

Alberta Provincial
Achievement Testing

Assessment
Highlights
2009

GRADE

9

Social Studies (1989 program of studies)

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This document contains assessment highlights from the 2009 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test (1989 Program of Studies).

Assessment highlights provide information about the overall test, the test blueprints, and student performance on the English form of the 2009 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test (1989 Program of Studies). Also provided is commentary on student performance at the *acceptable standard* and the *standard of excellence* on 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. **Assessment Highlights reports** for all achievement test subjects and grades will be **posted on the Alberta Education website every year** in the fall.

Released test items, which contained approximately 25% of the total number of test items from previously secured achievement tests, were mailed to school administrators each fall from 2004 to 2006 and have been made available to teachers in only print form because of copyright limitations. **Every second year**, as of the fall of 2007, **a complete test** for all achievement test subjects and grades (except grades 6 and 9 Social Studies; grades 3, 6, and 9 Français/French Language Arts; and Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability courses) will be **mailed** to school administrators in conjunction with the Assessment Highlights report for that year. In this way, teachers will receive complete forms of achievement tests. The parts of those tests that are released in print form for which electronic copyright permission is received will subsequently be posted on the Alberta Education website. A test blueprint and an answer key that includes the difficulty, reporting category, test section, and item description for each test item will also be included. These materials, along with the Program of Studies and Subject Bulletin, provide information that can be used to inform instructional practice.

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The Alberta Education Internet address is education.alberta.ca.

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The 2009 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test (1989 Program of Studies)

This report provides teachers, school administrators, and the public with an overview of the performance of those students who wrote the English form of the 2009 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test (1989 Program of Studies). It complements the detailed school and jurisdiction reports.

How Many Students Wrote the Test?

A total of 7 808 students wrote the English form of the 2009 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test (1989 Program of Studies).

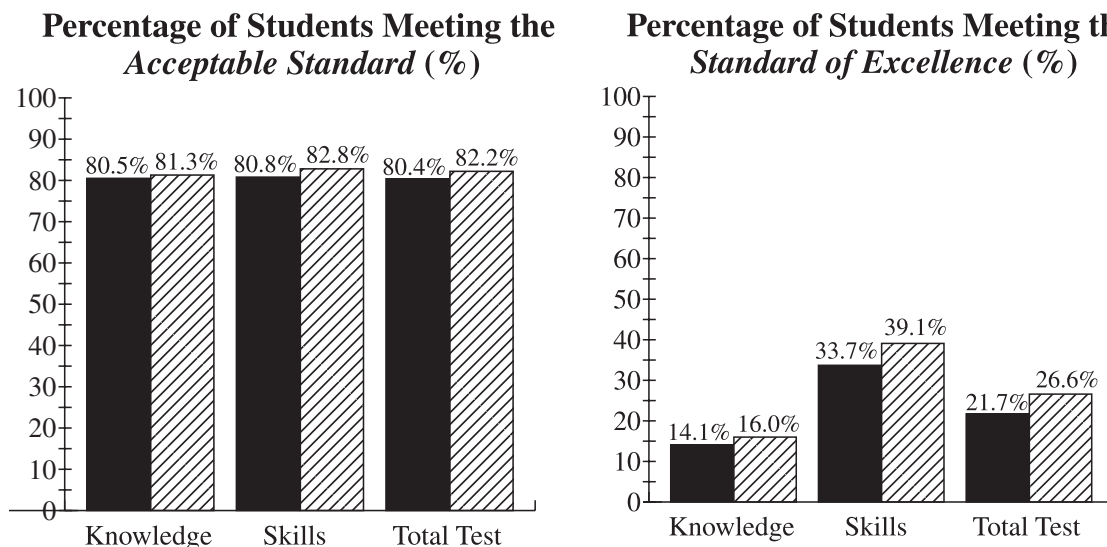
What Was the Test Like?

The 2009 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test (1989 Program of Studies) consisted of 55 multiple-choice questions based on three social studies topics that focus on different perspectives on economic growth: Topic A—Economic Growth: U.S.A., Topic B—Economic Growth: A Case Study of the Former U.S.S.R., and Topic C—Canada: Responding to Change.

The topics were integrated into the 55 questions. Therefore, questions on Topic A do not constitute the first section; rather, they were combined with concepts related to topics B and C, so they appear throughout the test. The test was organized into sections based on the major concepts studied in Grade 9 Social Studies. The sections included (1) Industrialization and Technology, (2) Market, Mixed, and Centrally Planned Economies, (3) Quality of Life, (4) Economic Change, and (5) Geography. The knowledge and skills components were integrated into the test.

How Well Did Students Do?

The percentages of students meeting the *acceptable standard* and the *standard of excellence* in 2009 are consistent with 2008, as shown in the graphs below. Out of a total possible score of 55, the provincial average on the English form of the test was 36.9 (67.1%). The results presented in this report are based on scores achieved by all students who wrote the English form of the test; results for those students in French Immersion and Francophone programs who wrote the French form of the test 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 9 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 9 Social Studies Achievement Test (1989 Program of Studies) (based on those who wrote).

2009 Test Blueprint and Student Achievement

In 2009, 82.2% of students who wrote the English form of the test achieved the *acceptable standard* on the Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test (1989 Program of Studies), and 26.6% of students achieved the *standard of excellence*. These results are consistent with previous administrations of the achievement test.

Student achievement on the English form of the 2009 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test (1989 Program of Studies) averaged 36.9 out of 55 (67.1%).

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 it shows the provincial average of student achievement on the English form of the test by both raw score and percentage.

Test Sections (Curricular Content Areas)	Reporting Category		Provincial Student Achievement (Average Raw Score and Percentage)
	Knowledge	Skills	
	Understands Generalizations, Concepts, Related Concepts, Terms, and Facts	Locating, Organizing, Interpreting, Analyzing, Synthesizing, and Evaluating	
Technology and Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrialization • Technology 			13.9/21 (66.2%)
Economic Systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market Economy • Centrally Planned Economy • Mixed Economy 			14.7/21 (70.0%)
Quality of Life Available in Different Economic Systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of Life 			5.6/8 (70.0%)
The Former U.S.S.R. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geography • Economic Change 			2.6/5 (52.0%)
Provincial Student Achievement (Average Raw Score and Percentage)	14.4/22 (65.5%)	22.4/33 (67.9%)	Total Test Raw Score = 55

Commentary on 2009 Student Achievement

The following is a discussion of student achievement on the English form of the 2009 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test (1989 Program of Studies). Commentary is provided to highlight levels of achievement of students who met the *acceptable standard*, students who met the *standard of excellence*, and students who did not meet the *acceptable standard*.

In the content area of **industrialization and technology** (questions 1 to 21), many students who met the *acceptable standard* were able to identify changes in methods of producing goods, aspects of mass production, and apply knowledge of the process of industrialization. Skills demonstrated by students achieving the *acceptable standard* include interpreting and synthesizing information in graphs and charts regarding agricultural and industrial production in the United States and in the Soviet Union as well as identifying and analyzing the values underlying contrasting opinions on economic development. Students who achieved the *standard of excellence* illustrated a sophisticated understanding of the interrelationship between technology and industrial development and demonstrated skill in analyzing information in a variety of sources regarding the impact of the Industrial Revolution upon population growth, methods of agricultural and industrial production, and economic expansion. Students who did not meet the *acceptable standard* showed some uncertainty in recognizing key concepts—such as the domestic system, the factors of production, and the division of labour—and in distinguishing among differing perspectives on economic growth.

In the section of the 2009 achievement test blueprinted for curricular content pertaining to **economic systems** (questions 22 to 42), students who achieved the *acceptable standard* were able to apply knowledge related to principles and practices associated with traditional, market, centrally planned, and mixed economies and apply skills in analyzing and interpreting opinions, cartoons, and comments pertaining to the role of government in the economy. Students achieving the *standard of excellence* were also able to recognize subtle distinctions among the principles and goals upon which market, centrally planned, and mixed economic systems are based. In addition, these students could interpret diagrams and other sources to evaluate both positive and negative aspects of government intervention in the economy as viewed by individuals with differing values. For students who did not meet the *acceptable standard*, questions that required identifying economic indicators such as equality and efficiency as they apply to different types of economies posed some difficulty.

With regard to curricular content related to **quality of life** (questions 43 to 50), students who achieved the *acceptable standard* were able to recognize indicators of quality of life and could interpret information in graphs on economic trends to make inferences regarding how people will live and work in the future. Students who achieved the *standard of excellence* were additionally able to draw conclusions regarding the impact of economic goals upon social aspects of quality of life. Students who did not achieve the *acceptable standard* were challenged by questions that involved making inferences from opinions regarding the impact of economic development, consumerism, and automation upon quality of life.

On those questions blueprinted in the **economic change** and **geography** sections of the test (questions 51 to 55), students achieving the *acceptable standard* could interpret a cartoon to identify problems Gorbachev faced in dealing with the economy as well as analyze maps of the Soviet Union to draw conclusions about the effect of geography upon economic advancement in the Soviet Union. Students achieving the *standard of excellence* were further able to extend their knowledge of Gorbachev's economic policies by comparing and contrasting them with those of past Soviet leaders. Those students who did not meet the *acceptable standard* had some trouble determining factors that limited the modernization of the Soviet Union.

Overall, student achievement on the 2009 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test (1989 Program of Studies) was strong and comparable to the achievement of students in previous years. On the English form of the test, most students (82.2%) were able to meet the standards within the test, and 26.6% of students achieved the *standard of excellence*. Of all students who wrote the English form of the test, 17.8% did not meet the *acceptable standard*.

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 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 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 and grades 6 and 9 Social Studies, 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 achievement tests. The writing samples documents contain sample responses with scoring rationales that relate student work to the scoring categories and scoring 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.