

Alberta Provincial
Achievement Testing

Assessment
Highlights
2011–2012

GRADE
6

Social Studies

Alberta  Government

This document is an assessment highlights report on the 2012 Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Test.

The assessment highlights report provides information about the test overall, test blueprints, and student performance on the achievement test that was administered in 2012. Also provided is commentary on areas of strength and weakness in student performance at the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence on selected items (from the 2012 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.

This document was written primarily for:

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

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The 2012 Grade 6 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 2012 Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Test.

How Many Students Wrote the Test?

A total of 39 195 students wrote the 2012 Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Test.

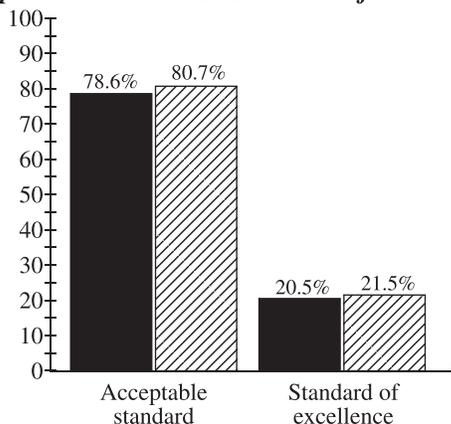
What Was the Test Like?

The 2012 Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Test consisted of 50 multiple-choice questions based on two social studies topics: Citizens Participating in Decision Making and Historical Models of Democracy – Ancient Athens, Iroquois Confederacy.

How Well Did Students Do?

The percentages of students meeting the *acceptable standard* and the *standard of excellence* in 2012 are shown in the graph below. Out of a total score of 50 on the test, the provincial average was 34.2/50 (68.3%). The examination statistics that are included in this document represent all writers: both French and English. If you would like to obtain English-only or French-only statistics that apply to your school, please refer to the detailed reports that are available on the Extranet.

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



- 2011 Achievement Standards: The percentage of students in the province who met the *acceptable standard* and the *standard of excellence* on the 2011 Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Test (based on those who wrote).
- ▨ 2012 Achievement Standards: The percentage of students in the province who met the *acceptable standard* and the *standard of excellence* on the 2012 Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Test (based on those who wrote).

2012 Test Blueprint and Student Achievement in Multiple Choice

Student achievement on the 2012 Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Test averaged 32.7 out of a total score of 50 (65.4%).

The blueprint below shows the reporting categories and test sections (curricular content areas) by which 2012 summary data are reported to schools and school authorities, and the provincial average of student achievement by both raw score and percentage.

Multiple Choice: 50 Questions

		Knowledge and Understanding	Skills and Processes	Provincial Student Achievement Average (Raw Score and Percentage)
Citizens Participating in Decision Making	Democratic Principles and Ideals			7/10 (70.0%)
	Structure and Function of Local and Provincial Government			6.9/11 (62.7%)
	Individual, Group, and Community Involvement			6/9 (66.7%)
Historical Models of Democracy	Ancient Athens			6.3/10 (63.0%)
	Iroquois Confederacy			6.4/10 (64.0%)
Number (Percentage) of Questions		11.9/19 (62.6%)	20.8/31 (67.1%)	32.7/50 (65.4%)

Commentary on 2012 Student Achievement

The following discussion addresses specific areas of strength and weakness demonstrated by students who wrote the 2012 Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Test. Sample questions from the 2012 Grade 6 Social Studies Achievement Tests are provided to highlight these areas for students meeting the *acceptable standard* and for those meeting the *standard of excellence*. These questions are no longer secured and will not be reused on future achievement tests.

Multiple-choice question 12 was a Knowledge and Understanding question and is found in the **Citizens Participating in Decision Making: Local and Provincial Government** reporting category.

12. Which of the following responsibilities belongs **only** to cabinet ministers and not to other members of the Legislative Assembly?
- A. Vote on bills
 - B. Participate in debates
 - *C. Lead a government department
 - D. Respond to concerns of constituents

This question was challenging, with 54.2% of all students answering correctly. Students needed to identify an exclusive responsibility of cabinet ministers in the provincial government. Option **A** was chosen by 11.5% of students. Option **B** was chosen by 10.2% of students. Option **D** was chosen by 23.0% of students. Approximately 50.2% of students who met the acceptable standard were able to answer this question correctly. Approximately 83.6% of students who met the standard of excellence chose the correct response.

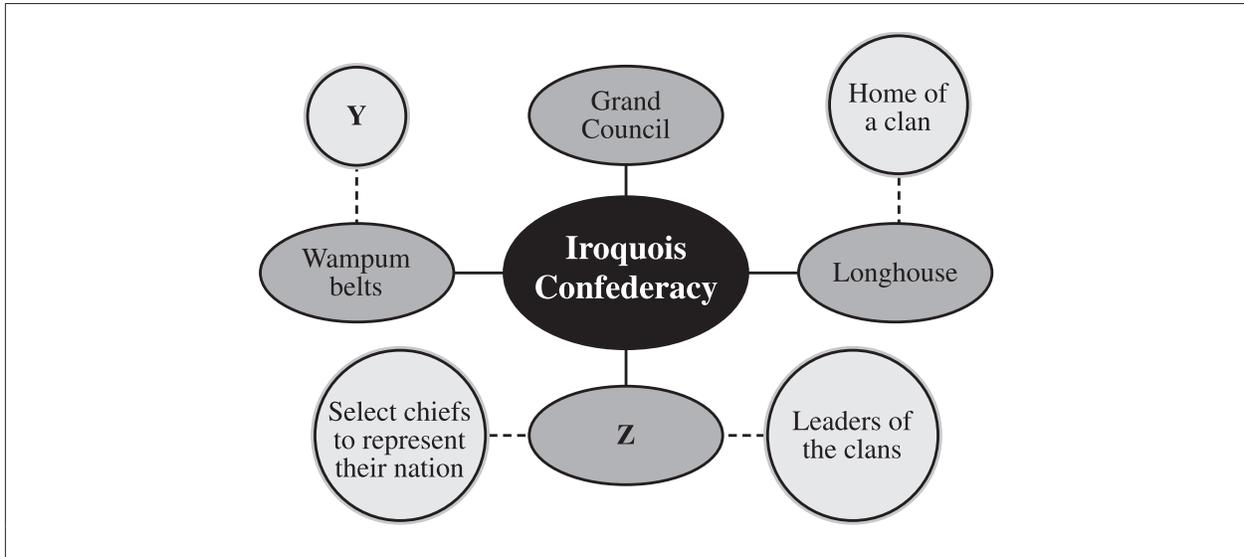
Multiple-choice question 31 was a Knowledge and Understanding question and is found in the **Historical Models of Democracy: Ancient Athens** reporting category.

31. In order to participate in decision making in their society, female Athenian citizens could
- *A. influence male members in their family
 - B. write a letter to a government member
 - C. speak in the agora on important issues
 - D. cast a vote on each issue

This question was easier than the previous example, with 72.7% of all students answering correctly. Students needed to recall the role and influence of female Athenian citizens in ancient Athens. Option **B** was chosen by 10.4% of students. Option **C** was chosen by 11.9% of students. Option **D** was chosen by 5.0% of students. Approximately 76.9% of students who met the acceptable standard were able to answer this question correctly. Approximately 91.9% of students who met the standard of excellence chose the correct response.

Multiple-choice question 46 was a Skills and Processes question and is found in the **Historical Models of Democracy: Iroquois Confederacy** reporting category.

Use the following information in the word web to answer question 46.



46. The word or phrase that should be placed in location Z on the word web is

- A. Warriors
- B. Governors
- *C. Clan mothers
- D. Elder brothers

This question was quite easy, with 86.8% of all students answering correctly. Students needed to recognize a key role in the political structure of the Iroquois Confederacy. Option A was chosen by 3.7% of all students. Option B was chosen by 5.3% of students. Option D was chosen by 4.0% of students. Approximately 90.7% of students who met the acceptable standard were able to answer this question correctly. Approximately 97.5% of students who met the standard of excellence chose the correct response.

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 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 Students' 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.

