Grade 6 Subject Bulletin English Language Arts and Literature

Alberta Provincial Achievement Testing **2026–2027**

Alberta

This document was written primarily for		
Students		
Teachers	✓	Grade 6 English Language Arts
Administrators	✓	
Parents		
General Audience		

2026–2027 English Language Arts and Literature 6 Subject Bulletin

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Grade 6 English Language Arts and Literature Provincial Achievement Test

General description

The *Grade 6 English Language Arts and Literature Provincial Achievement Test* is composed of two parts—Part A: Writing and Part B: Reading, each worth 50% of the test total.

Test items are created from the learning outcomes contained within the Grade 6 English language arts and literature (ELAL) curriculum.

Part A: Writing

Part A: Writing consists of two writing assignments—one non-fiction and one fiction—developed to be completed in 2 hours; however, students may have up to 4 hours to complete the test should they need it. For the first 10 minutes of the 2 hours, students may discuss both assignments with classmates in groups of two to four or think alone about the prompts. Students will engage in this discussion time 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 non-fiction and fiction writing assignments. Students may take up to 4 hours to complete the test.

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* (multiple choice) is developed to be completed in 60 minutes; however, students may take up to 2 hours to complete the test should they need it. The test consists of 50 questions of various formats supported by the digital assessment platform, each worth one mark based on reading selections from fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and visual media.

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 a test, it will be defined on the page on which it appears.

It is important to remember that one test cannot measure all the components within the learning outcomes in the ELAL curriculum.

Grade 6 English Language Arts & Literature provincial assessment standards

The following statements describe what is expected of Grade 6 students at the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence based on outcomes in the Grade 6 English Language Arts and Literature curriculum. 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 curriculum.

Students who meet the acceptable standard are able to:	**Students who meet the standard of excellence are able to:**
Create texts that reflect personal voice and style through creative thinking processes.	Create polished and distinctive texts that reflect personal voice and style through creative and critical thinking processes.
Evaluate how vocabulary enhances communication and provides clarity.	Evaluate how vocabulary enhances communication and use effective vocabulary to provide clarity.
Apply conventions that support accuracy or enhance creative expression.	Apply and analyze conventions that ensure accuracy or enhance creative expression.
Analyze how text form and structure clarify information.	Analyze how text form and structure clarify information and support connecting with self, others and the world.
Connect the quality of oral communications to the development of oral language skills.	Connect quality and effective oral communications in the development of oral language skills.
Interpret texts through the application of comprehension strategies.	Interpret and respond to texts through the deliberate and effective application of comprehension strategies.

Part A: Writing

Writing consists of prompts that require students to create personal voice and style through creative and critical thinking.

Writing requires students to write for a specific audience and to fulfill a specified purpose within a given context. Students are required to write their responses based on the provided topic.

Assignment I of *Part A: Writing* requires students to write a non-fiction response to the topic identified in the assignment. Additional prompt materials are provided that students may refer to if they wish. Students are assessed on their ability to explore the topic and support their ideas with details, examples and explanations. Their well-developed response should establish a tone appropriate for their chosen audience while paying attention to sentence structure, vocabulary and conventions. 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 fiction response to the topic identified in Assignment I. The same additional prompt materials are provided for students to refer to if they wish. Students are assessed on their ability to choose an appropriate fiction form to explore the topic while supporting their ideas with creative details. Their coherently developed response should align with their chosen audience while paying attention to sentence structure, vocabulary and conventions. Assignment II includes a space labelled *Planning* as well as a space for student writing.

Important reminders

In order to facilitate valid and fair marking for all students during the July marking session, it is important that teachers:

- have students plan their writing only in the space provided in the Digital Assessment Platform;
- follow the procedures for scribing papers, as outlined in the *General Information Bulletin;*
- follow the procedures regarding classroom materials, as outlined in the *General Information Bulletin*;

Students whose writing is unrelated to the topic presented in Assignment I: Non-fiction writing and Assignment II: fiction writing will be awarded a score of **Insufficient**.

Blueprint for *Part A: Writing*

Grade 6 English Language Arts and Literature 2025 PAT
Part A: Writing Blueprint

Assignment I: Non-fiction Writing

Scoring/Reporting Category	Curriculum KUSPs	Achievement Standards	Distribution of Marks
Ideas & Evidence	Create written texts for a variety of audiences and purposes Organize writing around clear ideas or positions that are supported by examples or relevant evidence	Student achievement in each scoring/reporting category will be identified by the following descriptors: Excellent **Proficient** **Satisfactory** **Limited** **Poor** **Insufficient**	**5**
Structure & Organization	Express ideas using organizational structures that enhance writing Focus expression of ideas through; introduction, opening or lead, details in order of sequence or importance, transitions, conclusions		**5**
Sentence Structure	Variety in sentence length and structure can enhance writing fluency and reader engagement		**5**
Vocabulary & Clarity	Use words that create effects or emphasis Tone expresses the text creator's attitude toward or feelings about the topic and audience		**5**
Conventions & Accuracy	Communication is enhanced when correct conventions of grammar are maintained Apply punctuation and capitalization appropriately in written communication Spelling accuracy and fluency enhance written communication		**5**
Total Marks for Assignment I:			**25**

Assignment II: Fiction Writing

Scoring/Reporting Category	Curriculum KUSPs	Achievement Standards	Distribution of Marks
Ideas & Impressions	Create narratives that develop setting, plot, and character, using suspense, figurative language, and dialogue Apply creative-thinking processes through evaluating, and selecting details to produce a desired effect	Student achievement in each scoring/reporting category will be identified by the following descriptors: **Excellent** **Proficient** **Satisfactory** **Limited** **Poor** **Insufficient**	**5**
Structure & Form	Create written texts in a variety of forms and structures Align ideas with purpose, audience and form of writing		**5**
Sentence Structure	Variety in sentence length and structure can enhance writing fluency and reader engagement		**5**
Vocabulary & Style	Enhance personal style and voice through careful selection of words to create emphasis or effects Create texts that use imagery		**5**
Conventions & Effect	Communication is enhanced when correct conventions of grammar are maintained Apply punctuation and capitalization appropriately in written communication Spelling accuracy and fluency enhance written communication		**5**
Total Marks for Assignment II:			**25**
Total for Assignment I & Assignment II:			**50**

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 & Accuracy** for Assignment I: Non-fiction Writing and **Conventions & Effect** for Assignment II: Fiction Writing.

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

Tests that are not marked locally by teachers will be marked centrally only once. At least once a day, all 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. These exemplars are not to be shared with students and must be kept secure. 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.

Non-fiction Writing

Assign a score of 1 to 5 for each of Ideas and Evidence, Structure and Organization, Sentence Structure, Vocabulary and Clarity, and Conventions and Accuracy.

Maximum score possible for Non-fiction Writing = 25

Fiction Writing

Assign a score of 1 to 5 for each of Ideas and Impressions, Structure and Form, Sentence Structure, Vocabulary and Style, and Conventions and Effect.

Maximum score possible for Fiction Writing = 25

Total Part A: Writing score

Add the Non-fiction Writing and Fiction Writing scores.

Total score for *Part A: Writing*

Add the Non-fiction Writing and Fiction Writing scores. Total score for Part A: Writing

Non-fiction Writing	**___/25 (50%)**
+ Fiction Writing	**___/25 (50%)**
= Total score	**___/50 (100%)**

The mark for *Part A: Writing* is worth 50% of the total mark for the *Grade 6 English Language Arts and Literature 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 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 the course 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 and a variety of 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 often asked 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 Guides—Non-fiction Writing

Ideas and Evidence

When marking Ideas and Evidence appropriate for the Grade 6 Non-fiction Writing Assignment, the marker should consider how effectively the student

- explores ideas in relation to the topic
- supports ideas with facts, details, examples, and/or explanations
- considers audience and purpose

Excellent **E**	• The ideas explored in relation to the topic are insightful and/or carefully chosen. • Supporting facts, details, examples, and/or explanations are precise and/or comprehensive. • The purpose of the writing is effectively fulfilled and the writing skillfully engages the audience.
Proficient **Pf**	• The ideas explored in relation to the topic are thoughtful and/or considered. • Supporting facts, details, examples, and/or explanations are specific and/or thorough. • The purpose of the writing is fulfilled and the writing capably engages the audience.
Satisfactory **S**	• The ideas explored in relation to the topic are straightforward and/or generalized. • Supporting facts, details, examples, and/or explanations are relevant and/or generic. • The purpose of the writing is generally fulfilled and/or the writing occasionally engages the audience.
Limited **L**	• The ideas explored in relation to the topic are superficial and/or incomplete. • Supporting facts, details, examples, and/or explanations are ambiguous and/or abbreviated. • The purpose of the writing is partially fulfilled and the writing infrequently engages the audience.
Poor **P**	• The ideas explored in relation to the topic are underdeveloped and/or inadequate. • Supporting facts, details, examples, and/or explanations are inappropriate and/or lacking. • The purpose of the writing is unfulfilled and the writing does not engage the audience.
Insufficient **INS**	• The marker can discern no evidence of an attempt to fulfill the assignment, or the student has written so little that it is not possible to assess **Ideas and Evidence.**

Structure and Organization

When marking **Structure and Organization** appropriate for the Grade 6 Non-fiction Writing Assignment, the marker should consider how effectively the student

- introduces the response
- orders and develops the response
- provides a conclusion to the response

Excellent **E**	• The introduction provides a perceptive focus and/or definitive direction. • Transitions fluently connect the development of ideas and/or details within and/or between sentences and/or paragraphs. • The conclusion is astute.
Proficient **Pf**	• The introduction provides a well-defined focus and/or clear direction. • Transitions sensibly connect the development of ideas and/or details within and/or between sentences and/or paragraphs. • The conclusion is well considered.
Satisfactory **S**	• The introduction provides a general focus and/or some direction. • Transitions mechanically connect the development of ideas and/or details within and/or between sentences and/or paragraphs. • The conclusion is functional.
Limited **L**	• The introduction provides little focus. • Transitions awkwardly connect the development of ideas and/or details within and/or between sentences and/or paragraphs. • The conclusion is not functional and/or abrupt.
Poor **P**	• The introduction provides no focus and/or is missing. • Transitions haphazardly connect the development of ideas and/or details within and/or between sentences and/or paragraphs. • The conclusion is ineffective and/or absent.
Insufficient **INS**	• The response has been deemed **insufficient** in **Ideas and Evidence**.

Sentence Structure

When marking **Sentence Structure** appropriate for the Grade 6 Non-fiction 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.

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. • There is little variety of sentence beginnings.
Poor **P**	• Sentence structure generally lacks control, and this often impedes meaning. • There is essentially no variety in sentence type or sentence length. • There is essentially no variety of sentence beginnings.
Insufficient **INS**	• The response has been deemed **insufficient** in **Ideas and Evidence**.

Vocabulary and Clarity

When marking **Vocabulary and Clarity** appropriate for the Grade 6 Non-fiction Writing Assignment, the marker should consider the

- accuracy of words and expressions
- clarity of words and expressions
- appropriateness of the tone created by the student

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

Excellent **E**	• Words and expressions are used accurately. • Precise words and expressions enrich details. • The 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. • The tone created by the student is competent.
Satisfactory **S**	• Words and expressions are generally used accurately. • General words and expressions are used. • The tone created by the student is evident but may be inconsistent.
Limited **L**	• Words and expressions are often used inaccurately. • Imprecise words and expressions are used. • The tone created by the student is not clearly established.
Poor **P**	• Words and expressions are generally used inaccurately. • Overgeneralized words and expressions are used. • The tone created by the student is inappropriate.
Insufficient **INS**	• The response has been deemed **insufficient** in **Ideas and Evidence**.

Conventions and Accuracy

When marking **Conventions and Accuracy** appropriate for the Grade 6 Non-fiction Writing Assignment, the marker should consider the extent to which the writing demonstrates control of

- mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, indentation for new speakers, etc.)
- grammar (subject-verb agreement, pronoun-antecedent agreement, etc.)
- fluency of the response

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

Excellent **E**	• The quality of the writing is enhanced because it is essentially free from errors in mechanics. • Minute errors in grammar, if any, do not interrupt communication. • Errors, if present, do not reduce fluency.
Proficient **Pf**	• The quality of the writing is sustained because it contains only minor errors in mechanics. • Inconsequential errors in grammar seldom interrupt communication. • Errors infrequently reduce fluency.
Satisfactory **S**	• The quality of the writing is sustained through generally correct use of mechanics. • Occasional errors in grammar sometimes interrupt communication. • Errors periodically reduce fluency.
Limited **L**	• The quality of the writing is weakened by the frequently incorrect use of mechanics. • Recurrent errors in grammar often interrupt communication. • Errors regularly reduce fluency.
Poor **P**	• The quality of the writing is impaired by the consistently incorrect use of mechanics. • Jarring errors in grammar interrupt communication. • Errors severely reduce fluency.
Insufficient **INS**	• The response has been deemed **insufficient** in **Ideas and Evidence**.

Student writing that has been identified as scribed is not awarded a score in **Conventions**.

Scoring Guides—Fiction Writing

Ideas and Impressions

When marking **Ideas and Evidence** appropriate for the Grade 6 Fiction Writing Assignment, the marker should consider how effectively the student

- establishes a creative context and presents ideas in relation to the topic
- incorporates details in context to enhance creative thinking
- aligns purpose with chosen audience

Excellent **E**	• The ideas presented are discerning and/or deliberately related to the context established. • Contextual details are creative and/or original. • The purpose of the writing is confident and skillfully aligns with the chosen audience.
Proficient **Pf**	• The ideas presented are purposeful and/or intentionally related to the context established. • Contextual details are specific and/or elaborated. • The purpose of the writing is intentional and capably aligns with the chosen audience.
Satisfactory **S**	• The ideas presented are clear and/or adequately related to the context established. • Contextual details are appropriate and/or predictable. • The purpose of the writing is evident and occasionally aligns with the chosen audience.
Limited **L**	• The ideas presented are vague and/or tenuously related to the context established. • Contextual details are insignificant and/or repetitive. • The purpose of the writing is unclear and partially aligns with the chosen audience.
Poor **P**	• The ideas presented are scant and/or unrelated to the context established. • Contextual details are disjointed and/or minimal. • The purpose of the writing is unfulfilled and does not align with a chosen audience.
Insufficient **INS**	• The marker can discern no evidence of an attempt to fulfill the assignment, or the student has written so little that it is not possible to assess **Ideas and Impressions**.

Please advise students that their work must relate to the assignment. Those assignments that are completely off topic will be awarded a mark of **Insufficient**.

Structure and Form

When marking **Structure and Form** appropriate for the Grade 6 Fiction Writing Assignment, the marker should consider how effectively the student

- opens the response
- coherently develops the response
- brings an ending to the response

Excellent **E**	• The opening provides insightful direction and is cohesively sustained. • Connections among ideas and/or details within and/or between sentences and/or paragraphs are consistently discernible. • The ending is effective.
Proficient **Pf**	• The opening provides clear direction that is capably sustained. • Connections among ideas and/or details within and/or between sentences and/or paragraphs are clearly discernible. • The ending is apt.
Satisfactory **S**	• The opening provides direction that is generally sustained. • Connections among ideas and/or details within and/or between sentences and/or paragraphs are generally discernible. • The ending is straightforward.
Limited **L**	• The opening lacks direction. • Connections among ideas and/or details within and/or between sentences and/or paragraphs are not clearly discernible. • The ending is contrived and/or lacking.
Poor **P**	• The opening provides no direction and/or is ineffective. • Connections among ideas and/or details within and/or between sentences and/or paragraphs are incoherent. • The ending is unconnected or missing.
Insufficient **INS**	• The response has been deemed **insufficient** in **Ideas and Impressions**.

Sentence Structure

When marking **Sentence Structure** appropriate for the Grade 6 Fiction 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.

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. • There is little variety of sentence beginnings.
Poor **P**	• Sentence structure generally lacks control, and this often impedes meaning. • There is essentially no variety in sentence type or sentence length. • There is essentially no variety of sentence beginnings.
Insufficient **INS**	• The response has been deemed **insufficient** in **Ideas and Impressions**.

Vocabulary and Style

When marking **Vocabulary and Style** appropriate for the Grade 6 Fiction Writing Assignment, the marker should consider the

- appropriateness of the words and expressions
- artistry of the words and expressions
- effectiveness of the voice created by the student

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

Excellent **E**	• Words and expressions are used deliberately. • Precise words and expressions are used to create vivid images. • The voice created by the student is sophisticated.
Proficient **Pf**	• Words and expressions are often used competently. • Specific words and expressions show some awareness of connotative effect. • The voice created by the student is distinct.
Satisfactory **S**	• Words and expressions are generally used appropriately. • General words and expressions adequately convey meaning. • The voice created by the student is established but may be uneven.
Limited **L**	• Words and expressions are often used inexactly. • Imprecise words and expressions predominate. • The voice created by the student is indistinct.
Poor **P**	• Words and expressions are generally used inaccurately. • Ineffective words and expressions predominate. • The voice created by the student is obscure.
Insufficient **INS**	• The response has been deemed **insufficient** in **Ideas and Impressions**.

Conventions and Effect

When marking **Conventions and Effect** appropriate for the Grade 6 Fiction Writing Assignment, the marker should consider the extent to which the student has control of

- mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, indentation for new speakers, etc.)
- grammar (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.

Excellent **E**	• The quality of the writing is enhanced because it is essentially free from errors in mechanics. • Minute errors in grammar, if any, do not interrupt communication. • Errors, if present, do not reduce fluency.
Proficient **Pf**	• The quality of the writing is sustained because it contains only minor errors in mechanics. • Inconsequential errors in grammar seldom interrupt communication. • Errors infrequently reduce fluency.
Satisfactory **S**	• The quality of the writing is sustained through generally correct use of mechanics. • Occasional errors in grammar sometimes interrupt communication. • Errors periodically reduce fluency.
Limited **L**	• The quality of the writing is weakened by the frequently incorrect use of mechanics. • Recurrent errors in grammar often interrupt communication. • Errors regularly reduce fluency.
Poor **P**	• The quality of the writing is impaired by the consistently incorrect use of mechanics. • Jarring errors in grammar impede communication. • Errors severely reduce fluency.
Insufficient **INS**	• The response has been deemed **insufficient** in **Ideas and Impressions**.

Student writing that has been identified as scribed is not awarded a score in **Conventions**.

Part B: Reading

Part B: Reading of the Grade 6 *English Language Arts and Literature Provincial Achievement Test* requires students to read selections that include a variety of informational, narrative, poetic and visual media texts. In total, there are 50 questions of various formats supported by the Digital Assessment Platform, each worth one mark.

Blueprint for *Part B: Reading*

The blueprint below shows the reporting categories and language function under which the questions are classified and reported to schools and school authorities. The number of questions in each reporting category is approximate.

Reporting Category	Learning Outcome	Distribution of Marks	Distribution in Percentage
Text Forms and Structures (genres, non-fiction/fiction, poetry, characters, conventions)	Students analyze how text form and structure clarify information and support connecting with self, others, and the world.	18-23	35-45%
Oral Communication (oration, listening, verbal/non-verbal/paraverbal)	Students connect the quality and efficacy of oral communication to oral language skills.	3-5	5-10%
Comprehension (strategies, perspective, critical thinking, vocabulary)	Students interpret and respond to texts through application of comprehension strategies.	22-28	45-55%
Total:		**50**	**100%**
Part A 50% + Part B 50% = Total 100%			

Preparing Students for the *Grade 6 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 6 English Language Arts and Literature curriculum 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 6 English Language Arts and Literature 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 6 English Language Arts and Literature Provincial Achievement Test*.

Suggestions for writing the test

Part A: Writing

- Plan your time carefully. Use all the time available to you to read the assignment carefully and 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 and listen to 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 key words in the assignments helps them to focus on what is expected.
- Plan your writing. You should choose a planning strategy that helps you to focus your ideas.
- Use your reference materials. You may use the 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 to find a more precise word for the context you are developing, but be careful not to overuse 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 the purpose)
    - Relevance of information (all details are related 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 reread 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 reread the lines that are referenced and to consider the meanings of these lines in both their immediate context in the selection and the context of the selection as a whole.
- When answering “best answer” questions, be sure to carefully read all choices before choosing the answer that you think is best. These questions will always include a boldfaced qualifier such as **best**, **most strongly**, or **most clearly** in their stems. All the choices are 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 by referring to the information.
- 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 Part A: Writing portions 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 Guide*.

Working groups

Teacher involvement in the development of provincial achievement tests is important because it helps to ensure the validity and appropriateness of the assessments.

Teacher working groups are used throughout the process to create raw forms of test questions and to review and revise draft forms of provincial achievement tests. These working groups usually meet for one or two days, two or three times per year. Occasionally, these meetings are held on weekends.

To be eligible to serve on a working group, a teacher must currently be teaching the course in question or must have taught the course within the past three years.

Teachers participating in working groups are selected from the working-group nominees approved by superintendents of school authorities. 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 a variety of regional representation by zone, school authority, and school. Unfortunately, not everyone whose name is submitted will be selected.

Appendix 1

Example of *Grade 6 English Language Arts and Literature Part A* Instruction Pages

Grade 6 Provincial Achievement Test

English Language Arts and Literature
Part A: Writing

To the Teacher

Read this page and pages 2 and 3 to your students.

You may use the dictionary icon at the right side of the screen.

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 consists of two sections.

- **Section I: Non-fiction Writing**
  This section has you refer to the information pages and create a non-fiction response based on the prompts. You should take about 55 minutes to complete Section I.
- **Section II: Fiction Writing**
  This section also refers you to the information pages in order to create a fictional response based on the prompts. You should take about 55 minutes to complete Section II.

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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Appendix 2

Example of *Grade 6 English Language Arts and Literature Part B* Instruction Pages

Grade 6 Provincial Achievement Test

English Language Arts and Literature
Part B: Reading

Description

Time: 60 minutes. You have up to 120 minutes to complete this test should you need it.

- In the Question Resource(s) area of this test, there are 9 different readings, consisting of stories, articles, cartoons, excerpts, or poems. There are 50 multiple-choice questions, each worth 1 mark, about these readings.
- To help you answer the questions, every fifth line of the selected reading passages is numbered.

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 or a thesaurus.
- Read each story, article, cartoon, excerpt, or poem carefully.
- Read each question carefully, and choose the **correct** or **best** answer.
- If you change an answer, your test will be automatically updated.
- Try to answer every question.
- 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.

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Appendix 3

Example of Descriptions Used in Text to Speech on the *Grade 6 English Language Arts and Literature Provincial Achievement Test*

This appendix has been prepared by the Provincial Assessment Sector of Alberta Education. Its purpose 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. Scripting notes are written to describe sources that contain more than just text. Visual sources are described to maintain fairness for all students. However, some visual sources are not scripted, as students may be required to visually analyze a source to determine trends or extrapolate a conclusion. In these situations, the scripting notes would instruct students to examine the image on the test.

Part A: Writing

For text instructions, all text printed on the page is read aloud and any font details, such as bold print or italics, are identified and all instructions are read in their entirety. Visual prompt materials are described in terms of composition and visual details.

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.

Part B: Reading Example

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

Selection 8. Listen to the following selection and answer question 45.

SNOW HOUSES

Today, most Canadians live in houses with central heating. When the temperature outside begins to drop, the thermostat inside the house can be adjusted to increase the heat. But imagine if you lived long ago in what is now northern Canada—how would you protect yourself from the harsh winter environment?

The Inuit of Canada's north call their traditional winter homes *iglu* (the word 'iglu' is written in italics), meaning "snow house." This is where the term *igloo* comes from. The igloo was invented centuries ago by Inuit hunters to survive in the extreme winter weather. It was a quick and easy shelter for a skilled hunter to build. Today, some Inuit still use igloos as temporary shelters, but they are much less common than fifty years ago. The most common type of igloo is a dome-shaped structure built from large blocks of snow.

How can something made of snow be used as a shelter from the cold? Snow happens to be a great insulator, that's how! This means heat inside an *igloo* (the word 'igloo' is written in italics)—from body heat or from a small lantern—stays

inside the igloo. In fact, the temperature inside an igloo can be up to 20 degrees Celsius warmer than the temperature outside. As well, the igloo walls block the fierce winds common to the North.

The type of snow used to make an igloo is not the same type used to make a snowman. To make an igloo, snow must be hard-packed—the soft, powdery stuff just won't work. If the snow is too wet and sticky, that's not good either. So, if the next snowstorm you get produces the right kind of snow, grab some friends and an adult and build your very own "snow house"!

Question 45 refers to the fourth paragraph, which reads:

The type of snow used to make an igloo is not the same type used to make a snowman. To make an igloo, snow must be hard-packed—the soft, powdery stuff just won't work. If the snow is too wet and sticky, that's not good either. So, if the next snowstorm you get produces the right kind of snow, grab some friends and an adult and build your very own "snow house"!

Question

45. The **main** purpose of the fourth paragraph is to

A. list the tools necessary to build an igloo
B. provide instructions on how to build an igloo
C. describe the type of snow used to build an igloo
D. compare building an igloo to building a snowman

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
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