

**Alberta Provincial
Achievement Testing**

**Assessment
Highlights
2014–2015**

**GRADE
9**

Social Studies

Alberta  Government

This document contains assessment highlights from the 2015 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test.

Assessment highlights provide information about the overall test, the test blueprints, and student performance on the 2015 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 2015 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 had 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 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.

This document was written primarily for:

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

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The 2015 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 2015 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test. It complements the detailed school and jurisdiction reports.

How Many Students Wrote the Test?

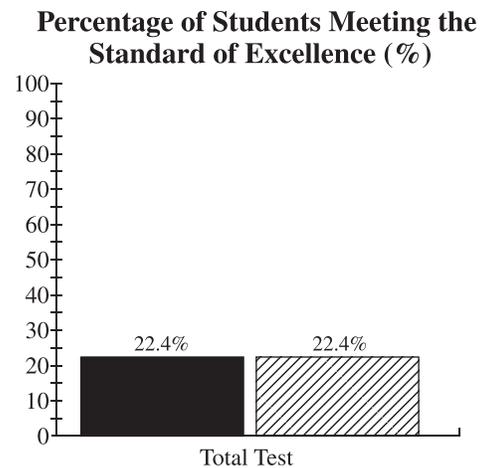
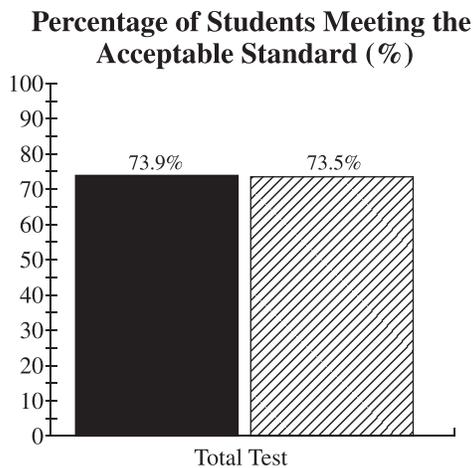
A total of 38 552 students wrote the 2015 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test.

What Was the Test Like?

The 2015 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 2015 are consistent with 2014, as shown in the graphs below. Out of a total possible score of 50, the provincial average on the test was 32.0 (64.0%). The results presented in this report are based on scores achieved by all students who wrote the test, including those in French immersion and Francophone programs. Detailed provincial assessment results that provide English-only statistics or French-only statistics that apply to individual schools are contained in school and jurisdiction reports that are available on the extranet.



 2014 Achievement Standards: The percentage of students in the province who met the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence on the 2014 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test (based on those who wrote).

 2015 Achievement Standards: The percentage of students in the province who met the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence on the 2015 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test (based on those who wrote).

2015 Test Blueprint and Student Achievement

In 2015, 73.5% of all students who wrote the test achieved the acceptable standard on the Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test, and 22.4% of all students who wrote achieved the standard of excellence. Student achievement on the 2015 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test averaged 32.0 out of a total score of 50 (64.0%).

The blueprint below shows the reporting categories and test sections (curricular content areas) by which 2015 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 Section (Curricular Content Area)	Reporting Category		Provincial Student Achievement (Average Raw Score and Percentage)
	Knowledge and Understanding ¹	Skills and Processes ²	
The Political and Judicial System (9.1.4, 9.1.5) ³ 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 on questions and issues regarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how federal laws are passed • branches of the federal government • selection of MPs and senators • accountability of MPs and senators • the role of federal political parties • the role of media in political issues • lobby groups and government decisions • extent to which political and legislative processes meet the needs of Canadians • participation in Canada's justice system • citizens' legal roles and responsibilities • the Youth Criminal Justice Act 			7.3/11 (66.4%)
Individual and Collective Rights (9.1.6, 9.1.7) ³ 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 on questions and issues regarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognition of individual rights • exercising individual rights • conditions in the workplace • rights and responsibilities of citizens • recognition of collective rights • the needs of Francophone minorities • the needs of Francophones in Québec • the rights of official-language minorities • the Indian Act • Treaty 6, Treaty 7, and Treaty 8 • legislation and Métis cultures and rights 			7.0/11 (63.6%)
Immigration (9.1.8) ³ Students critically assess how legislative processes address issues of immigration by exploring and reflecting on questions and issues regarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • factors influencing immigration policies • changes to Canadian policies on immigration and refugees • immigration and Aboriginal peoples • provincial immigration policies • immigration policies in Québec • immigration policies and the Charter • how Canada benefits from immigration 			4.8/8 (60.0%)
Economic Decision Making (9.2.4) ³ Students analyze principles and practices of market and mixed economies by exploring and reflecting on questions and issues regarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • principles of a market economy • government intervention • Canada's mixed economy • consumers in market and mixed economies • consumer individual and collective identity • the economic impact of labour unions • government intervention in the economy • the basic economic question of scarcity 			5.1/8 (63.8%)
Consumerism, Quality of Life, and Political Decision Making (9.2.5, 9.2.6) ³ 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 on questions and issues regarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • indicators of quality of life • individual consumer behaviour • how marketing affects consumerism • consumerism and quality of life • consumerism as a power of a collective • consumerism and economic growth • values underlying social programs • economic platforms of political parties • political party philosophies and platforms • the underground economy • environmental issues and quality of life 			7.9/12 (65.8%)
Provincial Student Achievement (Average Raw Score and Percentage)	13.1/19 (68.9%)	18.9/31 (61.0%)	Total Test Raw Score = 50

¹**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)*.

²**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)*.

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

Commentary on 2015 Student Achievement

The following is a discussion of student achievement on the 2015 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test. Sample questions from the test are provided to highlight the 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 blueprint categories encompass outcomes contained in General Outcome 9.1 Issues for Canadians: Governance and Rights, wherein students are expected to analyze 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 on questions and issues pertaining to:

- How are laws passed in the federal political system? (SO 9.1.4)
- To whom are members of Parliament and senators accountable? (SO 9.1.4)
- How do lobby groups impact government decision making? (SO 9.1.4)
- To what extent do political and legislative processes meet the needs of all Canadians? (SO 9.1.4)
- How do citizens and organizations participate in Canada's justice system (i.e., jury duty, knowing the law, advocacy, John Howard Society, Elizabeth Fry Society)? (SO 9.1.5)
- What are citizens' legal roles and their responsibilities? (SO 9.1.5)

Students who achieved the acceptable standard were able to demonstrate a basic understanding of the role played by lobby groups in Canada's federal political system, the need for members of Parliament and senators to be accountable to Canadian citizens, and the purpose of advocacy groups in Canada's justice system. Students who met the standard of excellence additionally demonstrated strengths in recognizing issues arising from the extent to which lobbyists may influence democratic decision making in Canada, assessing differing viewpoints regarding the extent to which the legislative branch of Canada's government is responsible to citizens, and evaluating the merits of legislation related to the granting of pardons for criminal convictions. Students who did not achieve the acceptable standard were generally able to recognize key institutions in Canada's federal political system. However, many of these students struggled with questions pertaining to checks and balances that exist between the House of Commons and the Senate in Canada's federal political system and demonstrated a limited awareness of societal concerns related to the sealing of an individual's criminal record. The following question illustrates some of these differences in student achievement on the 2015 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test.

In question 10 (blueprinted as a **Skills and Processes** question), students were required to consider the message in a cartoon in one source to determine why a bill described in another source was enacted into law in Canada (SO 9.S.1).

- 10.** Considering the cartoonist's message in Source II, details in Source III reveal that Bill C-23A was **most likely** enacted in order to
- A.** reintegrate convicted criminals into society
 - *B.** restrict the eligibility of applicants for pardons
 - C.** simplify the process by which pardons are granted
 - D.** ensure that criminals are convicted of crimes committed

The correct answer (option **B**) was chosen by 42.8% of all students who wrote the test. These students were able to determine—from a cartoon depicting automobiles in a line at a “drive-thru” business that provides pardons—that the key features of Bill C-23A described were intended to restrict the eligibility of applicants for pardons. Option **A** (selected by 23.5% of all students) references a potential benefit of pardons in enabling individuals convicted of crimes to reintegrate into society should their offences be pardoned. Option **C** (selected by 24.7% of all students) presents the misinterpretation that Bill C-23A was intended to simplify the process by which pardons are granted. Both of these options, however, fail to consider the cartoonist's message regarding the ease with which pardons could be obtained and do not account for the restrictive elements of Bill C-23A identified. Option **D** (selected by 9.0% of all students) reflects the misunderstanding that pardons are in some way related to the convicting of individuals who have been

found guilty of having committed crimes and neglects to consider the premise that pardons provide individuals who have been convicted of crimes with the opportunity to have their criminal record sealed. Overall, the correct answer for this question was selected by 40.9% of those students who achieved the acceptable standard, 67.9% of those students who met the standard of excellence, and 25.3% of those students who did not achieve the acceptable standard.

In the section of the 2015 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 legislative processes in Canada (Specific Outcome 9.1.6) and assess, critically, how the increased demand for recognition of collective rights has impacted legislative processes in Canada (Specific Outcome 9.1.7) by exploring and reflecting on questions and issues regarding:

- In what ways has the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms fostered recognition of individual rights in Canada? (SO 9.1.6)
- How does the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms support individuals in exercising their rights? (SO 9.1.6)
- In what ways has the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms fostered recognition of collective rights in Canada? (SO 9.1.7)
- In what ways does the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms meet the needs of Francophones in minority settings? (SO 9.1.7)
- To what extent should federal and provincial governments support and promote the rights of official-language minorities in Canada? (SO 9.1.7)
- How does the Indian Act recognize the status and identity of Aboriginal peoples? (SO 9.1.7)

Students who met the acceptable standard were able to identify how the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects the rights of individuals, how the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms meets the needs of Francophones in minority settings, and how the Indian Act recognizes the collective rights of First Nations peoples. Students who achieved the standard of excellence were additionally able to appreciate the societal implications of the Canadian government’s promotion of the rights of individuals, assess the extent to which minority-language educational rights have been guaranteed to official-language communities in Alberta, and acknowledge the values underlying disparate viewpoints and perspectives pertaining to negotiations between First Nations peoples and Canada’s federal government with regard to the terms of the Indian Act. For students who did not meet the acceptable standard, questions that required forming generalizations regarding both the rights and responsibilities of Canadians, making connections among historical events related to official-language rights in Canada, or synthesizing information related to the inherent rights of First Nations peoples frequently proved challenging. Some of these differences in student achievement on the 2015 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test are demonstrated in the following question.

In question 21 (blueprinted as a **Skills and Processes** question), students were required to determine, from information in a magazine article, an individual’s viewpoint regarding the actions of the First Nations described (SO 9.S.1).

- | |
|--|
| <p>21. Details in Source II reveal that Stewart Phillip considers the actions of the Tsawwassen First Nation and the Gitksan First Nation to be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">*A. unacceptable, because both First Nations are surrendering their treaty rightsB. unacceptable, because both First Nations face opposition from their own membershipC. acceptable, because both First Nations are seeking to promote economic developmentD. acceptable, because both First Nations have the right to sign treaties with the federal government |
|--|

Of all students who wrote the test, 52.1% chose the keyed response (option **A**). These students were able to identify details in a magazine article that describe how “grand chief of the B.C. Union of Indian Chiefs” Stewart Phillip protested and “labelled the treaty a fraud and a sell-out” in relation to the Tsawwassen treaty’s terms regarding “tax exemptions and claims to Aboriginal title” and conclude that he would find these terms unacceptable because “in the wider Aboriginal community” such treaty rights are “widely seen as non-negotiable mandates.” Option **B** (selected by 21.5% of all students) references

the detail that “The Gitksan’s own membership is deeply divided” but incorrectly suggests that this is the basis for Stewart Phillip’s opposition to the Tsawwassen treaty. Option **C** (selected by 13.4% of all students) references how “B.C.’s Gitksan” are willing “to hand over reserves, tax exemptions, free housing and, yes, the ambition of a separate order of government in return for a bigger prize: a share of resources on ancestral land” in order to promote economic development but incorrectly suggests that Stewart Phillip would be supportive of the Gitksan’s actions. Option **D** (selected by 13.0% of all students) acknowledges the fact that First Nations possess the right to negotiate the terms of treaties with Canada’s federal government but presents the misinterpretation that Stewart Phillip supports this right with regard to the actions of the Gitksan First Nation. Of those students who met the acceptable standard, 52.2% answered this question correctly. Of those students who met the standard of excellence, 83.0% chose the correct answer. Of those students who did not achieve the acceptable standard, 25.8% selected the correct response.

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 on questions and issues related to:

- What factors influence immigration policies in Canada (i.e., economic, political, health, security)? (SO 9.1.8)
- How are changes to Canadian policies on immigration and refugees a reflection of world issues? (SO 9.1.8)
- How are provincial governments able to influence and implement immigration policies? (SO 9.1.8)
- How is the implementation of immigration policies in Québec an attempt to strengthen the French language in North America? (SO 9.1.8)
- What is the relationship between immigration policies in Canada and the rights guaranteed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms? (SO 9.1.8)

Those students who achieved the acceptable standard were able to identify key factors related to Canada’s policies on immigration and refugees and demonstrate a basic understanding of the intent underlying the implementation of immigration policies in Québec. Students achieving the standard of excellence could also assess concerns related to the need to ensure that all immigration applicants are treated equitably and appreciate the complexities inherent in balancing the rights of immigrants to Québec with the interests of the provincial government in preserving the cultures and identities of Francophones in Québec. Students who did not meet the acceptable standard sometimes had difficulty with the analysis of issues arising from the application of Canada’s policies on immigration and refugees as well as with the acknowledgement of conflicting viewpoints related to the impact of provincial immigration policies aimed at strengthening Québec’s unique cultural identity on immigrants to Québec. Such differences in student achievement on the 2015 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test are shown in the following question.

In question 23 (blueprinted as a **Knowledge and Understanding** question), students were required to recognize what defines individuals who are classified as refugees under Canada’s immigration laws (SO 9.1.8).

- 23.** According to Canada’s immigration laws, “refugees” (Source I) are defined as individuals who are seeking to
- A.** find temporary housing
 - *B.** escape from persecution
 - C.** reunite with family members
 - D.** gain employment in the trades

Of all students who wrote the test, 83.5% were able to recall—from their knowledge of the immigration categories that are defined by Canada’s Immigration and Refugee Protection Act—that individuals who are escaping persecution, torture, or cruel and unusual punishment are classified as refugees under Canada’s immigration laws, and chose the keyed response (option **B**). Option **A** (selected by 8.4% of all students) identifies how some refugees may initially need to seek temporary housing on their arrival in Canada but the assumption that this is a defining characteristic of refugees under Canada’s immigration laws is incorrect. Option **C** (selected by 3.3% of all students) identifies a characteristic of individuals who are, under Canada’s immigration laws, categorized as “family class” immigrants, an immigration

category distinct from refugees. Option **D** (selected by 4.9% of all students) identifies a characteristic that would apply to individuals who are, under Canada’s immigration laws, categorized as “economic class” immigrants, an immigration category that is also distinct from refugees. Of those students who met the acceptable standard, 89.7% answered this question correctly. Of those students who met the standard of excellence, 97.8% chose the correct answer. Of those students who did not achieve the acceptable standard, 59.3% selected the correct response.

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 on questions and issues pertaining to:

- What are the principles of a market economy? (SO 9.2.4)
- Why do governments intervene in a market economy? (SO 9.2.4)
- Why is Canada viewed as having a mixed economy? (SO 9.2.4)
- What is the role of the consumer in market and mixed economies? (SO 9.2.4)
- To what extent do consumer actions reflect individual and collective identity? (SO 9.2.4)
- How do the economic systems of Canada and the United States differ in answering the basic economic question of scarcity? (SO 9.2.4)

Students who met the acceptable standard were able to recognize key differences in the roles played by consumers in market and mixed economies and were able to identify in general terms the impact of government intervention on the economy. Students who achieved the standard of excellence were additionally able to form generalizations regarding the societal implications of decisions made by businesses in market and mixed economies and explore the values underlying conflicting viewpoints pertaining to initiatives used by Canada’s government to foster the financial well-being of Canadians. Students who did not achieve the acceptable standard were often challenged by questions that required consideration of the advantages and disadvantages for consumers and businesses of government intervention in market and mixed economies or synthesis of information in multiple sources to determine the central economic issue regarding government intervention in the economy that is raised. The following question illustrates some of these differences in student achievement on the 2015 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test.

In question 31 (blueprinted as a **Knowledge and Understanding** question), students were required to identify the basic economic question for which the answer is most directly determined by consumers in a market economy (SO 9.2.4).

- 31.** In a “Market Economy” (Source I), consumers **most directly** determine the answer to which of the following basic economic questions?
- A.** Which resources will be used to produce goods?
 - B.** Where will goods be produced?
 - C.** When will goods be produced?
 - *D.** What goods will be produced?

Of all students who wrote the test, 61.7% were able to apply their knowledge of how a market economy addresses the basic economic problem of scarcity in order to recognize that consumer demand most directly influences the decisions of businesses with regard to what goods will be produced, and chose the keyed response (option **D**). Option **A** (selected by 20.6% of all students), Option **B** (selected by 10.1% of all students), and Option **C** (selected by 7.4% of all students) identify questions that must be answered by businesses with regard to the resources that will be used to produce goods, where goods will be produced, and when goods will be produced, but decisions made by businesses with regard to these questions are typically not directly influenced by consumers. Of those students who met the acceptable standard, 64.2% answered this question correctly. Of those students who met the standard of excellence, 93.0% chose the correct answer. Of those students who did not achieve the acceptable standard, 30.7% selected the correct response.

In the blueprint 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 on questions and issues regarding:

- How does individual consumer behaviour impact quality of life (e.g., environmental issues)? (SO 9.2.5)
- How does marketing impact consumerism? (SO 9.2.5)
- How does consumerism provide opportunities for and limitations on impacting quality of life? (SO 9.2.5)
- How is consumerism used as a power of a collective (e.g., boycotts)? (SO 9.2.5)
- What societal values underlie social programs in Canada and the United States? (SO 9.2.5)
- How do government decisions on environmental issues impact quality of life (i.e., preservation, exploitation, and trade of natural resources)? (SO 9.2.6)

Students achieving the acceptable standard were able to apply their knowledge of the purposes of Canada's Employment Insurance program, recall the effect that consumer decisions have on decisions made by businesses, and acknowledge the impact of economic development on the environment. Students who achieved the standard of excellence could also appreciate the difficulty of sustaining Canada's Employment Insurance program in light of the high demand for the economic supports it provides to Canadians, were able to examine the impact of consumer behaviour on quality of life, and could appreciate the difficulty of reconciling differing viewpoints related to the impact of economic development on wildlife habitats. Those students who did not meet the acceptable standard often had difficulty interpreting the financial implications of maintaining Canada's Employment Insurance program and the consequences of economic choices made by consumers, as well as with recognizing the far-reaching effects of economic development on the environment. Some of the aforementioned differences in student performance are evident in the following question taken from the 2015 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test.

Question 42 (blueprinted as a **Skills and Processes** question) required that students synthesize information to determine the question that identifies the issue most clearly raised by three sources (SO 9.S.4).

42. Which of the following questions identifies an issue **most clearly** raised by all three sources?
- A. Should government provide tax breaks to stimulate job creation?
 - B. Are businesses responsible for providing employee pension plans?
 - *C. Should government provide financial support for Canadians in need?
 - D. What role do businesses play in providing for the needs of Canadians?

The correct answer (C) was selected by 75.4% of all students who wrote the test. These students were able to synthesize information presented in three sources related to Canada's Employment Insurance program in order to conclude that the issue most clearly raised pertains to the extent to which publicly funded social programs should provide for individuals who are in need. Option A, selected by 7.3% of all students, presents an idea related to how tax breaks provided by government that are intended to stimulate job creation may have an impact on the number of individuals seeking employment insurance benefits, but this is not the issue most clearly raised by the sources. Option B, selected by 6.5% of all students, presents an idea related to the extent to which businesses are responsible for the provision of employee pension plans, but this is also not the issue most clearly raised by the information pertaining to Canada's Employment Insurance program in the sources. Option D, selected by 10.8% of all students, identifies an issue related to the extent to which businesses have a role to play in providing for the needs of Canadians, but this as well is not the issue most clearly raised by the information pertaining to Canada's Employment Insurance program in the sources. Many students who achieved the acceptable standard were able to choose the correct answer, with 79.6% choosing the keyed response. The majority of students who achieved the standard of excellence (95.7%) chose the correct answer, while 50.2% of students who did not meet the acceptable standard correctly answered the question.

Overall, student achievement on the 2015 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test was strong. Most students (73.5%) were able to achieve the acceptable standard and 22.4% of all students achieved the standard of excellence. Of all students who wrote the test, 26.5% did not achieve 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. Click on one of the specific links 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 Provincial 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 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 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 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 [*Alberta Provincial Achievement Testing Parent Guide*](#) for grades 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 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.