

Grade 6

Assessment Highlights
English Language Arts

Alberta Provincial Achievement Testing
2017–2018

This document is an assessment highlights report on the 2018 Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test.

The assessment highlights report provides information about the test overall, test blueprints, and student performance on the English form of the 2018 Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test. Also provided is commentary on student performance at the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence both in *Part A: Writing* and on selected items (common to both the 2017 and 2018 achievement tests) from *Part B: Reading*. 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 are posted on the Alberta Education website every year in the fall.

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The [Alberta Education](http://www.education.alberta.ca) website address is [education.alberta.ca](http://www.education.alberta.ca).

This document was written primarily for:

Students	
Teachers	✓
Administrators	✓
Parents	
General Audience	
Others	

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The 2018 Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test

This report provides teachers, school administrators, and the public with an overview of the performance of those students who wrote the 2018 Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test. It complements the detailed school and jurisdiction reports.

How Many Students Wrote the Test?

A total of 46 678 students in Alberta wrote the 2018 Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test.

What Was the Test Like?

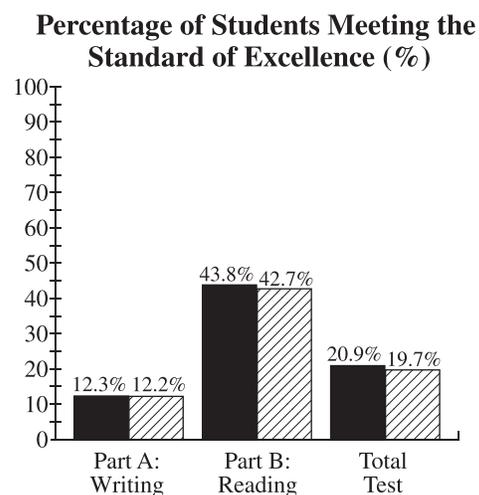
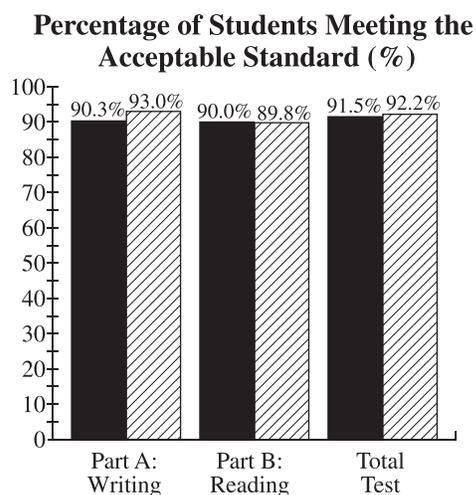
The 2018 Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test had two parts that were weighted equally.

Part A: Writing consisted of a narrative/essay writing assignment (worth 35 marks) and a functional writing assignment (worth 20 marks) for a total of 55 marks. The narrative/essay writing assignment provided students with a coloured picture to which they were to respond in narrative form. The functional writing assignment required students to use specific information to create a newspaper article.

Part B: Reading consisted of 50 multiple-choice questions based on reading selections that were either informational or narrative/poetic in nature.

How Well Did Students Do?

The percentages of students meeting the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence in 2018 and 2017 are shown in the graphs below. Out of a total score of 100 on the test (parts A and B), the provincial average was 68.4/100 (68.4%). 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 are provided in school and jurisdiction reports.



 2017 Achievement Standards: The percentage of students in the province that met the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence on the 2017 Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test (based on those who wrote).

 2018 Achievement Standards: The percentage of students in the province that met the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence on the 2018 Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test (based on those who wrote).

Part A: Writing—2018 Test Blueprint

The blueprints for *Part A: Writing* identify the scoring/reporting categories by which student writing is assessed and by which 2018 summary data are reported to schools and school authorities, a description of the writing assignments, and the achievement standards.

Writing Assignment and Reporting Categories	Description of Writing Assignments	Achievement Standards	
Assignment I: Narrative/Essay Writing			
<p>Content* (selecting ideas and details to achieve a purpose)</p> <p>Students respond to a picture prompt by writing a narrative. 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 Narrative Writing Assignment is a picture prompt meant to stimulate the imagination of the student. Students may organize their story ideas on a provided planning page.</p>	<p>Student achievement in each reporting category will be described according to the following standard statements:</p>	
<p>Organization* (organizing ideas and details into a coherent whole)</p> <p>Students organize their ideas to produce a unified and coherent narrative that links events, details, sentences, and paragraphs.</p>			<p>Meets the standard of excellence</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>Approaches the standard of excellence</p>
<p>Vocabulary (selecting and using words and expressions correctly and effectively)</p> <p>Students choose specific words and expressions that are accurate and effective and that enhance the student’s voice.</p>			<p>Clearly meets the acceptable standard</p>
<p>Conventions (using the conventions of written language correctly and effectively)</p> <p>Students use conventions accurately and effectively to communicate.</p>			<p>Does not clearly meet the acceptable standard</p>
Assignment II: Functional Writing			
<p>Content* (thought and detail)</p> <p>Students organize and develop ideas for a specified purpose and audience.</p>	<p>The Functional Writing Assignment requires students to write to a specified audience in the context of a news article.</p>	<p>Clearly below the acceptable standard</p>	
<p>Content Management* (using the conventions of written language correctly and effectively)</p> <p>Students communicate accurately and effectively by selecting words and phrases appropriate to their purpose. Students demonstrate control of sentence structure, usage, mechanics, and format.</p>		<p>Insufficient</p>	

*These scoring categories are weighted to be worth twice as much as the other categories.

Part A: Writing—2018 Student Achievement

In 2018, 93.0% of students who wrote the Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test achieved the acceptable standard on *Part A: Writing* and 12.2% of students who wrote the test achieved the standard of excellence. These results are consistent with previous administrations of *Part A: Writing* of the achievement test.

Student Achievement by Assignment and Reporting Category

The quality of the writing on the 2018 Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test is consistent with that of previous years. The chart below illustrates the percentage of students achieving writing standards for each writing assignment and reporting category.

		Narrative / Essay Writing Assignment					Functional Writing Assignment	
		Reporting Category					Reporting Category	
		Content	Organization	Sentence Structure	Vocabulary	Conventions	Content	Content Management
Writing Standard	Score*	% of Students	% of Students	% of Students	% of Students	% of Students	% of Students	% of Students
Meets the Standard of Excellence	5.0	3.0	2.6	3.5	3.8	3.7	2.3	2.6
	4.5	4.8	4.4	5.2	5.4	5.1	3.8	4.0
Approaches the Standard of Excellence	4.0	14.0	13.4	15.3	16.3	17.0	12.2	12.8
Clearly Meets the Acceptable Standard	3.5	18.4	17.8	17.0	17.7	15.8	15.1	15.2
	3.0	48.9	48.4	46.0	49.8	40.7	43.2	43.8
	2.5	6.7	8.2	8.1	4.8	9.9	11.3	10.4
Does Not Clearly Meet the Acceptable Standard	2.0	3.5	4.4	4.1	1.8	6.7	10.0	9.5
	1.5	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.8	1.0	0.8
Clearly Below the Acceptable Standard	1.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.6	0.4
Insufficient / No Response	0	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.5

* Scores of 4.5, 3.5, 2.5, and 1.5 occur only when local marks and central marks are averaged. In 2018, approximately 76% of papers were marked locally, and these scores were submitted to Alberta Education. Papers with discrepant scores were given a third adjudicating reading. The third reading rescore rate was 6.73%.

Part A: Writing—Commentary on 2018 Student Achievement

During the 2018 scoring session, 180 teachers from throughout the province scored 48 104 student test booklets. Teachers who marked the tests were pleased with the quality of most papers.

On *Part A: Writing* of the 2018 Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test, students who wrote the test achieved an average of 35.6 out of a total of 55 (64.7%). The provincial average on the Narrative/Essay Writing Assignment was 23.1 out of 35 (66%), and the provincial average on the Functional Writing Assignment was 12.5 out of 20 (62.5%).

Narrative/Essay Writing Assignment

In the 2018 Narrative Writing Assignment, students were required to use a picture prompt to write a narrative response. The colour picture prompt shows a man trying to give a cracker to a large bird in a cage.

Training for the marking session always emphasizes the need to look at the strengths of the writer and to mark what is written. Markers conscientiously use their exemplar documents to support the scoring criteria in helping them distinguish between the scoring categories. Each response is reviewed according to each category in the scoring criteria. Every effort is made to score each response in a valid and reliable manner.

Students responded in a wide variety of ways to the picture prompt, bringing their prior knowledge, experience, and imagination into their writing. Students achieving the standard of excellence included substantial details, effective connections, and precise vocabulary that created vivid images and enhanced the students' voice.

The following excerpts illustrate some student responses to the picture prompt at the acceptable standard:

- I start my day of as a normal start I get ready for work. Once I got to work there was a cage with a blanket on top of it. On the blanket there was a note saying "feed me crackers" so I lifted the blanket and there was a parrot looking at me. I fed all the animals but when I get to the parrot I tried to feed him a cracker but he didn't want it, so I droped it at the bottom of his cage and did the rest of my chore around the shop. later that night I was doing a double check to make sure all the animals are in there cages when I got to the parrat's cage and he was gone.
- After awaly Scott saw a gray bird. It hod a nice read tail and a beack that was nice and shiny. Scott felt back for the bird because it was locked up in a cag. Scott saw the price for the bird. He was shocked. The bird was \$2.00. after that he started saving evrey penny he got. After tow month Scott bought the gray bird. He couldnt come up with a name, so he was going to let the bird come up with it's own name. When he got his bird he also bought toy's that hang in it's cag. Scott thought the bird might be hungry, so he tried to feed it a cracker. But then the bird got mad and pecked Scott. "Hey Im going to name you pecky" said Scott.

These examples illustrate the type of content and organization that some Grade 6 students used in their responses to the picture prompt. Some corrections may have been made to aid readability.

Each of these examples illustrates ideas that are appropriate and straightforward. The ideas are organized and have both an adequate beginning and end. The vocabulary clarifies meaning and generally enhances the students' voices.

The following excerpt illustrates a student response to the picture prompt at the standard of excellence:

- You know when you're having a perfect, chill day and then something or someone has to go and ruin it for you? This is exactly what happened to me today (and I'm not happy about it).
I was just lying on my bed, listening to music while reading a chapter from a book on an app on my iPad when suddenly, the phone rang. I groan, get out of bed and walk over to my desk where the phone is sitting. The caller ID reads a name – 'Fred.' I groan again. Fred is the most annoying kid in my neighbourhood. I walk back to my bed and ignore the call. The phone rings again. Still ignoring it. The phone keeps ringing and ringing. I stomp over to the desk and put the phone on mute. "There," I thought. "Nothing will bother me now." I'm about to get back in bed when suddenly, the doorbell rings. "What now?!" I say in frustration. I walk down the stairs, walk to the front entryway and open the front door. I almost groan again when I see who's at the door. Standing there, right in front of me, is Fred.
"Olivia!" he cries. "You have to help me!"
What do you want Fred?" I ask, not very politely.
"My parrot!" he whines. "My parrot doesn't like me and I don't know how to take care of it!"
I roll my eyes. Fred got a new parrot from his seventh birthday and he's been bragging about it non-stop. "No wonder your parrot doesn't like you," I thought. "You're super annoying."

This example illustrates the type of content, organization, sentence structure, and vocabulary that some Grade 6 students used in their responses to the picture prompt.

This example illustrates how some students selected clear and precise details and organized them in a purposeful and effective order. Words and expressions helped to create vivid images and enhanced the students' voices. Few errors in conventions were noted in the student response from which this example was taken.

Functional Writing Assignment

The 2018 Functional Writing Assignment presented students with the situation of writing a news article for their school newspaper. The students were provided with information about Alex Decoteau, an outstanding First Nations athlete, from which they were to construct an organized and effective news article. Students were successful in fulfilling the requirements of the Functional Writing Assignment by including the "who," "what," "when," "why," "where," and "how" and some supporting facts. Students were given a list of "Interesting Facts" that required some initiative on the part of students to organize the facts in a coherent and effective manner. Some students chose to select only those facts that best served their response, which was acceptable. Many students were successful in selecting vocabulary necessary for conveying a tone appropriate for a news article.

The following excerpts illustrate responses at the acceptable standard:

- A guy to remember
A guy named Alex Decoteau a first nations Albertan is getting a park named after him.
This first nations Albertan had many accomplishments.
The purpose of the article is to inform reading about a significant First nations Albertan.
He was born November 19, 1887.
He joined the police force in 1911.
Alex died 1917 in World war I.
He was in charge of his own police station.
Alex was Canada's first aboriginal police Officer. He was the first officer to ride a motorcycle. He was buried in europe.
If you want more information go on to WWW. Canada's History.com. Thank you for reading my article hope you read others by me.

- **Newborn Park**
 Yesterday at 6:00 The city of Edmonton, a ceremony of a new park happened. The park was named after a First Nations man named Alex Decoteau for his many accomplishments.
 Alex Decoteau was born on November 19, 1887. He was an excellent long distance runner and competed in the 1912 summer olympic games, he joined the Edmonton police force in 1911 and was the first Aboriginal police officer. He was also promoted to sergeant and was in charge of his own police station. He was born in Saskatchewan at the Red Pheasant Reserve and died in October, 1917 in world war I and was buried in Europe.
 Alex Decoteau was also a member of the First Nations Hall of fame. Was also a member of Alberta, and Saskatchewan Sports hall of fame.
 Named one of “100 Edmontonians of the Century” in 2004. Also In 1985 his relatives held a Cree burial ceremony to bring his spirit back to Canada. We shall remember Alex Decoteau for what he did for us.

The previous examples illustrate how students wrote news articles that directly addressed the writing prompt. These students included the purpose of the event on which they were reporting, essential details, and some interesting facts that were provided.

The following excerpt illustrates a student response that meets the standard of excellence:

- **Grand Opening of Decouteau Park!**
 Today, Decouteau Park in Edmonton will be opened to honor Alex Decouteau for everything he has done for his country.
 Alex was born on November 19, 1887, and he was born on the Red Pheasant Reserve in Saskatchewan. In 1911, he decided to join the Edmonton police force. He was the first ever Aboriginal police officer in Canada, and the first city police officer ever to use a motorcycle. Soon enough, he got promoted to a police sergeant for his excellent work, and after that became the boss of a police station. He remains today one of the best police officers Edmonton has ever seen.
 Alex was great at sports, as well. He was an excellent long-distance runner, and competed in the 1912 summer Olympic Games. But soon after those Olympics, World War I started and he became a soldier. Then, sadly, in October 1917, he died from the war. His body was transported to Europe, where it was buried.
 In 1985, his relatives held another burial, this time a Cree burial, to bring his spirit home to Canada. Alex Decouteau was a very important man, and he is name one of “100 Edmontonians of the Century”. He is also a member of the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame, and a member of the Alberta Sports Hall of Fame. Those are the reasons why the new park is being named after Decouteau.
 We all honor Decouteau!

This excerpt illustrates the use of vocabulary, sentence structure, organization, and extensive details to create a response that met the standard of excellence. The majority of the students at this standard included most, if not all, of the facts and details that were provided. Many of the students at this standard embellished their responses with relevant descriptive details that further enhanced their responses. An appropriate tone for a news article was maintained at all times, with adept use of vocabulary and few errors in conventions.

Overall, student performance on *Part A: Writing* of the 2018 Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test was consistent with that of previous years. The majority of students continue to demonstrate success in achieving the acceptable provincial assessment standards.

Part B: Reading—2018 Test Blueprint and Student Achievement

In 2018, 89.8% of students who wrote the Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test achieved the acceptable standard on *Part B: Reading*, and 42.7% of students who wrote achieved the standard of excellence. These results are consistent with previous administrations of *Part B: Reading* of the achievement test.

Student achievement on *Part B: Reading* of the 2018 Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test averaged 36.1 out of a total score of 50 (72.2%).

The blueprint below shows the reporting categories and language functions by which 2018 summary data are reported to schools and school authorities and the provincial average of student achievement by both raw score and percentage.

Reporting Category	Language Function		Provincial Student Achievement Average Raw Score and Percentage
	Informational	Narrative/Poetic	
Identifying and Interpreting Ideas and Details Students recognize explicit or implicit ideas and details and make inferences about the relationships between ideas and details.			9.1/12 (75.8%)
Interpreting Text Organization Students identify and analyze the author’s use of genre. Students identify and analyze the author’s choice of form, organizational structure, style, literary techniques, text features, and conventions.			8.9/13 (68.5%)
Associating Meaning Students use contextual clues to determine the connotative meaning of words, phrases, and figurative language.			8.0/10 (80.0%)
Synthesizing Ideas Students make generalizations by integrating information from an entire selection in order to identify the purpose, theme, main idea, or mood of the selection.			10.1/15 (67.3%)
Provincial Student Achievement Average Raw Score and Percentage	15.0/20 (75%)	21.1/30 (70.3%)	<i>Part B: Reading</i> Total Test Raw Score = 50

Part B: Reading—Commentary on 2018 Student Achievement

The following discussion addresses specific areas of strength and weakness demonstrated by students who wrote the 2018 Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test. Sample questions from the 2018 Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test are provided to highlight these areas for students meeting the acceptable standard and for those meeting the standard of excellence on *Part B: Reading*. For each sample question, the keyed answer is marked with an asterisk. These questions are no longer secured and will not be reused on future achievement tests.

Multiple-choice question 35 required students to identify a phrase that provides an indication of a character’s mood in an excerpt from a novel. This question belongs in the **Identifying and Interpreting Ideas and Details** reporting category.

35. The statement that **most clearly** indicates that Jackson is enjoying Emily’s struggle to climb the tree is
- *A. “‘Haw haw!’ came Jackson’s voice from above her” (line 8)
 - B. “‘J-J-Jackson!’ she called shakily. ‘Help me!’” (line 19)
 - C. “‘Jackson!’ she pleaded” (line 21)
 - D. “‘Well,’ Jackson said. ‘You made it this far’” (line 29)

This question was quite easy, with 81.8% of students answering correctly. Option **B** was chosen 8.9% of the time. Option **C** was chosen 3.1% of the time. Option **D** was chosen 6.1% of the time. Approximately 87.1% of students who met the acceptable standard were able to answer this question correctly, whereas approximately 97.0% of students who met the standard of excellence chose the correct response.

Multiple-choice question 36 required students to identify the meaning of a word using context clues in an excerpt from a novel. This question belongs in the **Associating Meaning** reporting category.

36. In the context of line 25, the word “howled” means
- A. cried in pain
 - B. mumbled out loud
 - *C. roared with laughter
 - D. whimpered and moaned

This question was straightforward, with 76.7% of students answering correctly. Option **A** was chosen 9.9% of the time. Option **B** was chosen 6.5% of the time. Option **D** was chosen 6.8% of the time. Approximately 82.7% of students who met the acceptable standard were able to answer this question correctly, whereas approximately 97.2% of students who met the standard of excellence chose the correct response.

Multiple-choice question 37 required students to recall the meaning of a literary device used in an excerpt from a novel. This question belongs in the **Interpreting Text Organization** reporting category.

37. The statement “She imagined that she would spend the rest of her life wrapped around that branch” (lines 32 to 33) is an example of
- A. synecdoche
 - *B. hyperbole
 - C. metaphor
 - D. mood

This question was challenging, with 53.5% of students answering correctly. Option **A** was chosen 11.9% of the time. Option **C** was chosen 23.0% of the time. Option **D** was chosen 11.4% of the time. Approximately 52.8% of students who met the acceptable standard were able to answer this question correctly, whereas approximately 77.9% of students who met the standard of excellence chose the correct response.

Multiple-choice question 39 required students to evaluate details to determine the traits of a character in an excerpt from a novel. This question belongs in the **Synthesizing Ideas** reporting category.

39. Emily **most clearly** demonstrates the character traits of being
- *A. persistent and determined
 - B. supportive and friendly
 - C. respectful and careless
 - D. brave and shy

This question was also fairly straightforward, with 67.5% of students answering correctly. Option **B** was chosen 4.9% of the time. Option **C** was chosen 4.0% of the time. Option **D** was chosen 23.4% of the time. Approximately 72.5% of students who met the acceptable standard were able to answer this question correctly, whereas approximately 89.2% of students who met the standard of excellence chose the correct response.

Provincial Achievement Testing Program Support Documents

The Alberta Education website contains several documents that provide valuable information about various aspects of the provincial achievement testing program. To access these documents, go to the [Alberta Education website](#). 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 provincial 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 provincial 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 provincial achievement tests in grades 6 and 9 English Language Arts and Français/French Language Arts, writing samples are designed for 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 provincial achievement tests (parts A and B) for Grade 9 semestered students are secured and must be returned to Alberta Education. All May/June provincial 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 answers frequently asked questions about the provincial achievement testing program and provides 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 provincial 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 provincial achievement test results to improve student learning.