

Alberta Provincial Achievement Testing

Assessment
Highlights
2009-2010

GRADE
9

Knowledge and Employability **Social Studies**



Government
of Alberta ■

Alberta ■

Freedom To Create. Spirit To Achieve.

This document contains assessment highlights from the 2010 Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability Social Studies Achievement Test.

Assessment Highlights provide information about the overall test, the test blueprints, and student performance on the 2010 Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability Social Studies Achievement Test. Also provided is commentary on student performance at the *acceptable standard* and the *standard of excellence* on the 2010 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.

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

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The 2010 Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability 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 2010 Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability Social Studies Achievement Test. The examination statistics that are included in this document represent all writers: both French and English. If you would like to obtain French-only statistics or English-only statistics that apply to your school, please refer to your detailed reports, which are available on the Extranet. It complements the detailed school and jurisdiction reports.

How Many Students Wrote the Test?

A total of 1 326 students wrote the 2010 Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability Social Studies Achievement Test.

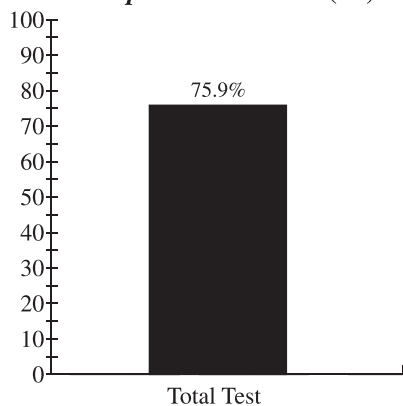
What Was the Test Like?

The 2010 Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability Social Studies Achievement Test consisted of 50 multiple-choice questions based on two topics: Governance and Citizenship, and Canada and the United States: an Economic Relationship.

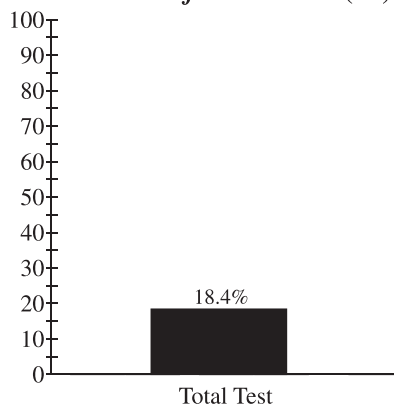
How Well Did Students Do?

Student achievement in 2010 is shown in the graphs below. Out of a total score of 50, the provincial average on the test was 33.02 (66.04%).

**Percentage of Students Meeting the
Acceptable Standard (%)**



**Percentage of Students Meeting the
Standard of Excellence (%)**



■ 2010 Achievement Standards: The percentage of students in the province who met the *acceptable standard* and the *standard of excellence* on the 2010 Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability Social Studies Achievement Test (based on those who wrote).

Multiple-Choice Component—2010 Test Blueprint and Student Achievement

The blueprint below shows the reporting categories and test sections (curricular content areas) by which 2010 summary data are reported to schools and school authorities, and the provincial average of student achievement by both raw score and percentage.

TOPICS	Reporting Category		Provincial Student Achievement (Average Raw Score and Percentage)
	Knowledge and Understandings	Skills and Process	
Canada: Governance and Citizenship (9.1)			
Students examine the relationship between Canada’s political and legislative processes and their impact on issues pertaining to governance, rights, citizenship, and identity (Canada’s federal political system, Canada’s justice system, Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, immigration).			17.5/28 (62.5%)
Canada and the United States: An Economic Relationship (9.2)			
Students examine and explore issues of economics and their impact on quality of life, citizenship and identity in Canada and the United States (market and mixed economies, consumerism, quality of life, political decision-making).			15.5/22 (70.0%)
Provincial Student Achievement (Average Raw Score and Percentage)	13.0/19 (68.4%)	20.0/31 (66.6%)	Total Test Raw Score 32.02/50 (66.04%)

Knowledge and Understandings – Knowledge includes social studies facts, events, information, concepts, evidence, ideas, opinions, and terminology as identified in the Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability Program of Studies (2007)

Skills and Processes – Skills include specific social studies skills of critical and creative thinking, historical thinking, geographic thinking, decision making and problem solving, research process, and media literacy as identified in the Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability Program of Studies (2007)

Multiple-Choice Component—Commentary on 2010 Student Achievement

The following is a brief summary of the areas where most students experienced difficulties and demonstrated strengths on the 2010 Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability Social Studies Achievement Test.

Students demonstrated relative strength by being able to:

- Explore the structure of Canada's federal political system by identifying how citizens can influence the political system
- Explore the structure of Canada's federal political system by identifying how members of parliament are selected
- Analyze information and identify an alternative solution to an issue
- Analyze information to identify the main idea in an information source
- Identify and recall knowledge of the purposes of taxation

Question 36 (blueprinted as a **Skills and Processes** question) required students to analyze information presented to draw a conclusion related to the values reflected in a political party's platform. Approximately 88% of students who met the *acceptable standard* and 98% of students who met the *standard of excellence* answered this question correctly.

Use the following information to answer question 36.

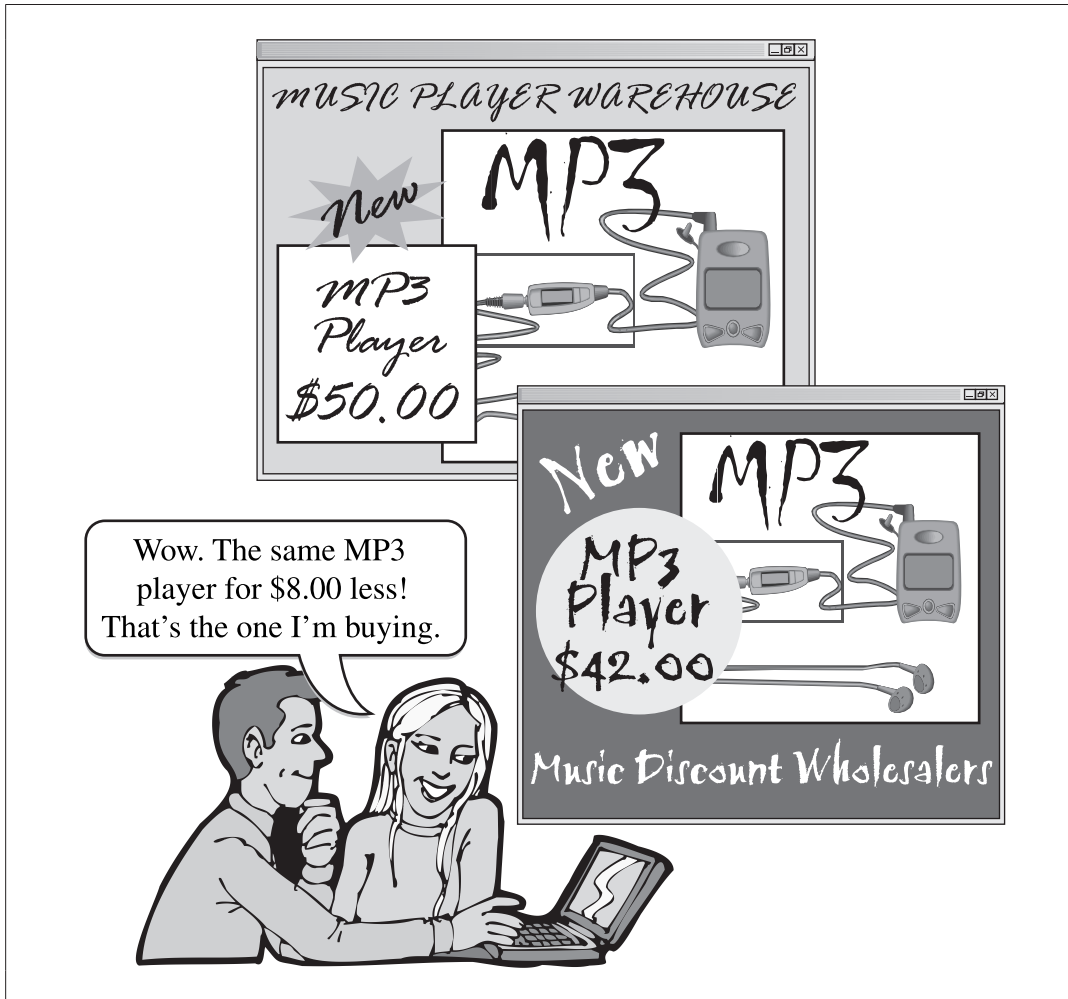
The Political Platforms of Four Political Parties	
<p style="text-align: center;">Party A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce business taxes• Give incentives to entrepreneurs• Support private business	<p style="text-align: center;">Party B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cancel tax credits• Increase business taxes• Support consumers
<p style="text-align: center;">Party C</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support public education• Increase health-care spending• Increase social assistance to create equality among people	<p style="text-align: center;">Party D</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protect national parks• Protect old-growth forests• Decrease logging to protect wildlife

36. Which of the parties listed above would **most likely** be in favour of building more hospitals?
- A. Party A
 - B. Party B
 - C. Party C
 - D. Party D

5.2% of the students chose A
6.9% of the students chose B
84.0% of the students chose C (correct answer)
3.8% of the students chose D

Question 50 (blueprinted as a **Skills and Processes** question) required students to analyze information presented to identify how advertising influences consumer choice. Approximately 76% of students who met the *acceptable standard* and 90% of students who met the *standard of excellence* answered this question correctly.

Use the following illustration to answer question 50.



50. The illustration above shows how
- A. consumers are influenced by friends
 - B. advertising affects consumer choice
 - C. advertising misleads consumers
 - D. consumers have little choice

7.5% of the students chose A
72.9% of the students chose B (correct answer)
12.1% of the students chose C
7.3% of the students chose D

Students demonstrated relative difficulty with:

- Exploring the structure of Canada’s federal political system by identifying steps in how laws are passed
- Exploring the structure of Canada’s federal political system by identifying and recalling the relationship between basic features of Canada’s judicial branch
- Analyzing information to draw a conclusion related to individual positions on an issue

Question 27 (blueprinted as a **Skills and Processes** question) required students to interpret information presented to categorize a sequence of events related to Canada’s federal electoral process. Approximately 58% of students who met the *acceptable standard* and 78% of students who met the *standard of excellence* answered this question correctly.

Use the following information to answer question 27.

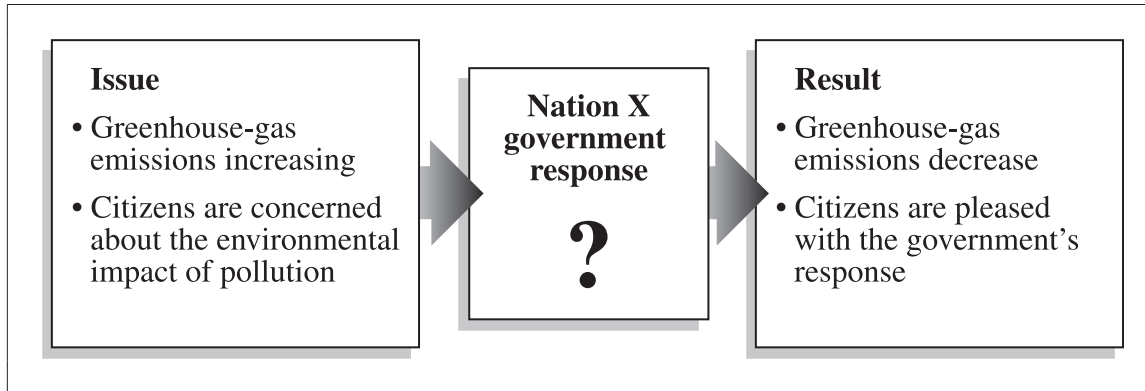
Some Events in the Federal Electoral Process	
W	People who are eligible to vote cast their votes at polling stations.
X	Elected officials are sworn in as members of Parliament.
Y	Candidates campaign in an attempt to win people’s votes.
Z	The prime minister calls an election.

27. Which of the following sequences identifies the correct order of events in the federal electoral process?
- A. X, Y, W, and Z
 - B. Y, X, Z, and W
 - C. Z, Y, W, and X
 - D. Z, Y, X, and W

11.0% of the students chose A
13.0% of the students chose B
56.2% of the students chose C (correct answer)
19.7% of the students chose D

Question 34, (blueprinted as a **Skills and Processes** question) required students to analyze information to make an inference regarding action taken on the issue. Approximately 40% of students who met the *acceptable standard* and 75% of students who met the *standard of excellence* answered this question correctly.

Use the following information to answer question 34.



34. Which of the following statements **most clearly** completes the information above?

- A. Natural resources are used more often.
- B. Legislation is passed to reduce pollution.
- C. Tax breaks are given to industrial polluters.
- D. Investments are made in non-renewable energy.

31.1% of the students chose A

43.7% of the students chose B (correct answer)

11.5% of the students chose C

13.6% of the students chose D

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. From the home page, follow this path: *Teachers > Provincial Testing > 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 released items and/or tests that have been posted on the Alberta Education website.

Parent Guides

Each school year, versions of the *Parent Guide to Provincial Achievement Testing* for grades 3, 6, and 9 are 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.