social studies knowledge and its application to the assignment.
Satisfactory **S**	Evidence is conventional and straightforward. The evidence may contain minor errors and a mixture of relevant and extraneous information. A generalized and basic discussion reveals an acceptable understanding of social studies knowledge and its application to the assignment.
Limited **L**	Evidence is potentially relevant but is unfocused and incompletely developed. The evidence contains inaccuracies and extraneous detail. The discussion reveals a superficial and confused understanding of social studies knowledge and its application to the assignment.
Poor **P**	Evidence is irrelevant and inaccurate. The evidence contains major and revealing errors. A minimal or scant discussion reveals a lack of understanding of social studies knowledge and its application to the assignment.
Insufficient **INS**	Insufficient is a special category. **It is not an indicator of quality.** It is assigned to responses that do not contain a discernible attempt to address the assignment or responses that are too brief to assess in one or more scoring categories.

Communication (8 marks)

When marking ***Communication***, markers should consider the effectiveness of the student's

- fluency and essay organization
- syntax, mechanics, and grammar
- use of vocabulary and social studies terminology

Note: Consider the proportion of error in relation to the complexity and length of the response to the assigned task.

Excellent **E**	The writing is fluent, skillfully structured, and judiciously organized. Control of syntax, mechanics, and grammar is sophisticated. Vocabulary is precise and deliberately chosen. The relative absence of error is impressive.
Proficient **Pf**	The writing is clear and purposefully organized. Control of syntax, mechanics, and grammar is capable. Vocabulary is appropriate and specific. Minor errors in language do not impede communication.
Satisfactory **S**	The writing is straightforward and functionally organized. Control of syntax, mechanics, and grammar is adequate. Vocabulary is conventional and generalized. There may be occasional lapses in control and minor errors; however, the communication remains generally clear.
Limited **L**	The writing is awkward and lacks organization. Control of syntax, mechanics, and grammar is inconsistent. Vocabulary is imprecise, simplistic, and inappropriate. Errors obscure the clarity of communication.
Poor **P**	The writing is unclear and disorganized. Control of syntax, mechanics, and grammar is lacking. Vocabulary is overgeneralized and inaccurate. Jarring errors impede communication.
Insufficient **INS**	Insufficient is a special category. **It is not an indicator of quality.** It is assigned to responses that do not contain a discernible attempt to address the assignment or responses that are too brief to assess in one or more scoring categories.

Student Performance in Social Studies 30–1: Observations from the Diploma Examination

The following observations made by teachers are presented here to illustrate areas of strength, areas needing improvement, and various approaches taken by students in writing the *Social Studies 30–1 Diploma Examination*.

Assignment I

- Students should refrain from using information not directly related to their interpretation of the sources.
- Students must demonstrate in their interpretation of the sources that they have considered the sources in their entirety.
- Students need to consider the perspective/point of view of the creator of each source and/or the perspective/point of view of others within the source.
- Some students describe the sources rather than interpreting and demonstrating how the sources link to liberalism.
- Attempting to place each source on a spectrum can prove problematic as not all sources lend themselves to placement on a spectrum.
- While understanding of illiberalism has improved, students must be aware that illiberal practices can only occur in democratic countries.
- Students often attempt to incorporate philosophers/theorists into their interpretations. Not all can do this effectively; students must establish an appropriate connection to the source.
- Students often attempt to take a position on each of the sources. There is no requirement for students to do this, nor will credit be given for this approach.
- Students need to differentiate between classical and modern liberalism in addressing the task.
- Generally, students are improving in their ability to discern relationships.
- Some students have difficulty grasping the irony, satire, or nuances of cartoons.
- Some students have difficulty fully developing their ideas when describing a relationship among all three sources, beyond restating an interpretation of each source.
- Visual literacy skills vary among students.

Assignment II

- Students sometimes use evidence that is inappropriate or extraneous to the given source. It is important to select evidence that can help further argumentation.
- Students must clearly demonstrate an understanding of the perspective presented in the source as a whole, not just a perspective or an idea represented by a portion of the source.
- Students at the Proficient and Excellent levels are able to "deconstruct" the source readily and discuss all aspects of it in their response.
- Students use a wide variety of evidence to complete Assignment II. Students who prepare a response ahead of time and try to fit it to the task presented are often not well served.
- In general, students can communicate quite effectively. Sometimes students either forget to use the spell-check and grammar-check or do not know how to use them. As well, the thesaurus is often used ineffectively, making the communication of ideas quite awkward. It is important for students to know how to properly use the technology provided to them to enhance their writing and to proofread the finished response for final revisions.
- Students are using a wide variety of evidence in their responses. Both depth and breadth of evidence are commonly seen. It has been observed that the depth of some evidence is not what would be expected at the Social Studies 30–1 level.
- Some students at the Satisfactory or lower levels use absolute statements rather than qualifying statements that are often used at the Proficient and Excellent levels in argumentation.
- Students that achieve at the higher levels present strong and clearly defined positions.
- The use of "negative" evidence is acceptable; however, evidence to support a position is required to present a convincing position.
- The equating of "communism" with "dictatorship" by some students is an area of concern.
- While reference to Hitler and Stalin seems to be a favourite among students, it is important to use it appropriately for the assigned task.
- For information, data, theory, or events to function as relevant evidence, a clearly articulated argument must be developed.

Examples of the Standards for Students' Writing

Examples of the Standards for Students' Writing is posted on the Writing diploma exams web page. In this document, you will find examples of Social Studies 30–1 diploma examination written responses, taken from several *Social Studies 30–1 Diploma Examinations*, that received scores of Satisfactory (S), Proficient (Pf), and Excellent (E) in each of the two writing assignments. Accompanying each response are brief rationales that will help to show how the scoring criteria were used to apply the provincial standards to each example.

Practice Tests

You can practice answering questions similar to those used on diploma examinations by accessing practice tests using Alberta Education and Childcare's digital assessment platform.

Part B: Sources and Questions

Description

Part B: Sources and Questions is worth 50% of the total diploma examination mark and consists of 60 machine-scored questions, each worth 1 mark. These questions provide students with response alternatives, of which only one is correct. Each question is classified according to the knowledge and understanding outcomes of each related issue as well as to the skills and processes outcomes related to either understanding and analysis or evaluation and synthesis. The examination blueprint that follows illustrates the distribution of questions within these classifications.

Questions are based on the Social Studies 30–1 key issues and related issues, as well as specific outcomes from the *Social Studies (10-12) Program of Studies*.

The sources and questions (machine-scored) section of the examination requires students to apply their knowledge and skills. Students must demonstrate that they understand social studies concepts and apply requisite skills and processes.

Social Studies 30–1 *Part B: Sources and Questions* Blueprint

Part B: Sources and Questions is designed to reflect the Alberta Social Studies Kindergarten to Grade 12 Programs of Study. The blueprint for Part B is shown below.

	ITEM CLASSIFICATION BY RELATED ISSUE				
ITEM CLASSIFICATION BY COGNITIVE LEVEL	Related Issue 1	Related Issue 2	Related Issue 3	Related Issue 4	Total Questions
Apply social studies knowledge and understanding* and skills and processes to items of understanding and analysis.	2–6	10–13	10–13	2–6	24–38
Apply social studies knowledge and understanding* and skills and processes to items of evaluation and synthesis.	2–6	10–13	10–13	2–6	24–38
Total Questions	**4–12**	**20–26**	**20–26**	**4–12**	**60**

*Knowledge and understanding includes ideas, information, and concepts identified and inherent in the Alberta Social Studies Kindergarten to Grade 12 Programs of Study.

Note: Item classification is not an indicator of item difficulty.

Website Links

Alberta Education and Childcare

Curriculum and Programs of study

General Information Bulletin
contains specific directives, guidelines, and procedures of diploma examinations

Diploma exams

Writing diploma exams
contains Guides for Students, exemplars, and other support documents

Digital Assessment Platform
contains practice questions and questions from previous diploma examinations

Help page
contains guides to help users of digital assessments access and administer secured tests and exams

Teacher participation in provincial assessments
contains information about marking, field testing, item development, and examination validation

Contacts 2026–2027

Provincial Assessment

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

Provincial Assessment

Diploma exam security, diploma exam rules, scheduling, and policy issues
780-427-1857
Email: exam.admin@gov.ab.ca

Results statements and rescores
780-427-1857
Email: exam.admin@gov.ab.ca

Special cases, accommodations, and exemptions
780-415-9242
780-427-4215
780-427-9795
Email: special.cases@gov.ab.ca

Field testing
Email: field.test@gov.ab.ca

Diploma exam format, content, confirming standards, marking, and results reporting
Email: diploma.exams@gov.ab.ca

Digital Assessment
780-641-8987
780-415-0824
Email: online.assessment@gov.ab.ca

***myPass* Access**
Alberta Education and Childcare Help Desk
780-427-5318
Email: AE.helpdesk@gov.ab.ca

Inquiries about transcripts, credentials, detailed academic reports, and rewrite fees
780-427-5732
Email: studentrecords@gov.ab.ca

Inquiries about student enrollment and marks and mature student status
780-422-9337
Email: studentrecords@gov.ab.ca

For a toll-free call to any Alberta government office, dial 310-0000 followed by the 10-digit phone number of the office that you would like to reach.

When contacting Alberta Education and Childcare, please include your name, title, school name, school code, and, if referring to a student, include the student's Alberta Student Number.

Contacts 2026–2027

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