Grade 9
Subject Bulletin
English Language Arts

Alberta Provincial Achievement Testing **2026–2027**

Alberta

This document was written primarily for		
Students		
Teachers	✓	Grade 9 English Language Arts
Administrators	✓	
Parents		
General Audience		

2026–2027 English Language Arts 9 Subject Bulletin

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Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test

General description

The *Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test* consists of two parts—*Part A: Writing* and *Part B: Reading*,each worth 50% of the test total.

Part A: Writing

Part A: Writing consists of two writing assignments—one narrative or essay and one functional—developed to be completed in two hours; however, students may have up to four hours to complete the test should they need it. For the first 10 minutes, students may discuss both assignments with classmates, in groups of two to four, or may think alone about the writing prompts. Students will engage in this discussion without teacher participation. During this discussion time, students may record their ideas in the planning spaces provided. The allotted test time, which includes the 10 minutes of discussion time, provides students with time for planning, drafting, revising, and editing both the narrative or essay and functional writing assignments.

Those students for whom a dictionary or a thesaurus is a familiar reference tool are encouraged, but not required, to use a dictionary or a thesaurus during the editing phase of their writing. However, excessive use of a dictionary or a thesaurus throughout the test may interfere with a student's ability to complete the writing assignments.

Students may use **print versions** of commercially published dictionaries and thesauri, including bilingual dictionaries, when completing *Part A: Writing* **only.** Dictionary and thesaurus tools are also available within the Digital Assessment Platform. In addition, spelling and grammar tools are enabled within the Digital Assessment Platform and will be accessible when writing the Provincial Achievement Test.

Part B: Reading

Part B: Reading is developed to be completed in 75 minutes; however, students have up to 150 minutes to complete the test should they need it. The test consists of 55 questions of various formats supported by the digital assessment platform, each worth one mark, based on 10 reading selections from fiction, nonfiction, drama, poetry, and cartoons.

Students may **not** use a dictionary, a thesaurus, or other reference materials when completing *Part B: Reading*. If a word that warrants definition is used on the test, it will be defined in the source in which it appears.

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

Grade 9 English Language Arts 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 English Language Arts 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
Students who meet the acceptable standard in Grade 9 English Language Arts are able to	Students who meet the standard of excellence in Grade 9 English Language Arts are also able to
• demonstrate sustained interest in reading, viewing, and listening to relatively short, uncomplicated stories, documentaries, and dramatic works • deal with uncomplicated, familiar details and ideas that are directly presented • expand, in writing, the narration of a personal experience, elaborate somewhat on their ideas, and sustain a topic using appropriate but conventional details • organize concrete, factual materials that contain simple ideas • understand techniques of literary structure or organization such as cause and effect, foreshadowing, flashback, and comparison and contrast; on occasion, they are able to apply that knowledge to unfamiliar literature or apply these techniques in their own writing • analyze and synthesize ideas in a familiar context when the experience is close in time to their own experiences • be successful in completing conventional tasks without assistance and in completing increasingly complex tasks with assistance and/or conscious effort • independently understand, organize, and articulate ideas and concepts in a concrete, direct, personal, and relatively uncomplicated manner • read relatively simple short novels, nonfiction selections, and narrative poems, and then clearly articulate the main idea, sequence of events, key details, and features of character and form	• read confidently and widely (texts such as mystery, romance, adventure, speculative fiction, and poetry) and search for information in texts • deal with abstract, complex details and ideas, and readily take risks with unfamiliar materials • read, write, and reflect on print and non-print texts from many perspectives • analyze and evaluate ideas in a wide variety of sources and appreciate how analysis can deepen an appreciation of the work • coherently develop and organize abstract, complex material • establish an appropriate focus for communication, and select ideas and language to suit different purposes and audiences • identify, without assistance, areas in their own writing that need to be revised and/or elaborated • demonstrate interest, enthusiasm, and imagination when dealing with details and ideas that demand complex thought and understanding

Part A: Writing

Assignment I of *Part A: Writing* requires students to write a narrative or an essay in response to the topic identified in the assignment. Additional prompt materials are provided that students may refer to if they wish. The ability of students to present and develop ideas coherently and clearly is being tested. Assignment I includes a space labelled *Planning* as well as a space for student writing.

Assignment II of *Part A: Writing* requires students to write a business email in response to the situation identified in the assignment. There are no prescribed guidelines with regard to the formatting of a business email. Students are required to address a specific audience in order to achieve a purpose, explain the details of a particular situation, organize their thoughts appropriately in sentences and paragraphs, and use vocabulary to establish a tone that is appropriate for their audience. Students are assessed on how well they are able to diplomatically address an individual who is in a position of authority in a real-world situation, and attempt to persuade this individual to not only take the sender's ideas into consideration but to act on the recommendation made. The manner in which such a request is made is key to attaining the outcome desired, and this includes ensuring that the communication is appealing to the recipient.Assignment II has a space labelled *Planning* as well as a space for student writing.

Both *Part A: Writing* 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 each assignment. Please note that the range is not a cap.

The suggested word count ranges below are based on various sources, including the student exemplars, 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.

Assignment I: Narrative or Essay Writing

- Suggested time: Approximately 70 minutes
- Suggested word count range: 500 to 1 000 words

Assignment II: Functional Writing

- Suggested time: Approximately 40 minutes
- Suggested word count range: 250 to 500 words

Important reminders

Students whose writing is unclearly related to the topic or prompts for Assignment I: Narrative or Essay Writing will be scored accordingly under **Content**. The bullet regarding "exploration of the topic" in the **Content** scoring category should be applied in accordance with the context established in each student's writing. If the marker can discern **no evidence of an attempt to address the task** presented in the assignment, a score of **Insufficient** will be awarded.

Students whose writing is unrelated to the task presented in Assignment II: Functional Writing will be awarded a score of **Insufficient**.

Test blueprint for *Part A: Writing*

The blueprint for *Part A: Writing* identifies the scoring/reporting categories by which student writing is assessed and by which summary data are reported to schools and school authorities; it also provides a description of the writing assignments and the achievement standards.

Assignment I: Narrative or Essay Writing

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

*These scoring categories are weighted to be worth twice as much as the other scoring categories.
**Numbers in parentheses refer to outcomes in the Grade 9 English Language Arts Program of Studies to which the reporting categories are cross-referenced.

(Continued on the next page)

Assignment II: Functional Writing

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

*These scoring categories are weighted to be worth twice as much as the other scoring categories.
**Numbers in parentheses refer to outcomes in the Grade 9 English Language Arts Program of Studies to which the reporting categories are cross-referenced.

Local marking

Classroom teachers are encouraged to assess students' writing, using the scoring guides contained in this bulletin. Exemplars and rationales provided will be from the 2026 PAT. Teachers who mark locally will be required to apply the standard using the previous year's exemplars. All papers will be marked centrally in Edmonton in July with exemplars for the 2027 test.

Locally awarded scores submitted to Alberta Education and Childcare will be used as the first reading of a student's response. Information regarding local marking is provided on the Digital Assessment Platform.

To assess locally those students with special test-writing needs, specifically a scribed response (test accommodation 5), teachers are to refrain from scoring **Conventions** for Assignment I: Narrative or Essay Writing and **Content Management** for Assignment II: Functional Writing.

Teachers have approximately one to two weeks to score the *Part A: Writing* tests. The tests will then be scored centrally by Alberta Education and Childcare as the second reading. Both sets of scores contribute to the student's final mark. In the event of a discrepancy between the two sets of scores, papers will receive a third reading, and all three sets of scores will determine the final scores that the paper is awarded. In this way, valid and reliable individual and group results can be reported.

Tests that are not assessed locally by teachers will be scored centrally only once. At least once a day, all central markers mark a copy of the same paper for inter-rater reliability.

After central marking has been completed and school reports have been sent to the schools, teachers who submitted their scores with an identification number will receive a confidential report on their marking on the digital assessment platform. This report is called the Local Marker Report and includes the locally awarded scores, the centrally awarded scores, third-read scores if applicable, and the final scores assigned.

To support local marking, Alberta Education and Childcare provides, along with the test materials, samples of student writing that exemplify the scoring criteria and levels of student achievement. Throughout the school year, teachers may use the exemplars that are posted on the Alberta Education and Childcare website.

A total score for a student's writing may be calculated using the procedure shown on the next page.

Calculating local marks

To determine a student's mark, convert the word descriptors to the following numeric values:

Excellent = 5

Proficient = 4

Satisfactory = 3

Limited = 2

Poor = 1

Use the following information to assign the score for each student's test.

Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment

1. Assign a score of 1 to 5 for each of Content, Organization, Sentence Structure, Vocabulary, and Conventions.
2. Multiply the scores for Content and Organization by 2, as these categories are worth twice as much as the other categories.

Maximum score possible for Narrative or Essay Writing = 35

Functional Writing Assignment

1. Assign a score of 1 to 5 for each of Content and Content Management.
2. Multiply these scores by 2.

Maximum score possible for Functional Writing = 20

Total *Part A: Writing* score

Add the Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment and Functional Writing Assignment scores.

Total score for *Part A: Writing*	
Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment	**___/35 (63.6%)**
+ Functional Writing Assignment	**___/20 (36.4%)**
= Total score	**___/55 (100%)**

The mark for *Part A: Writing* is worth 50% of the total mark for the *Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test*.

Information for teachers participating in central marking

Provincial Assessment will contact superintendents in the spring to nominate markers. The teachers selected will reflect proportional representation from the various regions of Alberta.

To qualify for nomination by a superintendent, a prospective marker must satisfy the following conditions:

- have a valid permanent Alberta Professional Teaching Certificate;
- have taught Grade 9 English Language Arts within the past three years;
- be currently employed by a school authority or private school; and
- be available on all scheduled days

Markers will be contacted in May, and the list of markers will be finalized no later than the middle of June. Group leaders will meet the day before the marking session for training.

Each year, more teachers are nominated to mark than are needed. There must be a balance of first-time and experienced markers, as well as regional representation by zone, school authority, and school. Unfortunately, not everyone whose name is submitted is selected.

Because the time allotted for marking is limited, markers are required to mark on Saturday and Sunday. The marking floor is open from 8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and markers are expected to be available to mark during those hours.

Scoring categories for Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment

Content

When marking **Content** appropriate for the Grade 9 Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment, the marker should consider how effectively the student

- explores the topic
- establishes a purpose
- presents ideas
- supports the response
- considers the reader

Cross-reference to Outcomes in the Program of Studies for Grade 9 English Language Arts: 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1, 3.3, 4.1, 4.3

Excellent **E**	• The student's exploration of the topic is insightful and/or imaginative. • The student's purpose, whether stated or implied, is deliberate. • The ideas presented by the student are perceptive and/or carefully chosen. • Supporting details are precise and/or original. • The writing is confident and/or creative and holds the reader's interest.
Proficient **Pf**	• The student's exploration of the topic is adept and/or plausible. • The student's purpose, whether stated or implied, is intentional. • The ideas presented by the student are thoughtful and/or sound. • Supporting details are specific and/or apt. • The writing is considered and/or elaborated and draws the reader's interest.
Satisfactory **S**	• The student's exploration of the topic is clear and/or logical. • The student's purpose, whether stated or implied, is evident. • The ideas presented by the student are appropriate and/or predictable. • Supporting details are relevant and/or generic. • The writing is straightforward and/or generalized and occasionally appeals to the reader's interest.
Limited **L**	• The student's exploration of the topic is tenuous and/or simplistic. • The student's purpose, whether stated or implied, is vague. • The ideas presented by the student are superficial and/or unclear. • Supporting details are imprecise and/or abbreviated. • The writing is unsubstantiated and/or incomplete and does not appeal to the reader's interest.
Poor **P**	• The student's exploration of the topic is minimal and/or tangential. • The student's purpose, whether stated or implied, is insubstantial. • The ideas presented by the student are overgeneralized and/or underdeveloped. • Supporting details are irrelevant and/or scant. • The writing is confusing and/or lacks validity and does not interest the reader.
Insufficient **INS**	• The marker can discern no evidence of an attempt to address the task presented in the assignment, or the student has written so little that it is not possible to assess **Content**.

Note: **Content** and **Organization** are weighted to be worth twice as much as the other scoring categories.
Student work must address the task presented in the assignment. Responses that are completely unrelated to the topic and/or prompts will be deemed **insufficient** in **Content**.

Organization

When marking **Organization** appropriate for the Grade 9 Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment, the marker should consider how effectively the writing demonstrates

- focus
- coherent development
- connections between events and/or details
- closure

Cross-reference to Outcomes in the Program of Studies for Grade 9 English Language Arts: 3.1, 3.3, 4.1, 4.3

Excellent **E**	• The introduction is engaging and skillfully establishes a focus that is consistently sustained. • Events and/or details are developed in a judicious order, and coherence is maintained. • Transitions, either explicit or implicit, fluently connect events and/or details within and/or between sentences and/or paragraphs. • Closure is effective and related to the focus.
Proficient **Pf**	• The introduction is purposeful and clearly establishes a focus that is capably sustained. • Events and/or details are developed in a sensible order, and coherence is generally maintained. • Transitions, either explicit or implicit, clearly connect events and/or details within and/or between sentences and/or paragraphs. • Closure is appropriate and related to the focus.
Satisfactory **S**	• The introduction is functional and establishes a focus that is generally sustained. • Events and/or details are developed in a discernible order, although coherence may falter occasionally. • Transitions, either explicit or implicit, tend to be mechanical and are generally used to connect events and/or details within and/or between sentences and/or paragraphs. • Closure is related to the focus and is mechanical and/or moralistic.
Limited **L**	• The introduction lacks purpose and/or is not functional; any focus established provides little direction and/or is not sustained. • The development of events and/or details is not clearly discernible, and coherence falters frequently. • Transitions, either explicit or implicit, are lacking and/or indiscriminately used to connect events and/or details within and/or between sentences and/or paragraphs. • Closure is abrupt, contrived, and/or unrelated to the focus.
Poor **P**	• The introduction, if present, is obscure and/or ineffective; any focus established provides no direction and/or is undeveloped. • The development of events and/or details is haphazard and/or incoherent. • Transitions, either explicit or implicit, are absent and/or inappropriately used to connect events and/or details within and/or between sentences and/or paragraphs. • Closure is ineffectual or missing.
Insufficient **INS**	• The response has been deemed **insufficient** in **Content**.

Note: **Content** and **Organization** are weighted to be worth twice as much as the other scoring categories.

Sentence Structure

When marking **Sentence Structure** appropriate for the Grade 9 Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment, the marker should consider the extent to which

- sentence structure is controlled
- sentence type and sentence length are effective and varied
- sentence beginnings are varied

Proportion of error to length and complexity of response must be considered.

Cross-reference to Outcomes in the Program of Studies for Grade 9 English Language Arts: 4.1, 4.2

Excellent **E**	• Sentence structure is effectively and consistently controlled. • Sentence type and sentence length are consistently effective and varied. • Sentence beginnings are consistently varied.
Proficient **Pf**	• Sentence structure is consistently controlled. • Sentence type and sentence length are usually effective and varied. • Sentence beginnings are often varied.
Satisfactory **S**	• Sentence structure is generally controlled, but lapses may occasionally impede meaning. • Sentence type and sentence length are sometimes effective and/or varied. • Some variety of sentence beginnings is evident.
Limited **L**	• Sentence structure often lacks control, and this may impede meaning. • Sentence type and sentence length are seldom effective and/or varied; syntactic structures are frequently awkward. • There is little variety of sentence beginnings.
Poor **P**	• Sentence structure generally lacks control, and this often impedes meaning. • There is essentially no variation in sentence type or sentence length; syntactic structures are unintelligible. • There is essentially no variety of sentence beginnings.
Insufficient **INS**	• The response has been deemed **insufficient** in **Content**.

Vocabulary

When marking **Vocabulary** appropriate for the Grade 9 Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment, the marker should consider the

- accuracy of the words and expressions
- effectiveness of the words and expressions
- appropriateness and effectiveness of the voice/tone created by the student

Proportion of error to length and complexity of response must be considered.

Cross-reference to Outcomes in the Program of Studies for Grade 9 English Language Arts: 4.1, 4.2

Excellent **E**	• Words and expressions are used accurately and deliberately. • Precise words and expressions are used to create vivid images and/or to enrich details. • The voice/tone created by the student is convincing.
Proficient **Pf**	• Words and expressions are often used accurately. • Specific words and expressions show some evidence of careful selection and/or some awareness of connotative effect. • The voice/tone created by the student is distinct.
Satisfactory **S**	• Words and expressions are generally used appropriately. • General words and expressions are used adequately to clarify meaning. • The voice/tone created by the student is discernible but may be inconsistent or uneven.
Limited **L**	• Words and expressions are often used inexactly. • Imprecise words and expressions predominate; specific words, if present, may be improperly used. • A voice/tone created by the student is not clearly established or is indistinct.
Poor **P**	• Words and expressions are generally used inaccurately. • Ineffective words and expressions predominate; specific words, if present, are frequently misused. • A voice/tone created by the student is not evident or is indiscreet.
Insufficient **INS**	• The response has been deemed **insufficient** in **Content**.

Conventions

When marking **Conventions** appropriate for the Grade 9 Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment, the marker should consider the extent to which the student has control of

- mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, indentation for new speakers, etc.) and usage (subject–verb agreement, pronoun–antecedent agreement, etc.)
- clarity and flow of the response

Proportion of error to length and complexity of response must be considered.

Cross-reference to Outcomes in the Program of Studies for Grade 9 English Language Arts: 4.2

Excellent **E**	• The quality of the writing is enhanced because it is essentially error-free. • Any errors that are present do not reduce clarity and/or do not interrupt the flow of the response.
Proficient **Pf**	• The quality of the writing is sustained because it contains only minor convention errors. • Any errors that are present rarely reduce clarity and/or seldom interrupt the flow of the response.
Satisfactory **S**	• The quality of the writing is sustained through generally correct use of conventions. • Errors occasionally reduce clarity and/or sometimes interrupt the flow of the response.
Limited **L**	• The quality of the writing is weakened by the frequently incorrect use of conventions. • Errors blur clarity and/or interrupt the flow of the response.
Poor **P**	• The quality of the writing is impaired by the consistently incorrect use of conventions. • Errors severely reduce clarity and/or impede the flow of the response.
Insufficient **INS**	• The response has been deemed **insufficient** in **Content**.

Scoring categories for Functional Writing Assignment

Content

When marking **Content** appropriate for the Grade 9 Functional Writing Assignment, the marker should consider the extent to which

- ideas and development of the topic are effective
- the purpose of the assignment is fulfilled with complete and relevant information
- an appropriate tone is used, and awareness of audience is evident

Cross-reference to Outcomes in the Program of Studies for Grade 9 English Language Arts: 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.3

Excellent **E**	• The ideas are perceptive, and development of the topic is clear and effective. • Pertinent information is presented, and this information is enhanced by precise details that effectively fulfill the purpose of the assignment. • An appropriate tone is skillfully maintained.
Proficient **Pf**	• The ideas are thoughtful, and development of the topic is generally effective. • Significant information is presented, and this information is substantiated by specific details that fulfill the purpose of the assignment. • An appropriate tone is clearly maintained.
Satisfactory **S**	• The ideas are appropriate, and development of the topic is adequate. • Relevant information is presented, and this information is supported by enough detail to fulfill the purpose of the assignment. • An appropriate tone is generally maintained.
Limited **L**	• The ideas are superficial, flawed, and/or merely a repetition of the situation presented, and development of the topic is inadequate. • Information presented is imprecise, undiscerning, and/or simply a restatement of the prompt provided. Supporting details are insignificant and/or lacking. The purpose of the assignment is only partially fulfilled. • Some awareness of an appropriate tone is evident but may be inconsistently maintained.
Poor **P**	• The ideas are overgeneralized, misconstrued, and/or essentially a verbatim reiteration of the situation presented, and development of the topic is ineffective. • Information is irrelevant, missing, and/or essentially copied from the prompt provided. Supporting details are obscure and/or absent. The purpose of the assignment is not fulfilled. • Little awareness of an appropriate tone is evident.
Insufficient **INS**	• The marker can discern no evidence of an attempt to address the task presented in the assignment, or the student has written so little that it is not possible to assess **Content**.

Note: **Content** and **Content Management** are equally weighted.

Student work must address the task presented in the assignment. Responses that are completely unrelated to the context established in the assignment will be deemed **insufficient** in **Content**.

Content Management

When marking **Content Management** appropriate for the Grade 9 Functional Writing Assignment, the marker should consider the extent to which

- words and expressions are used accurately and effectively
- sentence structure, usage, and mechanics (spelling, punctuation, etc.) are controlled

Proportion of error to length and complexity of response must be considered.

Cross-reference to Outcomes in the Program of Studies for Grade 9 English Language Arts: 4.1, 4.2

Excellent **E**	• Words and expressions used are consistently accurate and effective. • The writing demonstrates confident and consistent control of correct sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. Errors that may be present do not impede meaning.
Proficient **Pf**	• Words and expressions used are usually accurate and effective. • The writing demonstrates competent and generally consistent control of correct sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. Errors that are present rarely impede meaning.
Satisfactory **S**	• Words and expressions used are generally accurate and occasionally effective. • The writing demonstrates basic control of correct sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. Errors may occasionally impede meaning.
Limited **L**	• Words and expressions used are vague, inexact, and/or frequently taken from the prompt. • The writing demonstrates limited evidence of control of correct sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. Errors may frequently impede meaning.
Poor **P**	• Words and expressions used are inaccurate, misused, and/or essentially quoted from the prompt. • The writing demonstrates a lack of evidence of control of correct sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. Errors may severely impede meaning.
Insufficient **INS**	• The response has been deemed **insufficient** in **Content**.

Note: **Content** and **Content Management** are equally weighted.

Part B: Reading

Part B: Reading of the *Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test* requires students to read selections that include a variety of informational, narrative, and poetic texts with explicit and implicit ideas and details. There are 55 questions of various formats supported by the digital assessment platform, each worth one mark, based on the readings.

Test blueprint for *Part B: Reading*

The following blueprint identifies the reporting categories and language functions by which questions are classified and reported to schools and school authorities. The number of questions in each reporting category is approximate.

	LANGUAGE FUNCTION		
Reporting Category	**Informational**	**Narrative/Poetic**	**Number (Percentage) of Questions**
Identifying and Interpreting Ideas and Details (2.1, 2.2, 2.3)* Students construct meaning by interpreting ideas and details pertaining to setting/ atmosphere/context, character/narrator/speaker (actions, motives, values), conflict, and events.	**7** (13%)	**10** (18%)	**17** (31%)
Interpreting Text Organization (2.2, 2.3)* Students identify and analyze the text creator's choice of genre, form, tone, point of view, organizational structure (e.g., chronology, cause and effect, comparison and contrast), style, diction, rhetorical techniques (e.g., repetition, parallelism), text features (e.g., alliteration, onomatopoeia, imagery, dialogue, flashback, foreshadowing, suspense), and conventions.	**4** (7%)	**7** (13%)	**11** (20%)
Associating Meaning (2.1, 2.2, 2.3)* Students use contextual clues to determine the denotative and connotative meaning of words, phrases, and figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, irony, symbolism).	**4** (7%)	**7** (13%)	**11** (20%)
Synthesizing Ideas (2.2)* Students draw conclusions and make generalizations by integrating information in order to identify the tone, purpose, theme, main idea, or mood of a passage.	**7** (13%)	**9** (16%)	**16** (29%)
Number (Percentage) of Questions	**22** (40%)	**33** (60%)	**55** (100%)

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

Preparing Students for the *Grade 9 English Language Arts 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 English Language Arts 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.

Practice tests are available on the digital assessment platform. These practice tests include accommodations such as text-to-speech, coloured overlays, and a zoom feature for increasing the size of the font.

Special-format practice tests

To provide 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.

Teachers should also familiarize students with the scoring guides in this bulletin. With instruction, students may be able to use these guides effectively when evaluating their own writing or that of peers.

Examples of the Standards for Students' Writing documents for Grade 9 English Language Arts are available on the Alberta Education and Childcare website. These samples are intended to be used to enhance the quality of students' writing and to assist teachers in assessing student writing relative to the standards embedded in the scoring criteria in the scoring guides.

Teachers are also encouraged to share the following information with their students to help them prepare for the *Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test*.

Suggestions for writing the test
Part A: Writing

- Read the assignments carefully. Think about what you are being asked to do; plan your writing so that it is focused, unified, and coherent; and proofread your writing.
- Read all the instructions carefully and do what the assignments ask you to do. The time you spend reading and thinking about the assignments is time well spent. Many students find that highlighting or underlining key words helps them to focus their thinking.
- Plan your writing using the spaces provided. You should choose a planning strategy that helps you to focus your ideas.
- Use your reference materials. You may use a dictionary to look up the meanings of words that you want to use but are not completely sure about, and to ensure that you spell words correctly. Use a thesaurus if you need to find a more precise word for the context you are developing, but be careful not to overuse either a dictionary or a thesaurus.
- Keep in mind the characteristics of effective writing.
    - Awareness of audience (appropriateness of tone and use of correct language)
    - Completeness of information (enough detail to fulfill purpose)
    - Relevance of information (all details pertain to the purpose)
    - Clarity of information (all details are specific and easily understood by the reader)

Proofread your work and correct errors. Part B: Reading

- You may **not** use a dictionary, a thesaurus, or other reference materials when writing Part B.
- Read each selection and think about each question.
- Read the material using the strategy that works best for you. You should either:
    - read the selection and think carefully about it before you try any of the multiple-choice questions associated with the reading selection;

  OR

    - read the questions first and then read the selection, keeping in mind the questions you will need to answer.
- Each set of questions is designed to take you back through the reading selection in a certain way. The questions are ordered according to the location of the answers in the passage. For example, the answer to the first question will likely appear near the beginning of the passage, and so on. Questions relating to the reading selection as a whole will appear at the end of the set of questions.
- Make sure that you look at all forms of the information given. Information may be presented in cartoons, pictures, or charts.
- Take the time to re-read the lines that are referred to in a question. Many questions contain quotations from the selection with line references indicated. It is always worthwhile to re-read the lines that are referenced and to consider the meaning of these lines in both their immediate context in the selection and in the context of the selection as a whole.
- When answering “best answer” questions, be sure to carefully read all choices before selecting 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 choices may be, to some degree, correct, but one of the choices 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.

Opportunities to Participate in Test-development Activities

Field testing

All provincial achievement test questions, with the exception of the Part A: Writing portion of language arts tests, 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 and Childcare 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 on the digital platform 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 test-development 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 English Language Arts *Part A: Writing* Instructions Page

Grade 9 Provincial Achievement Test

English Language Arts
Part A: Writing

Description

Time: 2 hours. You have up to 4 hours to complete this test should you need it.

The assignment and resources can be navigated by clicking on the appropriate selection button on the left side of the screen.

Part A: Writing contributes 50% of the total Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test mark and consists of two assignments:

- **Assignment I: Narrative or Essay Writing**
  This assignment contains some material for you to consider. You must then respond in writing to the topic presented in the assignment. You should take about 70 minutes to complete Assignment I.
  Value: Approximately 65% of the total Part A: Writing test mark
- **Assignment II: Functional Writing**
  This assignment describes a situation to which you must respond in the format of a business email. You should take about 40 minutes to complete Assignment II.
  Value: Approximately 35% of the total Part A: Writing test mark

Before beginning to write, you will have 10 minutes to talk with your classmates (in groups of two to four) about both writing assignments or to think about them alone.

Instructions

- Review the "Try the Tools" instructions.
- You **may** use the following **print** references:
  – an English and/or bilingual dictionary
  – a thesaurus
- Complete **both** assignments.
- Record your ideas and/or make a **plan** before you write.
- Complete and revise your responses to the writing assignments using the word processor provided in this test.
- To submit your **final** responses, click "Submit" 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.

Do not include your name anywhere in your responses.

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The personal information collected through the Provincial Achievement Testing Program is for the purpose of administering the program as well as support programs, policy evaluation, and measurement. This collection is authorized by section 4(c) of the *Protection of Privacy Act*. For questions about the collection of personal information, email EDC.PATS@gov.ab.ca or by mail to 6th floor, 44 Capital Boulevard, 10044 108 Street NW, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 5E6.

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Appendix 2

Example of Grade 9 English Language Arts *Part B: Reading* Instructions Page

Grade 9 Provincial Achievement Test

English Language Arts

Part B: Reading

Readings and Questions

Description

Time: 75 minutes. You have up to 150 minutes to complete this test should you need it.

Part B: Reading contributes 50% of the total Grade 9 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test mark and consists of 10 reading selections and 55 machine-scored questions.

Instructions

- Review the "Try the Tools" instructions.
- The readings 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 "Submit" 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 3

Examples of descriptions used in Text to Speech on the *Grade 9 English Language Arts 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.

Part A: Writing

For text instructions for the Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment, all text printed on the page is read aloud and any font details, such as bold print or italics, are identified. Visual prompting texts are described in terms of composition and visual details. All instructions are read in their entirety. For the Functional Writing Assignment, the instructions, situation, and assignment are read in their entirety.

Part B: Reading

Each reading selection and its creator are identified and read in their entirety. Reading selections are read without excessive emphasis or dramatization. Each set of questions accompanying a reading selection is read after the reading selection is read in its entirety. When specified lines within the reading selection are referenced within a given question, these lines are repeated prior to reading the question. Footnoted words appear in blue font and provide definitions when selected.

Example of scripting notes for *Part A: Writing* Narrative or Essay Writing Assignment

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.

The assignment, contained in a text box, reads:

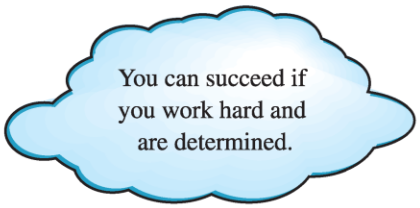
> Write a narrative or an essay about **how the advice or suggestions of others can influence young people.** You may wish to write about yourself or other people, real or fictional. You may set your writing in the past, present, or future.

Below the assignment is a section titled "**Ideas**" that contains 5 statements and 5 graphics.

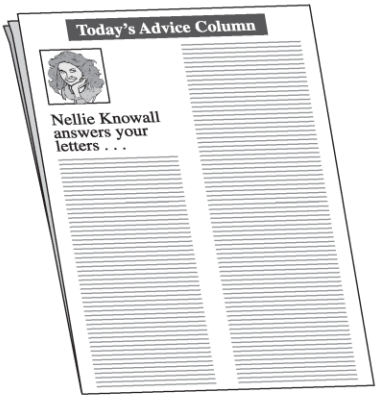
Ideas

The following material may give you ideas for your writing. **You do not have to refer directly to any of it.** Consider your own experiences gained through reading, listening, viewing, discussing, thinking, or imagining.

The first statement reads:

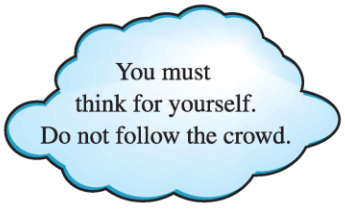


The first graphic is of a page from a newspaper. At the top of the page, the heading reads, "Today's Advice Column." Beneath the heading is a picture of a woman's face. Directly below this picture are three lines of text that read, "Nellie Knowall answers your letters . . ."



The second graphic shows three young people facing and talking to each other. Above these three individuals is a sign that reads, "Peer Support Group Meeting."

The second statement reads:



The third statement reads:

The third graphic shows a person seated comfortably in front of a television. On the screen, the words "NEW" and "BUY NOW!" appear in large letters.

The fourth graphic shows an elderly person and two young people seated at a table. They are engaged in a conversation.

The fourth statement reads:

Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today.

The fifth statement reads:

Take risks and follow your dreams.

The fifth graphic presents two people who are standing facing one another. The person on the left is wearing a whistle around his neck and is pointing to aspects of a diagram that is on a sheet of paper he is holding in front of him. The young person on the right, who is wearing a T-shirt, shorts, and running shoes, is looking at the diagram.

When writing, **be sure to**

- consider your **audience**
- focus on your **purpose** and **point of view**
- **organize** your thoughts appropriately in sentences and paragraphs
- use **vocabulary** that is interesting and effective
- **edit** your work directly on your writing
- **budget** your time

Example of scripting notes for *Part A: Writing* Functional Writing Assignment

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.

Situation

To promote the development of critical-thinking skills, many schools have created collaborative work spaces for students in school libraries and learning commons. A collaborative work space is a place where students can work together to design and build creative solutions to classroom-based tasks. In such a space, students can make use of electronics, robotics, woodworking, sewing, or 3D printing to complete assignments. This creative space allows students to access materials in an environment that fosters hands-on learning.

You are Jamie Barnes, a student who attends Templeton School in the city of Templeton, Alberta. You believe that a collaborative work space in your school could be beneficial for all students, especially those who may not have access to such resources outside of school. As a member of the school's student council, you have been tasked with establishing a collaborative work space at your school to enhance student learning.

Positive aspects of a collaborative work space for students may include the following:

- development of creativity
- self-directed learning
- cooperating with others
- problem-solving skills
- learning from mistakes and successes

You have decided to write a business email to Mr. Jason Torres, principal of Templeton School, to present your ideas regarding the creation of a collaborative work space at your school. In your email, be sure to explain how student learning could be enhanced by such a space.

Assignment

The assignment, contained in a text box, reads:

> Write a business email to Mr. Jason Torres, principal of Templeton School, **to persuade him to support the creation of a collaborative work space at the school**. Provide enough information to **convince Mr. Torres of the benefits for students of having such a space at Templeton School**.

When writing, **be sure to**

- **identify** the **purpose** of the email
- **explain** the details of the **situation** and **request**
- **organize** your **thoughts** appropriately in sentences and paragraphs
- **use vocabulary** that is appropriate and effective

Example of scripting notes for *Part B: Reading*

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.

Selection **VI.** Listen to the reading of the following editorial from a magazine **and answer questions 30 to 34 from your Questions Booklet.**

There are 4 footnotes for this selection as follows: Footnote 1 – that same ATP luncheon—Alberta Theatre Projects' Bob Edwards luncheon in Calgary, Footnote 2 – systemic barriers—obstacles that are part of the structure of a particular system, Footnote 3 – acuity—keen insight, Footnote 4 – ilk—type or kind.

This editorial was published in the June 2005 issue of AlbertaViews *magazine.*

A TRIBUTE TO LOIS HOLE

"Sometimes I wish we lived in a less hectic world, where everyone could find time to enjoy a simple breakfast. I hate to see people going hungry. It hurts, especially when there's no need for it. We are rich enough to feed everyone, and yet, somehow, we're not quite smart enough or fair enough to do it."
—Lois Hole, 1933–2005

LAST FALL, ATTENDEES OF ALBERTA Theatre Projects' Bob Edwards Luncheon in Calgary were treated to a delightful and rousing speech by Lieutenant Governor Lois Hole. Alberta's "Queen of Hugs" reminded her audience of the importance of the arts in our lives and the need for arts education in our schools. "Well educated citizens, who must have a solid grounding in the liberal arts, are the foundation of any nation's prosperity and cultural worth," she said. "The arts enrich us all; they are not a frill, they are an absolute necessity."

The staff of *AlbertaViews* exchanged happy looks. Hole had, as she so often did, displayed the rich, progressive spirit we hope to capture in this magazine.

Four months later, Lois Hole died at age 71 after a long battle with cancer. When putting together this issue, which looks at women, and particularly women in politics, we were reminded of her grace, strength and commitment. We were reminded of her capacity to stand up and say her piece, regardless of whether she had been asked, and to do so with such tact, clarity and good humour as to elevate discussions where others may have caused offence.

Shortly after her appointment by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien in 1999, Hole declared: "I want to give support and legitimacy to the groups that need it most, to the people who often go unheard in our culture… While the position of lieutenant governor is not a platform for activism, neither is it one without substance. My

primary goal is to encourage people to carefully consider our more vital issues of social justice, in the hopes that positive change may result."

A tireless advocate for public education, public health care and the arts, Hole often pushed the boundaries of her traditionally ceremonial role. At that same ATP luncheon[1] where she so eloquently spoke of arts education, Hole joked that Premier Klein's absence was his way of avoiding the displeasure of sitting through her criticisms. And when a new women's hospital in Edmonton was named after her just weeks before her death, Hole took the opportunity to speak out in favour of public health care. Never silenced by the limitations of her position, Hole always spoke from the heart.

"I have faith in a better future," she once said, "because I have faith that most human beings want to do the right thing. If we can put aside differences of ideology, if we can learn to love one another, then one day we will enjoy a world where no one need live in fear, where no one need go hungry, where everyone can enjoy a good education, the fellowship of friendly neighbours, and the security of a world at peace with itself at long last."

A portion of this issue of *AlbertaViews* focuses on the systemic barriers[2] women face in politics. But we just couldn't focus on women in politics without pausing to remember Lois Hole. Her compassion, acuity[3] and strength made us so proud. In a province where women make up half the population but account for only 16 per cent of MLAs, one could argue that we might benefit from having more women in our legislature. Having more people of Lois Hole's ilk[4] in our government would do this province a world of good.

Read footnote 1 here.
Read footnote 2 here.
Read footnote 3 here.
Read footnote 4 here.

This was an editorial from a magazine by AlbertaViews *Staff*

[1] that same ATP luncheon—Alberta Theatre Projects' Bob Edwards Luncheon in Calgary
[2] systemic barriers—obstacles that are part of the structure of a particular system
[3] acuity—keen insight
[4] ilk—type or kind

AlbertaViews Staff. "Editorial: A Tribute to Lois Hole." *AlbertaViews*, June 2005. Reproduced with permission from Jackie Flanagan.

Selection **VI.** Listen to the reading of **the editorial "A Tribute to Lois Hole" from *AlbertaViews* magazine on pages 10 and 11 of your Readings Booklet and answer questions 30 to 34.**

Question 30 refers to lines 1 to 4, which read, "Sometimes I wish … to do it."

Question **30.** The opening quotation in lines 1 to 4 focuses on Lois Hole's belief that

A. social inequality is unjustified in a wealthy nation

B. economic instability is unavoidable in society today

C. the number of people who are unable to provide for their families is increasing

D. there are insufficient resources available for the needs of the growing population

Question 31 refers to lines 17 to 20, which read, "We were reminded … have caused offence."

Question **31.** The details in lines 17 to 20 **most clearly** suggest that Lois Hole was able to

A. give her opinion without causing resentment
B. deliver speeches without criticizing others
C. offer solutions and resolve problems
D. explore issues and accept input

Question 32 refers to lines 27 to 28, which read, "A tireless advocate … traditionally ceremonial role."

Question **32.** The idea contained in lines 27 to 28 is **most strongly** reinforced by the quotation

A. "she so eloquently spoke of arts education" (line 29)

B. "Hole joked that Premier Klein's absence was his way of avoiding the displeasure of sitting through her criticisms" (lines 29–31)

C. "And when a new women's hospital in Edmonton was named after her just weeks before her death, Hole took the opportunity to speak out in favour of public health care" (lines 31–33)

D. "Never silenced by the limitations of her position, Hole always spoke from the heart" (lines 33–34)

Question **33.** The statement "Having more people of Lois Hole's ilk in our government would do this province a world of good" (lines 46 to 47) **most strongly** reinforces the writers' views in this editorial regarding Lois Hole's

A. patriotic nature
B. forthright manner
C. exemplary character
D. outgoing personality

Question **34.** The tone of this editorial could **best** be described as

A. moralistic
B. respectful
C. objective
D. critical

Provincial Assessment Contacts

Provincial Achievement Tests Help Desk
Email: ECC.PATS@gov.ab.ca

Examination Administration (for test security, rules, scheduling and policy issues)
Email: exam.admin@gov.ab.ca

Online Assessment (for technical assistance)
Email: online.assessment@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