

Alberta Provincial  
Achievement Testing

Assessment  
Highlights  
2009

GRADE  
6

# Social Studies (1989 Program of Studies)



Government  
of Alberta ■

Alberta ■

Freedom To Create. Spirit To Achieve.

This document is an assessment highlights report on the 2009 Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Test.

The assessment highlights report provides information about the test overall, test blueprints, and student performance on the achievement test that was administered in 2009. Also provided is commentary on areas of strength and weakness in student performance at the *acceptable standard* and the *standard of excellence* on selected items (from the 2009 achievement test). This information is intended for teachers and is best used in conjunction with the multi-year and detailed school reports that are available to schools via the extranet. Beginning in 2007, **assessment highlights reports** will be **mailed** to school administrators **every year** in the fall.

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The Alberta Education Internet address is [education.alberta.ca](http://education.alberta.ca).

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## The 2009 Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Test

This report provides teachers, school administrators, and the public with an overview of the performance of those students who wrote the 2009 Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Test. It complements the detailed school and jurisdiction reports.

### How Many Students Wrote the Test?

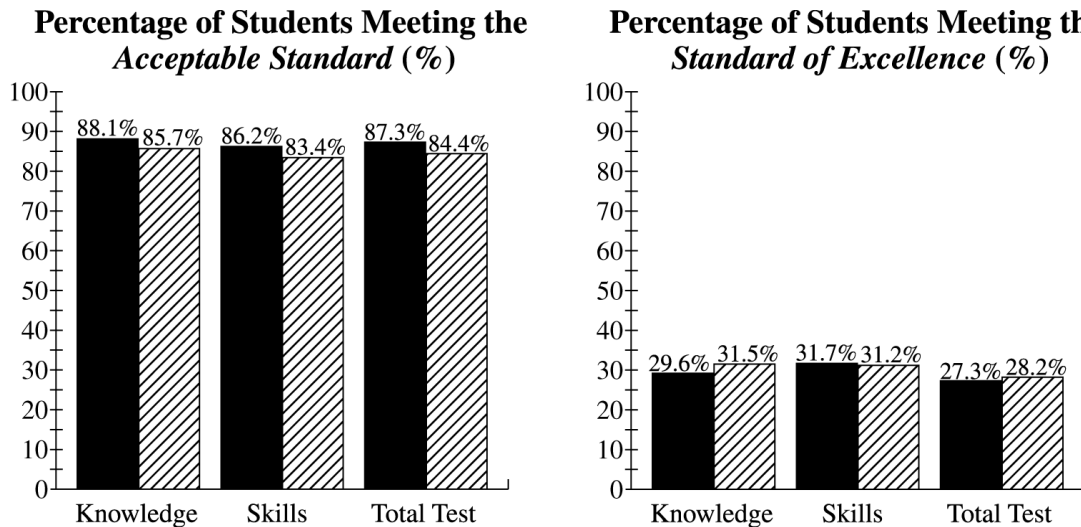
A total of 6 440 students wrote the 2009 Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Test.

### What Was the Test Like?

The 2009 Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Test consisted of 50 multiple-choice questions based on three social studies topics: Topic A—Local Government, Topic B—Greece: An Ancient Civilization, and Topic C—China: A Pacific Rim Nation.

### How Well Did Students Do?

The percentages of students meeting the *acceptable standard* and the *standard of excellence* in 2009 compared with 2008 are shown in the graphs below. Out of a total score of 50 on the test, the provincial average was 33.4/50 (66.8%). The results presented in this report are based on scores achieved by all students who wrote the test except those in French Immersion and Francophone programs; results for these students are reported separately. Detailed provincial assessment results are provided in school and jurisdiction reports.



- 2008 Achievement Standards: The percentage of students in the province who met the *acceptable standard* and the *standard of excellence* on the 2008 Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Test (based on those who wrote).
- ▨ 2009 Achievement Standards: The percentage of students in the province who met the *acceptable standard* and the *standard of excellence* on the 2009 Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Test (based on those who wrote).

### **2009 Test Blueprint and Student Achievement**

In 2009, 84.4% of students who wrote the test achieved the *acceptable standard* on the Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Test, and 28.2% of students who wrote achieved the *standard of excellence*. These results are consistent with previous administrations of the achievement test.

Student achievement on the 2009 Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Test averaged 33.4 out of a total score of 50 (66.8%).

The blueprint below shows the reporting categories and test sections (curricular content areas) by which 2009 summary data are reported to schools and school authorities, and the provincial average of student achievement by both raw score and percentage.

<b>Test Sections (Curricular Content Areas)</b>	<b>Reporting Category</b>		<b>Provincial Student Achievement Average Raw Score and Percentage</b>
	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skills</b>	
	Understands Generalizations, Concepts, Related Concepts, Terms, and Facts	Locating, Organizing, Interpreting, Analyzing, Synthesizing, and Evaluating	
<b>Local Government</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs–Government</li> <li>• Local Government</li> <li>• Democracy, Rights, Responsibilities, Lobby Groups</li> </ul>			<b>11.2/18 (62.2%)</b>
<b>Greece: An Ancient Civilization</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs</li> <li>• Environment, Beliefs/Values, Class Structure</li> <li>• Civilization</li> </ul>			<b>11.5/16 (71.9%)</b>
<b>China: A Pacific Rim Nation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pacific Rim</li> <li>• Communication Technology</li> <li>• Sharing</li> </ul>			<b>10.8/16 (67.5%)</b>
<b>Provincial Student Achievement Average Raw Score and Percentage</b>	<b>13.7/21 (65.2%)</b>	<b>19.8/29 (68.3%)</b>	<b>Total Test Raw Score 33.4/50</b>

### *Commentary on 2009 Student Achievement*

The following discussion addresses specific areas of strength and weakness demonstrated by students who wrote the 2009 Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Test – 1990 Program of Studies. Sample questions from the 2009 Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Test – 1990 Program of Studies – are provided to highlight these areas for students meeting the *acceptable standard* and for those meeting the *standard of excellence*. These questions are no longer secured and will not be reused on future achievement tests.

Multiple-choice question 5 required students to understand the class structure of ancient Greece and is found in the **Knowledge** reporting category.

5. Slavery was a common feature in the lives of Ancient Greeks and is an example of their
- A. religious beliefs
  - B. class structure
  - C. government
  - D. occupations

**Keyed answer is B**

This question falls into the middle range of difficulty, with 63.2% of students answering correctly. Students needed to recall the class structure of ancient Greece. Option **A** was chosen by 5.8% of students. Option **C** was chosen by 13.6% of students. Option **D** was chosen by 10% of students. Approximately 66.3% of students who met the *acceptable standard* were able to answer this question correctly, whereas approximately 94.1% of students who met the *standard of excellence* chose the correct response.

Multiple-choice question 23 required students to demonstrate knowledge of the electoral process, and is found in the **Skills** reporting category.

*Use the following information to answer question 23.*

- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 The candidate with the most votes wins and becomes the elected member for the riding.</li><li>2 The party with the most elected members forms the government.</li><li>3 The government calls a provincial election.</li><li>4 The candidates campaign to be elected.</li></ol> |
|--|

23. What is the correct order in which the steps in the provincial election process listed above occur?
- A. 2, 3, 1, 4
  - B. 2, 4, 1, 3
  - C. 3, 1, 2, 4
  - D. 3, 4, 1, 2

**Keyed answer is D**

This question is easier than the previous one, with 79.3% of students answering correctly. Students needed to sort the provided steps in the electoral process into the correct order. Option **A** was chosen by 5.8% of students. Option **B** was chosen by 5.6% of students. Option **C** was chosen by 9.1% of students. Approximately 84.8% of students who met the *acceptable standard* were able to answer this question correctly, whereas approximately 97.05% of students who met the *standard of excellence* chose the correct response.

Multiple-choice question 44 required students to determine the use of a waterway, given specific information regarding it, and is found in the **Skills** reporting category.

*Use the following information to answer question 44.*

The Grand Canal is an artificial waterway that connects Beijing and Nanjing. Boats use this waterway as a major transport route.

44. The Grand Canal was **most likely** built to
- A. meet recreational needs
  - B. improve fishing in the area
  - C. ship freight between north and south China
  - D. provide water for irrigation in central China

**Keyed answer is C**

This question is slightly more challenging than the previous one, with 68.6% of students answering correctly. Students needed to determine the use of a major waterway in China from a description of its location and construction. Option **A** was chosen by 11.3% of students. Option **B** was chosen by 6.1% of students. Option **D** was chosen by 13.9% of students. Approximately 72.3% of students who met the *acceptable standard* were able to answer this question correctly, whereas approximately 92.0% of students who met the *standard of excellence* chose the correct response.

## ***Achievement Testing Program Support Documents***

The Alberta Education website contains several documents that provide valuable information about various aspects of the achievement testing program. To access these documents, go to the Alberta Education website at [www.education.alberta.ca](http://www.education.alberta.ca). On the home page, click on the tab *Teachers*, then click on the link *Provincial Testing*. Next click on the link *Achievement Tests*, and then click on one of the specific links under the *Achievement Tests* heading to access the following documents.

### **Achievement Testing Program General Information Bulletin**

The *General Information Bulletin* is a compilation of several documents produced by Alberta Education and is intended to provide superintendents, principals, and teachers with easy access to information about all aspects of the achievement testing program. Sections in the bulletin contain information pertaining to schedules and significant dates; security and test rules; test administration and directives; test accommodations; field testing; resources and web documents; calculator and computer policies; test marking and results; samples, forms, and letters; and Learner Assessment contacts.

### **Subject Bulletins**

At the beginning of each school year, subject bulletins are posted on the Alberta Education website for all achievement test subjects for grades 3, 6, and 9. Each bulletin provides descriptions of assessment standards, test design and blueprinting, and scoring guides (for grades 3, 6, and 9 English Language Arts and Français/French Language Arts) as well as suggestions for preparing students to write the tests and information about how teachers can participate in test development activities.

### **Writing Samples**

For achievement tests in grades 3, 6, and 9 English Language Arts and Français/French Language Arts, writing samples have been designed to be used by teachers and students to enhance students' writing and to assess this writing relative to the standards inherent in the scoring guides for the *Part A: Writing* achievement tests. The writing samples documents contain sample responses with scoring rationales, student self-assessment checklists, and scoring categories and criteria for the writing assignments.

### **Previous Achievement Tests and Answer Keys**

All January achievement tests (parts A and B) for Grade 9 semestered students are secured and must be returned to Alberta Education. All May/June achievement tests are secured except *Part A* of grades 3, 6, and 9 English Language Arts and Français/French Language Arts. Unused or extra copies of only these *Part A* tests may be kept at the school after administration. Teachers may also use the print versions of released items that have been mailed to schools and/or the tests that are posted on the Alberta Education website.

### **Parent Guides**

Each school year, print versions of the *Parent Guide to Provincial Achievement Testing* for grades 3, 6, and 9 are mailed to schools and posted on the Alberta Education website. Each guide presents answers to frequently asked questions about the achievement testing program; descriptions of and sample questions for each achievement test subject; and excerpts from the *Curriculum Handbook for Parents* identifying what students should know and be able to do in each subject by the end of grades 3, 6, and 9.

### **Involvement of Teachers**

Teachers of grades 3, 6, and 9 are encouraged to take part in a variety of activities related to the achievement testing program. These activities include item development, test validation, field testing, and marking. In addition, regional consortia can make arrangements for teacher in-service workshops on topics such as Interpreting Achievement Test Results to Improve Student Learning.