

Alberta Provincial
Achievement Testing

Subject
Bulletin
2011–2012

GRADE
6

Social Studies

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Freedom To Create. Spirit To Achieve.

This document was written primarily for:

Students	
Teachers	✓ Grade 6 Social Studies
Administrators	✓
Parents	
General Audience	
Others	

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You can find achievement test-related materials on the Alberta Education website at education.alberta.ca.

At 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 listed under the *Achievement Tests* heading.

Additional topics of interest are found in the *General Information Bulletin*.

Grade 6 Social Studies Assessment

General Description

The Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Test consists of 50 multiple-choice questions. The test is developed to be completed in 60 minutes; however, students may have an additional 30 minutes if necessary.

The test has one booklet. Students record their multiple-choice answers on a tear-out answer sheet.

The test is based on the two Social Studies General Outcomes in the [*2007 Program of Studies*](#): **General Outcome 6.1 Citizens Participating in Decision Making** and **General Outcome 6.2 Historical Models of Democracy: Ancient Athens and the Iroquois Confederacy**.

Knowledge and Understanding and **Skills and Processes** are integrated into the multiple-choice test. In the knowledge and understanding category, students are tested on their ability to understand generalizations, concepts, related facts, and content. The skills and processes that students are expected to use when answering questions include critical and creative thinking, historical and geographic thinking, decision making and problem solving, research skills, written literacy, and media literacy.

Values and Attitudes outcomes are best assessed in the context of the classroom.

Students may **not** use a dictionary, a thesaurus, or other reference materials when writing the test.

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

Description of Social Studies Assessment Standards

The following statements describe what is expected of Grade 6 students at the *acceptable standard* and the *standard of excellence*, based on outcomes in the [Grade 6 Program of Studies](#). These statements represent examples of the standards against which student achievement is measured. It is important to remember that one test cannot measure all the outcomes in the *Program of Studies*.

<i>Acceptable Standard</i>	<i>Standard of Excellence</i>
<p>Students who meet the <i>acceptable standard</i> in Grade 6 Social Studies have a basic understanding of the concepts, generalizations, and skills fundamental to the program. They are able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• define or identify the fundamental principles of democracy• recognize the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy• recognize how citizens are able to actively participate in a democratic society• describe the structure and function of both local and provincial governments• describe the structure and function of specific historical models of democracy• use maps, graphs, tables, and charts to find essential relevant information• demonstrate the use of various media-literacy skills when examining current-events topics	<p>Students who meet the <i>standard of excellence</i> in Grade 6 Social Studies have internalized most, if not all, of the concepts and generalizations fundamental to the Grade 6 Social Studies program. The students are confident learners who demonstrate a clear and accurate understanding of how citizens participate in a democracy, and of the influence of historical models of democracy. They are able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• apply knowledge and/or provide examples of the fundamental principles of democracy• demonstrate a clear and accurate understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy• provide specific examples of how citizens can effectively participate in a democratic society• analyze the structure and function of both local and provincial governments• analyze the structure and function of specific historical models of democracy to demonstrate an understanding of democratic principles• interpret and analyze maps, graphs, tables, and charts to make inferences and draw conclusions• consistently apply media-literacy skills when examining current-events topics

Blueprint for the Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Test

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

		Knowledge and Understanding	Skills and Processes	Number (Percentage) of Questions
Citizens Participating in Decision Making	Democratic Principles and Ideals	3	7	10 (20%)
	Structure and Function of Local and Provincial Government	3	7	10 (20%)
	Individual, Group, and Community Involvement	3	7	10 (20%)
Historical Models of Democracy	Ancient Athens	3	7	10 (20%)
	Iroquois Confederacy	3	7	10 (20%)
Number (Percentage) of Questions		15 (30%)	35 (70%)	50 (100%)

Knowledge and Understanding—includes ideas, information, and concepts identified in the *Grade 6 Social Studies Program of Studies*

Skills and Processes—include critical and creative thinking, historical thinking, geographic thinking, and media literacy as identified in the *Grade 6 Social Studies Program of Studies*

Preparing Students for the Social Studies Achievement Test

Suggestions for Preparing Students

The best way to prepare students for writing the achievement test is to teach the *Program of Studies* well and to ensure that students know what is expected. Many of the skills and attitudes that support test writing are, in fact, good skills and strategies for approaching all kinds of learning tasks.

Teachers are encouraged to familiarize their students with the types of questions that will appear on the test.

Teachers are also encouraged to share the following information with their students to help them prepare for the Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Test.

Suggestions for Answering Multiple-Choice Questions

- Before you begin, find out how much time you have.
- Ask questions if you are unsure of anything.
- Skim through the whole test before beginning. Find out how many questions there are and plan your time accordingly.
- Answer the easier questions first; then go back to the more difficult ones.
- Do not spend too much time on any one question. Make a mark (* or ?) beside any questions you have difficulty with and go back to them if you have time.
- Read each question carefully, underline or highlight key words, and try to determine an answer.

- Read all the choices and see which one best fits the answer.
- When you are not sure which answer is correct, cross out any choices that are wrong, and then select the best of the remaining choices.
- If time permits, recheck your answers.
- Double-check to make sure that you have answered everything before handing in the test.
- Read the information given using the strategy that works best for you. You should either
 - look at all the information and think carefully about it before you try to answer the questions **OR**
 - read the questions first and then look at the information, keeping in mind the questions you need to answer.
- Make sure that you look at all forms of the information given. Information may be given in many forms, such as words, charts, pictures, graphs, maps, or cartoons.
- When information is given for more than one question, go back to the information before answering each question.
- When answering “best answer” questions, be sure to carefully read all four alternatives (A, B, C, and D) before choosing the answer that you think is best. These questions will always include a bold-faced qualifier such as **best**, **most strongly**, or **most clearly** in their stems. All the alternatives (A, B, C, and D) are, to some degree, correct, but one of the alternatives will be “best” in that it takes more of the information into account or can be supported most strongly by reference to the information.

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 6 Social Studies and Études Sociales 6^e année field tests that will be administered in May and June are usually sent out to schools in early January of the same year.

For further information about achievement field testing, see the Field Testing and Samples & Forms section of the [General Information Bulletin](#). Questions pertaining to field testing may be directed to the Field-Test Coordinator at field.test@gov.ab.ca.

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.

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.

To be eligible to serve on a test development working group, a teacher must currently be teaching Grade 6 Social Studies and must have a minimum of two years of experience teaching Social Studies.

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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