

Alberta Provincial
Achievement Testing

Subject
Bulletin
2011–2012

GRADE
9

Knowledge & Employability

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Government
of Alberta ■

Alberta ■

Freedom To Create. Spirit To Achieve.

This document was written primarily for

Students	
Teachers	✓
Administrators	✓
Parents	
General Audience	
Others	

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Preface

Knowledge and Employability Achievement Testing

Provincial achievement tests are administered annually in English and French Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. The purpose of the Achievement Testing Program is to assess what students know and are able to do at given points in their schooling; to use that information to inform instruction; and to report to Albertans how well students are learning relative to provincial standards. The Knowledge and Employability achievement tests have been designed with this purpose in mind.

The Knowledge and Employability courses include, among others, programs of study for English Language Arts 8–9, Mathematics 8–9, Science 8–9, and Social Studies 8–9. (See *Knowledge and Employability Courses Handbook* at education.alberta.ca.) The Knowledge and Employability achievement tests reflect the Grade 9 outcomes in these new programs of study. All of the achievement tests will be administered according to the same schedule as the regular Grade 9 achievement tests. Grade 9 students who are receiving instruction from a Knowledge and Employability program of study are expected to write the achievement test for that course.

Purpose of this Bulletin

The purpose of this bulletin is to outline key features of the Knowledge and Employability achievement tests and the reports that will be issued. It is also intended to inform school-system administrators and teachers about the administration of the achievement tests that will occur in January and June 2012.

Key Features

Test Design

Four Knowledge and Employability achievement tests, which reflect outcomes in the Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability programs of study, have been developed. These achievement tests will be administered provincially in January and June 2012.

Test Design Elements

The Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability achievement tests will assess those learning outcomes that can be tested using multiple-choice and numerical-response questions. Students record their answers on a machine-scorable answer sheet. Each test is designed to be completed in 75 minutes; however, to ensure that students have ample time to complete the test, an additional 30 minutes will be allowed if required.

The Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability English Language Arts Achievement Test will be composed of two parts—*Part A: Writing* and *Part B: Reading*.

French Translations

Translated forms of the Knowledge and Employability Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies achievement tests will be available for students receiving their instruction within Francophone or alternative French language programs.

Accommodations

Test accommodations will be available for the Knowledge and Employability achievement tests. These accommodations will be granted following the policies and processes outlined in the Achievement Testing Program's *General Information Bulletin*.

Test Administration

Eligibility to Write	To be eligible to write a Knowledge and Employability achievement test, a student must have received instruction from the Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability program of study for that course.
Administrative Framework	All the Knowledge and Employability achievement tests will be administered following the directives and policies of the Achievement Testing Program. Further information about the Achievement Testing Program directives and policies is provided in the <i>General Information Bulletin</i> . The <i>General Information Bulletin</i> may be accessed through Alberta Education's website at education.alberta.ca .
Testing Dates	The Knowledge and Employability achievement tests will be administered according to the same schedule as the regular Grade 9 achievement tests, that is, in January and June.

Scoring and Reporting

Results Reporting Each year, Alberta Education produces course- and grade-specific achievement test summary results reports for each school and school authority. Separate reports are issued for students who write the English and French forms of the Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies achievement tests. All these school and school-authority reports contain local and provincial results and are made available through the Extranet in late August.

Alberta Education produces two copies of an Individual Student Profile (ISP) for each student who participates in the Achievement Testing Program. These ISPs are made available via the Extranet to the school where a student writes his or her achievement tests. The school must keep a copy of the ISP with the student's record and must provide the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) with a copy of the ISP. The teacher is expected to discuss the ISP with the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) during a regularly scheduled parent/teacher conference.

School and school-authority summary reports and ISPs will be produced for the Knowledge and Employability achievement tests.

Test Design Details

Overview

Characteristics of Knowledge and Employability Courses

Collectively, the Knowledge and Employability courses focus on the development and application of reading, writing, and mathematical literacy as well as on the development and application of essential employability skills. To best meet the needs of the students for whom these courses have been designed, all the Knowledge and Employability learning outcomes reflect academic and occupational skill standards that have been deemed necessary for success by workplace representatives.

In addition to being organized around a set of grade-specific disciplinary concepts and themes, each of the Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability programs of study emphasizes the development and application of a common set of essential skills. These common essential skills include critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, and meta-cognition.

The Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability achievement tests have been designed to reflect the academic and occupational skill standards in the English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies programs of study. Thus, each test will assess outcomes related to the concepts, themes, and essential skills specific to that particular program of study.

Common Test Design Details

Test Format

Each of the Knowledge and Employability achievement tests is designed to assess what students know and are able to do in relation to those learning outcomes that are measurable using paper and pencil test questions.

All Knowledge and Employability achievement tests are composed of 50 multiple-choice items. However, the mathematics test is composed of 45 multiple choice items and 5 numerical-response items. Student responses will be recorded on a machine-scorable answer sheet. The Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability English Language Arts Achievement Test will be composed of two parts—*Part A: Writing* and *Part B: Reading*.

Administration Times

Each of the Knowledge and Employability multiple-choice achievement tests have been designed to be administered in 75 minutes. An additional 30 minutes of writing time may be provided to students who need it. *Part A: Writing* consists of one writing assignment designed to be administered in 80 minutes.

**Allowable
Student and
Classroom
Materials**

The design of an achievement test takes into account all the conditions under which it will be administered. These include any support resources that students might access while writing the test. Knowledge and Employability achievement tests are designed to be administered without the use of any support resources, with the following exceptions: students may use four-function or scientific calculators when writing the mathematics and science tests; students may also use manipulative materials (for example, algebra tiles or a circular protractor) when writing the mathematics test. Conversion tables (both metric and imperial) will be included with the mathematics test.

Notes (in any form), papers, graphic organizers, informal dictionaries, or books relating to the test may **not** be brought into the test room. Classroom materials that could provide **any assistance** to a student in a particular test must be removed or covered (for example, a list of definitions of terms, a multiplication table, or formulas).

Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability English Language Arts Assessment

General Description

The Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability English Language Arts Achievement Test consists of two parts—*Part A: Writing* and *Part B: Reading*.

Part A: Writing *General Description*

Part A: Writing consists of one writing assignment that is developed to be completed in 80 minutes. For the first 10 minutes, students may discuss the assignment with classmates in groups of two to four, or think alone about the prompt. Students will engage in this discussion time without teacher participation. During this discussion time, students may record their ideas on the *Planning* page provided. The allotted 80 minutes provides students with time for planning, drafting, and revising their writing.

Those students for whom a dictionary is a familiar tool are encouraged, but not required, to use a dictionary during the editing phase of their writing. Use of a dictionary throughout the writing test may interfere with a student's ability to complete his/her writing.

Students may use print versions of commercially published dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries, and commercially published thesauri when completing **Part A only**.

Students may do their writing using a computer. For information about using word-processing technology to complete the written component of the achievement test, see the *General Information Bulletin, Achievement Testing Program, Grades 3, 6, and 9*.

Part A: Writing requires students to write for a specific audience and to fulfill a specified purpose within a given context. Students are asked to respond to a given situation in the form of a persuasive essay. Students whose writing is unrelated to the prompt will be awarded a score of **Insufficient**. Students whose writing shows no evidence of an attempt to address the task presented in the assignment, or a student who has written so little that it is not possible to assess **Content** will be awarded a mark of **Insufficient**.

The booklet for *Part A: Writing* includes a page labelled *Planning*, as well as lined pages for the students' writing. Students are asked to produce only one copy of their work. They are encouraged to make revisions and corrections directly on this copy. Because of the limited testing time, students benefit most from spending their time composing and revising their work rather than from perfecting a "good copy."

Blueprint for Part A: Writing

The blueprint below shows the scoring/reporting categories by which student writing is assessed and by which summary data will be reported to schools and school authorities.

Reporting Category	Description of Writing Assignment	Standards
<p>Content* (selecting ideas and details to achieve a purpose)</p> <p>Students respond to a given topic by writing an essay. Students establish their purpose, select ideas and supporting details to achieve the purpose, and communicate in a manner appropriate to their audience.</p>	<p>The writing assignment requires students to respond to a prompt that provides a given context (situation) and a collection of materials that students may use, if they wish. These materials may include graphics, quotations, and short literary excerpts. Students may use ideas from previous experience and/or reading. Students are to respond by writing a persuasive essay.</p>	<p>Student achievement in each reporting category will be described according to the following descriptors:</p>
<p>Organization* (organizing ideas and details into a coherent whole)</p> <p>Students organize their ideas to produce a unified and coherent essay that links details, sentences, and paragraphs, and that supports the purpose.</p>		<p>Excellent</p> <p>Proficient</p>
<p>Sentence Structure (structuring sentences effectively)</p> <p>Students control sentence structure and use a variety of sentence types, sentence beginnings, and sentence lengths to enhance communication.</p>		<p>Satisfactory</p> <p>Limited</p>
<p>Vocabulary (selecting and using words and expressions correctly and effectively)</p> <p>Students choose specific words and expressions that are appropriate for their audience and effective in establishing a voice/tone that will help to achieve their purpose.</p>		<p>Poor</p>
<p>Conventions (using the conventions of written language correctly and effectively)</p> <p>Students use conventions accurately and effectively to communicate.</p>		<p>INS (insufficient)</p>

**Note: Content and Organization are weighted to be worth twice as much as the other categories.*

Local Marking

Classroom teachers will be able to mark students' writing, using scoring guides such as those in this bulletin, before returning the tests to Alberta Education. All papers will be marked centrally in Edmonton in July.

Locally awarded marks submitted to Alberta Education will be used as the first reading of a student's response. Local markers are to use the **For Teacher Use Only** section on the back of the *Part A: Writing* test booklet to record their marks by filling in the appropriate circles. The "School Code" and "ACCOMMODATIONS USED" sections should also be completed. If a teacher wants to know how his or her locally awarded marks compare with the marks that the tests received when marked centrally, then he or she must also fill in an "ID No." It is important that no two teachers from the same school use the same identification number. No other marks are to be made on the test booklet by the teacher.

Teachers have approximately one week to return the tests to Alberta Education. The papers will then be marked centrally by Alberta Education 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.

Papers 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 respective schools, teachers who submitted their marks with an identification number will receive a confidential report on their marking. This report is called the Local Marker Report and includes the locally awarded mark, the centrally awarded mark, a third-read mark if applicable, and the final mark.

To support local marking, Alberta Education will provide, along with the test materials, samples of student writing that exemplify the scoring criteria. These exemplars **are not to be shared** with students and must be returned to Alberta Education with the tests.

The mark for *Part A: Writing* is worth 35% of the total mark for the Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Test.

Essay Writing

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.

1. Assign a score of 1 to 5 for each of *content*, *organization*, *sentence structure*, *vocabulary*, and *conventions*.
2. Multiply the scores for *content* and *organization* by 2, as these categories are worth twice as much as the other categories.

Maximum score possible for Essay Writing = 35

Information for Teachers Participating in Central Marking

Learner Assessment will contact superintendents in the spring for their nominations of markers. The teachers selected will reflect proportional representation from the various regions of Alberta.

To qualify for nomination by a superintendent, a prospective marker must satisfy ALL the following conditions:

- have a valid permanent Alberta Teaching Certificate
- have taught the course within the past three years
- be currently employed by a school authority or private school
- be available on all scheduled days

Markers will be contacted in May, and the list of markers will be finalized no later than June 16. Group leaders will meet the day before the marking session for training.

Each year, many more teachers are nominated to mark than are needed. There must be a balance of first-time and experienced markers; regional representation by zone, school authority, and school; and gender balance when markers are selected. 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 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., and markers are expected to be available to mark during those hours.

Knowledge and Employability Scoring Guides for 2011–2012

Content

Focus

When marking **Content** appropriate for the Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability Essay Writing Assignment, the marker should consider how effectively the writer

- explores the topic
- establishes a point of view
- chooses ideas
- supports the response
- holds the reader’s interest

Excellent E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer’s exploration of the topic is insightful and/or discerning. • The writer’s point of view, whether stated or implied, is deliberate. • The ideas presented by the writer are engaging and/or carefully chosen. • Supporting details are precise and/or are original. • The writing is confident and/or interesting and captures and holds the reader’s interest.
Proficient Pf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer’s exploration of the topic is adept and/or logical. • The writer’s point of view, whether stated or implied, is intentional. • The ideas presented by the writer are thoughtful and/or sound. • Supporting details are relevant and specific. • The writing is purposeful and/or clear and draws the reader’s interest.
Satisfactory S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer’s exploration of the topic is clear and/or plausible. • The writer’s point of view, whether stated or implied, is evident. • The ideas presented by the writer are appropriate and/or direct. • Supporting details are relevant but general. • The writing is straightforward and occasionally captures the reader’s interest.
Limited L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer’s exploration of the topic is superficial or simplistic. • The writer’s point of view, whether stated or implied, is vague. • The ideas presented by the writer are superficial and/or ambiguous. • Supporting details are imprecise and/or vague. • The writing is uncertain and/or incomplete, lacks appeal, and infrequently captures the reader’s interest.
Poor P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writer’s exploration of the topic is minimal and/or irrelevant. • The writer’s point of view, whether stated or implied, is incomprehensible. • The ideas presented by the writer are overgeneralized and/or underdeveloped. • Supporting details are irrelevant and/or lacking. • The writing is confusing and/or undeveloped and does not interest the reader.
Insufficient INS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The marker can discern no evidence of an attempt to address the topic presented in the assignment, or the writer has written so little that it is not possible to assess Content.

Note: *Content and Organization are weighted to be worth twice as much as the other categories.*

Students whose writing is unrelated to the prompt will be awarded a score of **Insufficient**.

Organization

Focus

When marking **Organization** appropriate for the Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability Essay Writing Assignment, the marker should consider how effectively the writing demonstrates

- introduction
- coherent order
- connections between ideas and/or details
- conclusion

Excellent E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction is engaging and skillfully establishes a focus that is capably and consistently maintained. • Ideas and/or details are developed in paragraphs in a logical order, and coherence is consistently maintained. • Transitions fluently connect ideas and/or details within sentences and between paragraphs. • The conclusion is effective and enhances the focus.
Proficient Pf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction is purposeful and clearly establishes a focus that is capably maintained. • Ideas and/or details are developed in paragraphs in a sensible order, and coherence is generally maintained. • Transitions clearly connect ideas and/or details within sentences and between paragraphs. • The conclusion is appropriate and reinforces the focus.
Satisfactory S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction is functional and establishes a focus that is generally maintained. • Ideas and/or details are developed in a discernable order, although coherence may falter occasionally. • Transitions tend to be mechanical and are generally used to connect ideas and/or details within sentences and between paragraphs. • The conclusion is adequate and may be related to the focus.
Limited L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction lacks purpose and/or is not functional; any focus established is not maintained. • The development of ideas and/or details is not clearly discernible, and coherence falters frequently. • Transitions are lacking and/or ineffectively used to connect ideas and/or details within sentences and between paragraphs. • The conclusion is unrelated to the focus and may be random and/or haphazard.
Poor P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction, if present, is obscure or ineffective; no focus is established. • The development of ideas and/or details is haphazard and incoherent. • Transitions are absent and/or inappropriately used to connect ideas and/or details within sentences and between paragraphs. • The conclusion is ineffectual or missing.
Insufficient INS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing has been awarded an INS for Content.

Note: Content and Organization are weighted to be worth twice as much as the other categories.

Sentence Structure

Focus

When marking **Sentence Structure** appropriate for the Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability Essay 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence structure is effectively and consistently controlled. • Sentence type and sentence length are consistently effective and varied. • Sentence beginnings are consistently varied.
Proficient Pf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence structure is consistently controlled. • Sentence type and sentence length are usually effective and varied. • Sentence beginnings are often varied.
Satisfactory S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence structure often lacks control, and this may impede meaning. • Sentence type and sentence length are rarely effective or varied; run-on sentences and/or sentence fragments, if present, often impede meaning. • There is little variety of sentence beginnings.
Poor P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence structure lacks control, and this often impedes meaning. • There is no variation of sentence type or sentence length; run-on sentences and/or sentence fragments, if present, severely impede meaning. • There is no variety of sentence beginnings.
Insufficient INS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing has been awarded an INS for Content.

Vocabulary

Focus

When marking **Vocabulary** appropriate for the Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability Essay Writing Assignment, the marker should consider the

- accuracy of the words and expressions
- effectiveness of the words and expressions
- appropriateness and effectiveness of the voice/tone created by the writer

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

Excellent E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions are consistently used accurately and effectively. • Well-chosen words and expressions are used to enhance the writer’s position. • The voice/tone created by the writer is consistently engaging throughout.
Proficient Pf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions are often used accurately and appropriately. • Well-chosen words and expressions are often used to support the writer’s position. • The voice/tone created by the writer is frequently distinct.
Satisfactory S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions are generally used accurately and appropriately. • General words and expressions are used to support the writer’s position. • The voice/tone created by the writer is discernible but may be inconsistent.
Limited L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions used generally convey only vague meanings. • Imprecise words and expressions predominate; specific words, if present, may be awkwardly used to support the writer’s position. • The voice/tone created by the writer is not clearly established or is inconsistent.
Poor P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words and expressions used are vague and/or sometimes inappropriate or ineffective. • Overgeneralized words and expressions predominate; specific words, if present, are frequently misused and/or are repeated to support the writer’s position. • The voice/tone created by the writer is not evident or is inappropriate.
Insufficient INS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing has been awarded an INS for Content.

Conventions

Focus

When marking **Conventions** appropriate for the Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability Essay Writing Assignment, the marker should consider the extent to which the student has control of

- mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc.) and usage (subject–verb agreement, pronoun usage, consistent verb tenses, etc.)
- clarity and flow of the response

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

Excellent E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the writing is enhanced because it is essentially error-free. • Any errors that are present do not reduce clarity and do not interrupt the flow of the response.
Proficient Pf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the writing is sustained because it contains only minor convention errors. • Any errors that are present rarely reduce clarity and seldom interrupt the flow of the response.
Satisfactory S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the writing is sustained through generally correct use of conventions. • Errors that are present occasionally reduce clarity and sometimes interrupt the flow of the response.
Limited L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the writing is weakened by frequent incorrect use of conventions. • Errors often reduce the clarity and interrupt the flow of the response.
Poor P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the writing is impaired by consistent incorrect use of conventions. • Errors severely reduce clarity and impede the flow of the response.
Insufficient INS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing has been awarded an INS for Content.

Part B: Reading General Description

Part B: Reading of the Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability English Language Arts Achievement Test requires students to read selections that include a variety of informational, narrative, and poetic texts with implicit ideas and details. In total, there are 50 multiple-choice questions based on the readings.

Part B: Reading (multiple choice) is developed to be completed in 75 minutes; however, students may have an additional 30 minutes to complete the test if necessary.

The test consists of 50 multiple-choice questions based on reading selections from fiction, nonfiction, drama, poetry, and visual media.

Part B: Reading has **one booklet** that contains both the reading passages and the corresponding questions. Students record their answers on a tear-out machine-scorable answer sheet.

If a word that warrants definition is used on a test, it will be defined on the page on which it appears.

Blueprint for Part B: Reading

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

Reporting Category	Language Function		Number (Percentage) of Questions
	Informational	Narrative/Poetic	
Identifying and Interpreting Ideas and Details	8	8	16 (32%)
Interpreting Text Organization	4	4	8 (16%)
Associating Meaning	4	4	8 (16%)
Synthesizing Meaning	9	9	18 (36%)
Number (Percentage) of Questions			Total
	25 (50%)	25 (50%)	50 (100%)

Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability Mathematics Assessment

General Description

The Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability Mathematics Achievement Test consists of:

- 45 multiple-choice questions, each worth one mark
- 5 numerical-response questions, each worth one mark

The test is developed to be completed in 75 minutes; however, students may have an additional 30 minutes to complete the test if necessary.

Students record their answers on a tear-out, machine-scorable answer sheet.

Calculator use is recommended but not required; however, graphing calculator use is prohibited. Students may also use manipulative materials (for example, algebra tiles or circular protractor). Conversion tables (both metric and imperial) will be included with the mathematics test. See *Using Calculators & Computers* in the *Achievement General Information Bulletin* at education.alberta.ca.

Blueprint for Mathematics

The blueprint below shows the general outcomes that the questions address as well as the reporting categories under which they are classified. The number of questions in each category is approximate.

General Outcomes	Reporting Category		Number (Percentage) of Questions
	Knowledge	Skills	
Number	5	12	17 (34%)
Patterns and Relations	2	4	6 (12%)
Shape and Space	7	13	20 (40%)
Statistics and Probability	3	4	7 (14%)
Number (Percentage) of Questions			Total
	17 (34%)	33 (66%)	50 (100%)

Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability Science Assessment

General Description

The Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability Science Achievement Test consists of 50 multiple-choice questions, each worth one mark.

The test is developed to be completed in 75 minutes; however, students have an additional 30 minutes to complete the test if necessary.

Students record their answers on a tear-out, machine-scorable answer sheet.

Blueprint for Science

The blueprint below shows the topics and reporting categories under which questions are classified. The number of questions in each reporting category is approximate.

Topic	Reporting Category		Number (Percentage) of Questions
	Knowledge	Skills	
Biological Diversity	4	6	10 (20%)
Matter and Chemical Change	4	6	10 (20%)
Environmental Chemistry	4	6	10 (20%)
Electrical Principles and Technologies	4	6	10 (20%)
Space Exploration	4	6	10 (20%)
Number (Percentage) of Questions	Total		
	20 (40%)	30 (60%)	50 (100%)

Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability Social Studies Assessment

General Description

The Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability Social Studies Achievement Test consists of 50 multiple-choice questions each worth one mark.

The test is developed to be completed in 75 minutes; however, students may have an additional 30 minutes to complete the test if necessary.

Students record their answers on a tear-out, machine-scorable answer sheet.

Students may **not** use a dictionary, a thesaurus, or other reference material.

Blueprint for Social Studies

The blueprint below shows the reporting categories and test sections by which questions are classified. The number of questions in each reporting category is approximate.

Topic	Reporting Category		Number (Percentage) of Questions
	Knowledge	Skills	
Canada: Governance and Citizenship	10	18	28 (56%)
Canada and the United States: an Economic Relationship	8	14	22 (44%)
Number (Percentage) of Questions			Total
	18 (36%)	32 (64%)	50 (100%)

Details of the 2011–2012 Achievement Test Administration

Overview

Four achievement tests, which reflect outcomes in the Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability programs of study, will be administered in 2011–2012. In general, these Knowledge and Employability achievement tests will be administered following existing Achievement Testing Program directives, policies, procedures, and schedules. Further information about these directives, policies, procedures, and schedules is provided in the *General Information Bulletin*. This bulletin may be accessed through Alberta Education’s website at education.alberta.ca.

Specific details of the 2011–2012 administration are presented below.

Eligibility to Write

Instructional Requirements

To be eligible to write a Knowledge and Employability achievement test in 2011–2012, a student must have received instruction from the Knowledge and Employability program of study for that course.

Ordering Test Materials

In Alberta, Grade 9 students are registered by year rather than by course. For this reason, Alberta Education will not know if a student is receiving instruction from a Knowledge and Employability program of study rather than from a regular program of study, and therefore will not know whether or not the student should receive a Knowledge and Employability achievement test rather than a regular achievement test for a given course. Please refer to the Ordering Test Materials information in the *Administration Directives, Guidelines, and Procedures* section of the *General Information Bulletin*.

Test Administration

Schedules The Knowledge and Employability achievement tests will be administered in January and June 2012, following the same schedule as the regular achievement tests.

Please refer to the *Achievement Test Administration Schedule* information in the *Schedules and Significant Dates* section of the *General Information Bulletin*.

Security All Knowledge and Employability test materials are **secured** and **all copies, used and unused** must be returned after administration according to the schedule in the Schedule and Significant Dates section of the *General Information Bulletin*.

Preparing for the Achievement Tests A goal of the provincial Achievement Testing Program is to obtain valid and reliable information about student achievement. How and what educators communicate to students and parents about the tests and the manner in which students are prepared for the test experience affect how well this goal is met.

Students who will be writing one or more Knowledge and Employability achievement tests in 2011–2012 should be prepared in the same manner in which students are prepared for achievement tests. More information on this topic is provided in the *Introductions and Revisions* section of the *General Information Bulletin*.

Scoring and Reporting

Scoring and Reporting Alberta Education will provide answer keys to enable local scoring of the Knowledge and Employability achievement tests prior to the return of the test materials to Alberta Education.

Individual and aggregated result reports will be available following the provincial administration of these achievement tests in 2011–2012.

Opportunities to Participate in Test Development Activities

Field Testing

All Achievement Testing Program test questions are field tested before use. By “testing” the test questions, students who write field tests have an opportunity for a practice run at writing portions of an achievement test. As well, the teachers have an opportunity to comment on the appropriateness and quality of the test questions.

Request forms for Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability field tests that will be administered in May and June 2012 can be found on the Alberta Education website by following this link:
education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/forms.aspx.

Principals and teachers who wish to participate in the field-testing program must complete and return request forms to the Field-Test Coordinator at field.test@gov.ab.ca.

Once the completed request forms are received by Learner Assessment, classes will be selected to ensure that a representative and sufficiently large sample of students from across the province take part in the field test. Every effort will be made to place field tests as requested; however, because field tests are administered to a prescribed number of students, it may not be possible to fill all requests. Once the field tests are placed, a confirmation letter of test placements will be sent to each principal in early April, with memos to the teachers who will be participating in the field testing.

For further information about achievement field testing, see the *Field Testing* section of the *General Information Bulletin*.

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.

To be selected to participate in a working group, a teacher must be nominated by a school administrator or superintendent, and that nomination must be approved by the superintendent. To ensure that selected working-group members have appropriate subject matter training and teaching experience, nominees are asked to provide their information to their school administrator so that it can be forwarded to the Assessment Sector at Alberta Education through the superintendent.

To be eligible to serve on a Knowledge and Employability test development working group, a nominated teacher must currently be teaching the course in question and must have a minimum of two years' experience teaching Knowledge and Employability students.

Test Development

Teacher working groups are used throughout the test development 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.

Teachers participating in test development and/or test review working groups are selected from the working-group nominees provided by superintendents of school jurisdictions.

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