

**Alberta Provincial  
Achievement Testing**

**Assessment  
Highlights  
2010-2011**

**GRADE  
9**

# **Social Studies**



**Government  
of Alberta ■**

*Alberta* ■

Freedom To Create. Spirit To Achieve.

This document contains assessment highlights from the 2011 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test.

Assessment Highlights provide information about the overall test, the test blueprints, and student performance on the 2011 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test. Also provided is commentary on student performance at the *acceptable standard* and the *standard of excellence* on selected items from the 2011 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 posted on the Alberta Education website. A test blueprint and an answer key that includes the difficulty, reporting category, 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](http://education.alberta.ca).

This document was written primarily for:

|                  |                             |
|------------------|-----------------------------|
| Students         |                             |
| Teachers         | ✓ of Grade 9 Social Studies |
| Administrators   | ✓                           |
| Parents          |                             |
| General Audience |                             |
| Others           |                             |

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# The 2011 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test

This report provides teachers, school administrators, and the public with an overview of the performance of all students who wrote the 2011 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test. It complements the detailed school and jurisdiction reports.

## How Many Students Wrote the Test?

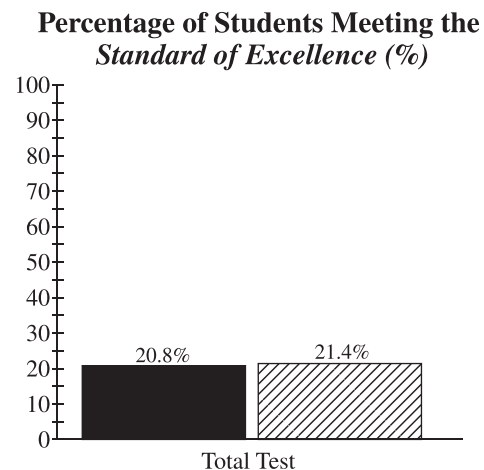
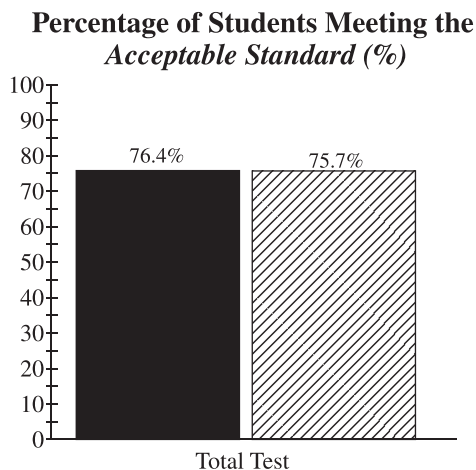
A total of 38 327 students wrote the 2011 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test.

## What Was the Test Like?

The 2011 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test consisted of 50 multiple-choice questions based on specific outcomes (SOs) within each of the two general outcomes (GOs) in the *2007 Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies*: GO 9.1 Issues for Canadians: Governance and Rights and GO 9.2 Issues for Canadians: Economic Systems in Canada and the United States.

## How Well Did Students Do?

The percentages of students meeting the *acceptable standard* and the *standard of excellence* in 2011 are shown in the graphs below. Out of a total possible score of 50, the provincial average on the test was 32.3 (64.6%). The examination statistics that are included in this document represent all writers: both French and English. If you would like to obtain English-only statistics or French-only statistics that apply to your school, please refer to your detailed reports that are available on the Extranet. Detailed provincial assessment results are provided in school and jurisdiction reports.



 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 Social Studies Achievement Test (based on those who wrote).

 2011 Achievement Standards: The percentage of students in the province who met the *acceptable standard* and the *standard of excellence* on the 2011 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test (based on those who wrote).

# 2011 Test Blueprint and Student Achievement

In 2011, 75.7% of all students who wrote the test achieved the *acceptable standard* on the Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test, and 21.4% of all students who wrote achieved the *standard of excellence*. Student achievement on the 2011 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test averaged 32.3 out of a total score of 50 (64.6%).

The blueprint below shows the reporting categories and test sections (curricular content areas) by which 2011 summary data are reported to schools and school authorities, and it shows the provincial average of student achievement by both raw score and percentage.

| Test Sections (Curricular Content Areas)   | Reporting Category                       |                                   | Provincial Student Achievement (Average Raw Score and Percentage) |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|---|
|  | Knowledge and Understanding <sup>1</sup> | Skills and Processes <sup>2</sup> |   |
| <p><b>The Political and Judicial System (9.1.4, 9.1.5)</b><sup>3</sup> Students examine the structure of Canada's federal political system and analyze the role of citizens and organizations in Canada's justice system by exploring and reflecting upon questions and issues regarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how federal laws are passed</li> <li>• branches of the federal government</li> <li>• selection of MPs and senators</li> <li>• accountability of MPs and senators</li> <li>• the role of federal political parties</li> <li>• the role of media in political issues</li> <li>• lobby groups and government decisions</li> <li>• extent to which political and legislative processes meet the needs of Canadians</li> <li>• participation in Canada's justice system</li> <li>• citizens' legal roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• the Youth Criminal Justice Act</li> </ul>              |  |                                   | 7.5/11 (68.2%)  |
| <p><b>Individual and Collective Rights (9.1.6, 9.1.7)</b><sup>3</sup> Students critically assess the impact of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms on legislative processes in Canada and how increased demand for recognition of collective rights has impacted legislative processes in Canada by exploring and reflecting upon questions and issues regarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognition of individual rights</li> <li>• exercising individual rights</li> <li>• conditions in the workplace</li> <li>• rights and responsibilities of citizens</li> <li>• recognition of collective rights</li> <li>• the needs of Francophone minorities</li> <li>• the needs of Francophones in Québec</li> <li>• the rights of official language minorities</li> <li>• the Indian Act</li> <li>• Treaty 6, Treaty 7, and Treaty 8</li> <li>• legislation and Métis cultures and rights</li> </ul>   |  |                                   | 7.4/11 (67.3%)  |
| <p><b>Immigration (9.1.8)</b><sup>3</sup> Students critically assess how legislative processes address issues of immigration by exploring and reflecting upon questions and issues regarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• factors influencing immigration policies</li> <li>• changes to Canadian policies on immigration and refugees</li> <li>• immigration and Aboriginal peoples</li> <li>• provincial immigration policies</li> <li>• immigration policies in Québec</li> <li>• immigration policies and the Charter</li> <li>• how Canada benefits from immigration</li> </ul>   |  |                                   | 5.4/8 (67.5%)   |
| <p><b>Economic Decision Making (9.2.4)</b><sup>3</sup> Students analyze principles and practices of market and mixed economies by exploring and reflecting upon questions and issues regarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• principles of a market economy</li> <li>• government intervention</li> <li>• Canada's mixed economy</li> <li>• consumers in market and mixed economies</li> <li>• consumer individual and collective identity</li> <li>• the economic impact of labour unions</li> <li>• government intervention in the economy</li> <li>• the basic economic question of scarcity</li> </ul>  |  |                                   | 4.7/8 (58.8%)   |
| <p><b>Consumerism, Quality of Life, and Political Decision Making (9.2.5, 9.2.6)</b><sup>3</sup> Students critically assess the relationship between consumerism and quality of life in Canada and the United States and the interrelationship between political decisions and economic systems by exploring and reflecting upon questions and issues regarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• indicators of quality of life</li> <li>• individual consumer behaviour</li> <li>• how marketing affects consumerism</li> <li>• consumerism and quality of life</li> <li>• consumerism as a power of a collective</li> <li>• consumerism and economic growth</li> <li>• values underlying social programs</li> <li>• economic platforms of political parties</li> <li>• political party philosophies and platforms</li> <li>• the underground economy</li> <li>• environmental issues and quality of life</li> </ul> |  |                                   | 7.4/12 (61.7%)  |
| <p><b>Provincial Student Achievement (Average Raw Score and Percentage)</b></p>  | 11.7/19 (61.6%)                          | 20.6/31 (66.4%)                   | Total Test Raw Score = 50   |

<sup>1</sup>**Knowledge and Understanding**—includes the breadth and depth of information, concepts, evidence, ideas, and opinions fundamental to decision making as identified in the *Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies (2007)*.

<sup>2</sup>**Skills and Processes**—includes the application of critical and creative thinking, historical thinking, geographic thinking, decision making, problem solving, and media literacy to relevant situations as identified in the *Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies (2007)*.

<sup>3</sup>Bolded numbers in parentheses cross-reference specific outcomes in the *Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies (2007)*.

## Commentary on 2011 Student Achievement

The following is a discussion of student achievement on the 2011 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test. Sample questions are 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*. For each question, the keyed answer is marked with an asterisk.

Together, the first three blueprinting categories encompass outcomes within General Outcome 9.1 Issues for Canadians: Governance and Rights, wherein students are expected to analyze the relationship between Canada’s political and legislative processes and their impact on issues pertaining to governance, rights, citizenship, and identity. In the **Political and Judicial System** blueprint category (composed of 11 questions), students were expected to examine the structure of Canada’s federal political system (Specific Outcome 9.1.4) and analyze the role that citizens and organizations play in Canada’s justice system (Specific Outcome 9.1.5) by exploring and reflecting upon questions and issues pertaining to:

- What processes are used to determine Members of Parliament (MPs) and Senators? (9.1.4.3)
- To whom are Members of Parliament and Senators accountable? (9.1.4.4)
- What is the role of the media in relation to political issues? (9.1.4.6)
- How do citizens and organizations participate in Canada’s justice system (i.e. jury duty)? (9.1.5.1)
- What are citizens’ legal roles and their responsibilities? (9.1.5.2)

Students who met the *acceptable standard* were able to identify the impact voting has on Canadian federal election results, the value of news media in reporting political issues, and the role juries play in Canada’s justice system. Students who met the *standard of excellence* additionally illustrated strengths in applying their understanding of principles underlying Canada’s electoral system, forming conclusions regarding fundamental democratic processes, and integrating aspects of multiple sources to evaluate the validity of viewpoints presented. Students who did not meet the *acceptable standard*, while generally able to recognize some of the basic features of Canada’s federal electoral system, often struggled with questions concerning how to address voter apathy, and many of these students did not recognize the necessity of news media in Canada’s political system or the issues surrounding the validity of juries in criminal trials in Canada. Some of these differences in student performance are evident in the following question taken from the 2011 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test.

Question 11 (blueprinted as a **Skills and Processes** question) required students to consider three sources together to identify the aspect of Canada’s judicial system upon which the information is focused.

- |  |
|--|
| <p>11. Together, these three sources centre on the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A. lawmaking process used in Canada</li><li>B. independence of the judiciary in Canada</li><li>*C. legal roles and responsibilities of Canadians</li><li>D. individual rights and freedoms of Canadians</li></ul> |
|--|

Of all students who wrote the test, 68.5% were able to choose the correct answer (C) by synthesizing information regarding the qualifications and responsibilities of jurors (Source I), some benefits of juries in Canada (Source II), and a cartoon in which a character expresses the concern that he is “scared” by the prospect of “being judged by 12 people who couldn’t even figure how to avoid jury duty” (Source III) in order to conclude that the central issue addressed is directly related to the legal roles and responsibilities of Canadians. Of those students who did not select the keyed response, 4.7% chose A (a choice indicative of confusion regarding the roles of the legislative branch [which makes laws] and the judicial branch [which applies and interprets the law] of the federal government); 23.0% chose B (wherein students may have incorrectly inferred that, because each source references the role of juries, the sources are related to the role of the judiciary in Canada—without recognizing that the context established by the sources is unrelated to the “independence” of the judiciary among the branches of the federal government); and 3.8% chose D (which may have resulted from the misconstrued conception that the sources suggest jury duty is in some way related to rights and freedoms contained in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms). Of those students who met the *acceptable standard*, 71.6% selected the correct answer while 90.1% of those students who met the *standard of excellence* chose the correct answer. Of those students who did not meet the *acceptable standard* on the test as a whole, 42.4% chose the correct answer.

In the section of the 2011 achievement test blueprinted for curricular content pertaining to **Individual and Collective Rights** (composed of 11 questions), students were required to assess, critically, the impact of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms on the legislative process in Canada (Specific Outcome 9.1.6) and assess, critically, how the increased demand for recognition of collective rights has impacted the legislative process in Canada (Specific Outcome 9.1.7) by exploring and reflecting upon questions and issues regarding:

- In what ways has the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms fostered recognition of individual rights in Canada? (9.1.6.1)
- What is the relationship between rights guaranteed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the responsibilities of Canadian citizens? (9.1.6.4)
- In what ways has the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms fostered recognition of collective rights in Canada? (9.1.7.1)
- To what extent should federal and provincial governments support and promote the rights of official language minorities in Canada? (9.1.7.4)
- How do governments recognize Métis cultures and rights through legislation (i.e. treaties, governance, land claims, Métis settlements in Alberta)? (9.1.7.7)

Students who met the *acceptable standard* were able to recognize circumstances in which rights and freedoms guaranteed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms may be restricted by government, form conclusions regarding recognition of the rights of official language minorities in Québec, and acknowledge the impact of federal and provincial legislation upon recognition of the rights of Métis peoples. Students who met the *standard of excellence* were additionally able to appreciate how the government's responsibility to act in the best interests of society as a whole supercedes the obligation to protect the rights of the individual, assess conditions under which minority language education rights have been guaranteed to official language communities in Québec by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and apply knowledge of legislation acknowledging the collective rights of Métis peoples. For students who did not meet the *acceptable standard*, questions that required forming generalizations regarding the rights and responsibilities of Canadians, making connections between historical events related to official language rights in Canada, or synthesizing information to determine issues pivotal to recognition of Métis rights frequently proved challenging. The following question illustrates some of these differences in the levels of student achievement on the 2011 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test.

In question 20 (blueprinted as a **Knowledge and Understanding** question), students were required to infer from information in a timeline what federal legislation pertaining to Métis peoples in Canada is mainly based upon.

20. Source I illustrates that legislation recognizing Métis rights is based **mainly** upon acknowledging the
- \*A. unique identity of Métis peoples
  - B. political independence of Métis peoples
  - C. current tensions between First Nations and Métis peoples
  - D. historical disputes between First Nations and Métis peoples

For question 20, the correct answer (A) was chosen by 55.7% of all students who wrote the test; these students were able to consider events in a timeline in order to draw upon their knowledge of the fact that political recognition of the rights of Métis peoples is based upon acknowledgement of their uniqueness as one of Canada's Aboriginal peoples. Option B was selected by 25.3% of all students, possibly because they may have incorrectly equated recognition of collective rights with the granting of political sovereignty. Both C (selected by 5.1% of all students) and D (selected by 13.8% of all students) are implausible given that these conclusions are not supported by any of the information presented but may have been selected on the basis of the fact that both "First Nations peoples" and "Métis peoples" are referenced in the timeline. The correct answer was selected by 56.8% of those students who met the *acceptable standard*, 83.3% of those students who met the *standard of excellence*, and 29.0% of those students who did not meet the *acceptable standard*.

In the **Immigration** blueprint category (composed of 8 questions), students were expected to assess, critically, how legislative processes attempt to address emerging issues of immigration (Specific Outcome 9.1.8) by exploring and reflecting upon questions and issues related to:

- What factors influence immigration policies in Canada (i.e., economic, political, health, security)? (9.1.8.1)
- How are provincial governments able to influence and implement immigration policies? (9.1.8.4)

Those students who met the *acceptable standard* were able to recall the categories into which immigrants to Canada are classified under Canada’s immigration policies and identify some of the challenges faced by immigrants to Canada. Students achieving the *standard of excellence* could also acknowledge the ways in which provinces can influence and implement federal immigration laws and observe inequities in the extent to which the educational credentials of individuals born in Canada and immigrants to Canada are recognized in the workplace. Students who did not meet the *acceptable standard* sometimes had difficulty with distinguishing factors characteristic of many immigrants to Canada as well as with acknowledging the economic inequality experienced by immigrants to Canada. Such differences in levels of student achievement are illustrated in the following question taken from the 2011 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test.

In question 23 (blueprinted as a **Knowledge and Understanding** question), students were required to recall the immigration class in which immigrants are judged by a point system in order to qualify for entry to Canada.

23. For which of the immigration categories identified in Source II are immigrants assessed by a point system in order to qualify to enter Canada?
- A. Other
  - B. Refugee
  - C. Family class
  - \*D. Economic class

The correct answer to this question (**D**) was chosen by 77.4% of all students who wrote the test (who were able to draw upon their background knowledge of how the point system is used to assess the qualifications of “Economic Class” immigrants to Canada). **A** was selected by 7.0% of all students, **B** was selected by 8.5% of all students, and **C** was selected by 7.0% of all students (likely a consequence of failing to recall that the point system focuses on an applicant’s potential employability in Canada and mistakenly concluding that the point system is used to assess immigrants who are applying for entry to Canada under either of the “Family Class,” “Refugee,” or “Other” immigration categories). Many students who met the *acceptable standard* were able to choose the correct answer, with 81.0% choosing the keyed response. The majority of those students who met the *standard of excellence* (96.5%) chose the correct answer whereas 52.6% of those students who did not meet the *acceptable standard*.

The final two blueprint categories encompass outcomes within General Outcome 9.2: Issues for Canadians: Economic Systems in Canada and the United States in which students are required to demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of how economic decision making in Canada and the United States impacts quality of life, citizenship, and identity. With regard to curricular content in the blueprint category related to **Economic Decision Making** (composed of 8 questions), students were required to compare and contrast the principles and practices of market and mixed economies (Specific Outcome 9.2.4) by exploring and reflecting upon questions and issues pertaining to:

- What are the principles of a market economy? (9.2.4.1)
- Why do governments intervene in a market economy? (9.2.4.2)
- Why is Canada viewed as having a mixed economy? (9.2.4.3)
- What are some similarities and differences in the way governments in Canada and the United States intervene in the market economies? (9.2.4.7)

Students who met the *acceptable standard* were able to differentiate features characteristic of a market economy from those that distinguish a mixed economy, as well as to recognize the impact of government intervention in either economic system. In addition to these abilities, students who met the *standard of excellence* were able to form generalizations regarding income distribution, individual

economic freedom, and differing viewpoints regarding how to achieve the public good. Students who did not meet the *acceptable standard* were often challenged by questions that required contrasting the extent of government intervention in market and mixed economies or that involved synthesizing information in several sources to determine the central economic issue to which a given source set is related. Such differences in student achievement on the 2011 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test are shown in the following question.

Question 33 (blueprinted as a **Skills and Processes** question) required that students analyze information in a graph to form a generalization regarding income distribution in Canada and the United States.

- 33.** Information in Source III reveals that in both Canada and the United States, income is distributed
- A.** equally among households
  - \*B.** unevenly among households
  - C.** to households on the basis of individual need
  - D.** to households as determined by the government

Of all students who wrote the test, 66.8% were able to interpret a bar graph illustrating income distribution in Canada and the United States to conclude that in both countries, income is distributed unequally among the poorest and richest households and chose the keyed response (**B**). Those students who selected **A** (6.2% of all students) misinterpreted the graph, likely by incorrectly determining that the similarities between Canada and the United States in the unequal percentages of total national income received by each household income class suggest that income is distributed equally among members of society. Both **C** (chosen by 15.2% of all students) and **D** (chosen by 11.7% of all students) are based on assumptions regarding how governments may regulate the distribution of wealth among members of society that extend beyond the information presented in the graph. A total of 69.3% of students who met the *acceptable standard* answered this question correctly. Of those students who met the *standard of excellence*, 91.2% chose the correct answer. Of those students who did not meet the *acceptable standard*, 39.8% selected the correct response.

In the blueprinting category that encompasses questions that involve **Consumerism, Quality of Life, and Political Decision Making** (composed of 12 questions), students were expected to assess, critically, the relationship between consumerism and quality of life in Canada and the United States (Specific Outcome 9.2.5) and assess, critically, the interrelationship between political decisions and economic systems (Specific Outcome 9.2.6) by exploring and reflecting upon questions and issues regarding:

- What are the indicators of quality of life? (9.2.5.1)
- How does individual consumer behaviour impact quality of life (e.g., environmental issues)? (9.2.5.2)
- How does marketing impact consumerism? (9.2.5.3)
- How does consumerism provide opportunities for and limitations on impacting quality of life? (9.2.5.4)
- How do the economic platforms of political parties differ from one another (i.e. Liberal versus Conservative)? (9.2.6.1)
- How is a political party's philosophy reflected in its platform (i.e. social programs, specific taxes, taxation model)? (9.2.6.2)?

Students achieving the *acceptable standard* were able to recall factors that affect consumer behaviour, apply knowledge of how advertising affects consumerism, and acknowledge differences among the economic platforms of political parties in Canada. Students achieving the *standard of excellence* could also see beyond the immediate economic benefits of consumerism to recognize that there are drawbacks to excessive consumption, appreciate both the benefits and drawbacks of advertising, and assess the values underlying the platforms of political parties in Canada. Those students who did not meet the *acceptable standard* often found difficult questions that required acknowledging the impact of consumerism on quality of life, identifying detrimental aspects of advertising upon consumers, and pinpointing differences among the platforms of political parties in Canada. Question 42 from the 2011 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test exemplifies some of these differences among the varying levels of student achievement.

In question 42 (blueprinted as a **Skills and Processes** question), students needed to be able to conclude from information in four sources the question regarding consumerism that is raised.

42. Which of the following questions is related to information in all four sources?
- A. How does marketing influence consumerism?
  - B. Should consumers focus on environmental concerns?
  - C. Should governments pass laws regulating businesses?
  - \*D. How does individual behaviour impact quality of life?

The correct answer (**D**) was selected by 55.8% of all students who wrote the test; these students were able to generalize—from a cartoon in which the cartoonist is commenting on the wastefulness of consumerism, a list defining the term “consumerism,” a newspaper article documenting a family’s efforts to “get off the consumption treadmill,” and a speaker’s comments regarding economic freedom of choice—that quality of life is determined by the actions of individual consumers. Students who chose **A** (29.5% of all students) may have erroneously presumed that consumerism is inextricably connected to marketing without considering that there is no mention of marketing in any of the sources. Students who chose **B** (9.2% of all students) may have done so based on the depiction of the “city dump” in Source I without considering that this is the only source that contains content related to “environmental concerns.” Students who chose **C** (5.4% of all students) may have inferred from Source I that some people believe that government regulation of businesses should be increased to prevent waste, or they may have inferred from Source II that the detail regarding how consumerism may “be encouraged by governments that try to stimulate individual spending” suggests that government regulation is necessary but neglected to acknowledge that neither Source III nor Source IV explicitly addresses government regulation of businesses. Of those students who achieved the *acceptable standard*, 55.8% chose the correct answer. Of those students who met the *standard of excellence*, 85.2% chose the correct answer. Of those students who did not meet the *acceptable standard*, 29.7% answered this question correctly.

Overall, student achievement on the 2011 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test was strong. Most students (75.7%) were able to meet the *acceptable standard*, and 21.4% of students met the *standard of excellence*. Of all students who wrote the test, 24.3% 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](http://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 directives, guidelines, and procedures; calculator and computer policies; test accommodations; test marking and results; field testing; resources and web documents; forms and samples; and Assessment Sector 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 (where applicable) as well as suggestions for preparing students to write the tests and information about how teachers can participate in test development activities.

## **Examples of the Standards for Student Writing**

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 achievement tests. The exemplars documents contain sample responses with scoring rationales that relate student work to the scoring categories and scoring criteria.

## **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 are 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 as well as descriptions of and sample questions for each achievement test subject.

## **Involvement of Teachers**

Teachers of grades 3, 6, and 9 are encouraged to take part in activities related to the achievement testing program. These activities include item development, test validation, field testing, and marking. In addition, arrangements can be made through the Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia for teacher in-service workshops on topics such as Interpreting Achievement Test Results to Improve Student Learning.