Alberta Provincial Achievement Testing

Subject Bulletin
2015–2016

GRADE 6

English Language Arts

Alberta Government

This document was written primarily for:

Students	
Teachers	✓ Grade 6 English Language Arts
Administrators	✓
Parents	
General Audience	
Others	

Contents

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

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

Grade 6 English Language Arts Assessment

Special-Format Practice Tests

To provide students an opportunity to practise provincial achievement test-style questions and content in Braille, audio, large print, or coloured print versions, Alberta Education is making special-format practice tests available. Tests are offered in all subjects with a corresponding provincial achievement test. Alberta schools with registered Alberta K-12 students may place orders for these tests. Braille tests are available in English, and by request in French. All tests are provided free of charge, but limits may be placed on order volumes to ensure access for everyone. For more information, contact 780-427-0010.

General Description

The Grade 6 English Language Arts Achievement Test is composed of two parts—*Part A: Writing* and *Part B: Reading*.

Part A: Writing consists of two writing assignments—one narrative and one functional—developed to be completed in two hours. For the first 10 minutes of the two hours, students may discuss both assignments with classmates in groups of two to four or think alone about the prompts. Students will engage in this discussion time without teacher participation. During this discussion time, students may record their ideas on the *Planning* pages provided. The allotted two hours provide students with time for planning, drafting, and revising of both the narrative and functional writing. Students may take an additional 30 minutes to complete the test.

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 or her writing.

> Students may use print versions of commercially published dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries, picture dictionaries, and a commercially published thesaurus when completing *Part A* **only**.

Students may do their writing using a computer. For information about using word-processing technology to complete the written components of the achievement test, see the *Subject Bulletins*.

Part B: Reading (multiple choice) is developed to be completed in 60 minutes; however, students may take an additional 30 minutes to complete the test. The test consists of 50 multiple-choice questions based on reading selections from fiction, nonfiction, drama, poetry, and visual media. 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.

Description of Language Arts 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 *Program of Study*. These statements represent examples of the standards against which student achievement is measured. It is important to remember that one test cannot measure all of the outcomes in the *Program of Study*.

Acceptable Standard	*Standard of Excellence*
Students who meet the *acceptable standard* are able to	Students who meet the *standard of excellence* are able to
• communicate information and ideas for a specific audience	• consistently establish an appropriate focus for communication, and select ideas and language to suit different purposes and audiences
• use words and expressions that convey relevant, general meanings	• use words and expressions that convey purposeful, specific meanings
• organize concrete, factual materials containing straightforward ideas	• analyze and evaluate ideas received from a wide variety of print and non-print materials representing many perspectives
• recognize some complex techniques of literary structure and organization, such as cause and effect and flashback	• recognize complex techniques of literary structure and/or organization, and apply them to their own writing
• read relatively short, simple selections of poetry and prose, fiction, and nonfiction, and identify the main idea, sequence of events, key details, author's purpose, and imagery	• deal effectively with abstract and complex details and ideas found in longer, sophisticated selections of poetry and prose, fictional and nonfictional
• use textual clues and prior knowledge to associate the meaning of words and phrases in straightforward text	• use textual clues and prior knowledge to associate the meanings of words and phrases in complex or unfamiliar text
• consistently answer literal idea, detail, and relationship questions; occasionally understand implied ideas, details, and relationships	• readily answer literal as well as implied idea, detail, and relationship questions

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Part A: Writing

Section I of *Part A: Writing* consists of a picture prompt that students are asked to respond to in the form of a story. Section I includes a page labelled *Planning* as well as lined pages for the students' writing.

Section II of *Part A: Writing* requires students to write for a specific audience and to fulfill a specified purpose within a given context. The functional writing assignment requires students to write a news article.

For both sections of *Part A: Writing*, students will be able to remove the writing prompts from the writing booklet and keep the prompts in front of them while they plan and write. Each section includes a page labelled *Planning* and 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, it is felt that students benefit most from spending their time composing and revising their work rather than from perfecting a "good copy."

Important Reminders

In order to facilitate valid and fair marking for all students during the July marking session, it is important that teachers

- have students plan their writing only on the page provided in the booklet
- follow the procedures for scribing papers, as outlined in the *General Information Bulletin*
- follow the procedures regarding classroom materials, as outlined in the *General Information Bulletin*
- not write anything in the booklets; for example, marks and rationales awarded at the school, spelling corrections, or interpretations of words and/or sentences written by their students

Blueprint for Part A: Section I—Narrative Writing

The blueprint below shows the reporting categories under which summary data will be reported to schools and school authorities.

Reporting Category	Description of Writing Assignment	Standards
Content* (selecting ideas and details to achieve a purpose) Students select ideas, events, and details to support their purpose. Students describe characters and setting using details that are appropriate for the context established. **Organization*** (organizing ideas and details into a coherent whole) Students organize their ideas to form a unified composition. Students establish connections or relationships among events, actions, details, and/or characters to support their purpose. **Sentence Structure** (structuring sentences effectively) Students control sentence structure and use a variety of sentence types and sentence lengths to enhance communication. **Vocabulary** (selecting and using words and expressions correctly and effectively) Students choose words and expressions to convey meaning appropriate for context, audience, and purpose. **Conventions** (using the conventions of written language correctly and effectively) Students use conventions accurately and effectively to enhance communication.	The narrative writing assignment requires students to respond to a picture prompt that is included in the test booklet. Students are to respond to the prompt by writing a story that the picture makes them think about.	Students' achievement in each reporting category will be described according to the following descriptors: Excellent Proficient Satisfactory Limited Poor Insufficient The marker can discern no evidence of an attempt to fulfill the assignment, or the writing is so deficient in length that it is not possible to assess **content.**

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

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Local Marking

Before returning the tests to Alberta Education, classroom teachers will be able to mark students' writing using the scoring guides that are provided in the 2014 Scoring Guide, Exemplars and Rationales that are delivered with the test. 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 the "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 samples of student writing that exemplify the scoring criteria with the test materials. These exemplars are not to be shared with students and must be returned to Alberta Education with the tests. Throughout the school year, teachers can refer to *Examples of the Standards for Students' Writing* on the Alberta Education website under *Provincial Achievement Tests*. Writing by Grade 6 students, along with scoring criteria, is posted at this location. Teachers can also access the rubrics used to assess Grade 6 English Language Arts writing under *Scoring Guides*. A total score for a student's writing may be calculated by following the procedure on the next page.

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Calculating Local Marks

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:

Narrative Writing

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 Narrative Writing = 35

Functional Writing

1. Assign a score of 1 to 5 for each of *content* and *content management*.
2. Multiply these scores by 2.

Maximum score possible for Functional Writing = 20

Total Score

1. Add the narrative and functional scores.

Total score for *Part A: Writing*	
Narrative Writing	_/35 (63.6%)
+ Functional Writing	_/20 (36.4%)
= Total Score	_/55 (100%)

The mark for *Part A: Writing* is worth 50% of the total mark for English Language Arts.

Teachers may make a photocopy of a student's writing from the *English Language Arts Part A: Writing* test for inclusion in a portfolio of the year's work. Copies can also be made for parents who request them.

Information for Teachers Participating in Central Marking

Provincial Assessment Sector staff will contact superintendents in the spring for their nomination 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 Professional 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 15. 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.

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Content

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">*Focus*</td></tr>
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When marking **Content** appropriate for Grade 6 narrative writing, the marker should consider how effectively the writer

• establishes a context
• uses ideas and/or events that are appropriate for the established context
• uses specific details (of characters, setting, actions, events, etc.)
• demonstrates an awareness of audience
</td></tr>
</table>

Excellent **E**	• The context is clearly established and consistent. • The ideas and/or events are creative and deliberately chosen for the context established. • Supporting details are precise and consistently effective. • The writing is confident and/or creative and holds the reader's interest.
Proficient **Pf**	• The context is clearly established and appropriate. • The ideas and/or events are intentionally chosen for the context established. • Supporting details are specific and generally effective. • The writing is purposeful and draws the reader's interest.
Satisfactory **S**	• The context is established and generally appropriate. • The ideas and/or events are adequate for the context established. • Supporting details are general and may be predictable. • The writing is straightforward and generally holds the reader's interest.
Limited **L**	• The context is vaguely established and/or may not be appropriate. • The ideas and/or events are vague given the context established. • Supporting details are few and/or may be repetitive. • The writing is superficial and does not hold the reader's interest.
Poor **P**	• The context may be unclear and/or inappropriate. • The ideas and/or events are undeveloped and/or unrelated to any context established. • Supporting details are scant. • The writing is confusing and/or frustrating for the reader.
Insufficient **INS**	• The marker can discern no evidence of an attempt to fulfill the assignment, or the student 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 each of the other categories.*

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Part B: Reading

Part B: Reading of the Grade 6 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 selections.

Blueprint for Part B: Reading

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

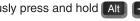| Reporting Category	Language Function		Number (Percentage) of Questions
	Informational	Narrative/Poetic	
Identifying and Interpreting Ideas and Details Students recognize explicit or implicit ideas and details, and make inferences about the relationships between ideas and details.	6	9	15 (30%)
Interpreting Text Organization Students identify and analyze the author's use of genre. Students identify and analyze the author's choice of form, organizational structure, literary techniques, text features, and conventions.	4	6	10 (20%)
Associating Meaning Students use contextual clues to determine the connotative meaning of words, phrases, and figurative language.	4	6	10 (20%)
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.	6	9	15 (30%)
Number (Percentage) of Questions	20 (40%)	30 (60%)	50 (100%)

Organization

Focus

When marking **Organization** appropriate for Grade 6 narrative writing, the marker should consider how effectively the writer

- introduces the response
- follows a coherent order
- establishes connections and/or relationships among events, actions, details, and/or characters
- brings closure to the writing

Excellent **E**	• The introduction is purposeful, interesting, and effectively establishes events, characters, and/or setting, and provides direction for the writing. • Events and/or details are developed in paragraphs, in a purposeful and effective order, and coherence is maintained. • Connections and/or relationships among events, actions, details, and/or characters are consistently maintained. • The ending ties events and/or actions together.
Proficient **Pf**	• The introduction clearly establishes events, characters, and/or setting, and provides direction for the writing. • Events and/or details are developed in paragraphs, in a purposeful order, and coherence is generally maintained. • Connections and/or relationships among events, actions, details, and/or characters are maintained. • The ending provides an appropriate finish for events and/or actions.
Satisfactory **S**	• The introduction directly presents information about events, characters, and/or setting. • Events and/or details developed in a discernible order, although coherence may falter occasionally. • Connections and/or relationships among events, actions, details, and/or characters are generally maintained. • The ending is predictable and/or contrived, and is connected to events and/or actions.
Limited **L**	• The introduction presents information about events, characters, and/or setting but lacks direction. • The development of events and/or details is not clearly discernible, and coherence falters frequently. • Connections and/or relationships among events, actions, details, and/or characters are unclear and/or inconsistent or missing. • The ending is predictable and/or contrived, and may not be connected to events and/or actions.
Poor **P**	• The introduction provides little information and/or is ineffective. • The development of events and/or details is haphazard and incoherent. • Connections and/or relationships among events, actions, details, and/or characters are missing. • The ending, if present, is unconnected to the events and/or actions.
Insufficient **INS**	• The writing has been awarded an INS for **Content**.

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

Blueprint for Part A: Section II—Functional Writing

The blueprint below shows the reporting categories under which summary data will be reported to schools and school authorities.

Reporting Category	Description of Writing Assignment	Standards
Content (thought and detail) Students organize and develop ideas for a specified purpose and audience. **Content Management** (using the conventions of written language correctly and effectively) Students communicate clearly and effectively by selecting words and phrases appropriate to their purpose. Students demonstrate control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics.	The functional writing assignment requires students to write to a specific audience for a specified purpose within the context of a news article.	Students' achievement in each reporting category will be described according to the following descriptors: Excellent Proficient Satisfactory Limited Poor Insufficient

Sentence Structure

> *Focus*
>
> When marking **Sentence Structure** appropriate for Grade 6 narrative writing, the marker should consider the
>
> - writer's control of sentence structure
> - effectiveness and variety of sentence type and sentence length
> - variety of sentence beginnings
>
> **Length and complexity of response must be considered.**

Excellent **E**	• Sentence structure is effectively and consistently controlled. • Sentence type and sentence length are consistently effective and varied. • Sentence beginnings are consistently varied.
Proficient **Pf**	• Sentence structure is controlled. • Sentence type and sentence length are usually effective and varied. • Sentence beginnings are often varied.
Satisfactory **S**	• Sentence structure is generally controlled, but lapses may occasionally impede the meaning. • Sentence type and sentence length are sometimes effective and/or varied. • Some variety of sentence beginnings is evident.
Limited **L**	• Sentence structure often lacks control, and this may impede the meaning. • There is little variation of sentence type and sentence length. • There is little variety of sentence beginnings.
Poor **P**	• Sentence structure generally lacks control, and this often impedes the meaning. • There is no variation of sentence type or sentence length. • There is no variety of sentence beginnings.
Insufficient **INS**	• The writing has been awarded an INS for **Content**.

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Vocabulary

Focus

When marking **Vocabulary** appropriate for Grade 6 narrative writing, the marker should consider the extent to which the writer uses

• words and expressions accurately
• words and expressions effectively
• words and expressions to enhance the student's voice

Length and complexity of response must be considered.

Excellent **E**	• Words and expressions are used accurately. • Precise words and expressions are used to create vivid images and/or to enrich details. • Words and expressions are used to enhance the student's voice.
Proficient **Pf**	• Words and expressions are often used accurately. • Specific words and expressions are frequently used to create images and/or to add clarity to details. • Words and expressions are descriptive and often enhance the student's voice.
Satisfactory **S**	• Words and expressions are generally used appropriately. • General words and expressions are used adequately to clarify meaning. • Words and expressions sometimes enhance the student's voice.
Limited **L**	• Words and expressions generally convey only vague meanings. • Imprecise words and expressions predominate; specific words, if present, may be awkwardly used. • Words and expressions are basic and may detract from the student's voice.
Poor **P**	• Words and expressions convey only vague meanings. • Overgeneralized words and expressions predominate; specific words, if present, are frequently misused. • Words and expressions are simple and/or obscure the student's voice.
Insufficient **INS**	• The writing has been awarded an INS for **Content**.

Conventions

> ### *Focus*
>
> When marking **Conventions** appropriate for Grade 6 narrative writing, the marker should consider the extent to which the writer has control of
>
> - mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, indentation for new speakers, etc.) and usage (subject–verb agreement, pronoun–antecedent agreement, etc.)
> - clarity and flow of the communication
>
> **Proportion of error to length and complexity of response must be considered.**

Excellent **E**	• The quality of the writing is enhanced because it is essentially error-free. • Errors, if present, do not reduce the clarity or interrupt the flow of the communication.
Proficient **Pf**	• The quality of the writing is sustained because it contains only minor convention errors. • Errors that are present rarely reduce the clarity or interrupt the flow of the communication.
Satisfactory **S**	• The quality of the writing is maintained through generally correct use of conventions. • Errors that are present occasionally reduce the clarity and sometimes interrupt the flow of the communication.
Limited **L**	• The quality of the writing is weakened by the frequently incorrect use of conventions. • Errors often reduce the clarity and interrupt the flow of the communication.
Poor **P**	• The quality of the writing is impaired by the consistently incorrect use of conventions. • Errors severely reduce the clarity and impede the flow of the communication.
Insufficient **INS**	• The writing has been awarded an INS for **Content**.

Content

Focus

When marking **Content** appropriate for Grade 6 functional writing, the marker should consider

- effectiveness of development and organization of the news article
- whether the purpose of the assignment is fulfilled with complete and appropriate information
- appropriateness of tone for the assignment and awareness of audience is evident

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Excellent **E**	• The ideas are well developed, and organization of the news article is clear and effective. • Complete information is presented, and this information is enhanced by precise and appropriate details that effectively fulfill the purpose of the assignment. • A tone appropriate for the assignment is clearly and effectively maintained.
Proficient **Pf**	• The ideas are generally well developed, and organization of the news article is generally effective. • Complete information is presented, and this information is substantiated by appropriate details that fulfill the purpose of the assignment. • A tone appropriate for the assignment is clearly maintained.
Satisfactory **S**	• The ideas are adequately developed, and organization of the news article is adequate. • Some information is given, and this information is supported by enough details to fulfill the purpose of the assignment. • A tone appropriate for the assignment is generally maintained.
Limited **L**	• The ideas are poorly developed, and organization of the news article is ineffective. • Essential information may be missing. Supporting details are scant, insignificant, and/or irrelevant. The purpose of the assignment is only partially fulfilled. • A tone appropriate for the assignment is evident but not maintained.
Poor **P**	• The ideas are not developed, and organization of the news article is inadequate. • Essential information and supporting details are inappropriate or lacking. The purpose of the assignment is not fulfilled. • Little awareness of tone appropriate for the assignment is evident.
Insufficient **INS**	• The marker can discern no evidence of an attempt to fulfill the assignment, or the student has written so little that it is not possible to assess **Content**.

Note: **Content** *and* **Content Management** *are equally weighted.*

Please advise students that their work must relate to the assignment. Those assignments that are completely off topic will be awarded a mark of **Insufficient**.

Content Management

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When marking **Content Management** appropriate for Grade 6 functional writing, the marker should consider

• accuracy and effectiveness of words and expressions
• control of sentence structures, usage, and mechanics (spelling, punctuation, etc.)
• clarity and flow of the communication

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

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Excellent **E**	• Words and expressions used are consistently accurate and effective. • The writing demonstrates confident and consistent control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. • Errors, if present, do not reduce the clarity or interrupt the flow of the communication.
Proficient **Pf**	• Words and expressions used are usually accurate and effective. • The writing demonstrates competent and generally consistent control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. • Errors that are present rarely reduce the clarity or interrupt the flow of the communication.
Satisfactory **S**	• Words and expressions used are generally accurate and occasionally effective. • The writing demonstrates basic control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. • Errors that are present occasionally reduce the clarity or interrupt the flow of the communication.
Limited **L**	• Words and expressions used are frequently vague and/or imprecise. • The writing demonstrates faltering control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. • Errors reduce the clarity and interrupt the flow of the communication.
Poor **P**	• Words and expressions used are inaccurate and/or misused. • The writing demonstrates lack of control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics. • Errors severely reduce the clarity and interrupt the flow of the communication.
Insufficient **INS**	• The writing has been awarded an INS for **Content**.

Preparing Students for the English Language Arts 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 should also familiarize students with the scoring guides in this bulletin. With instruction, students may be able to use these guides effectively when evaluating their own writing or that of their peers.

Samples of writing for grades 3, 6, and 9 are available on the Alberta Education website. These samples may be used in the classroom to share with students.

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

Suggestions for Writing the Test

Part A: Writing

- *Plan your time carefully.* Use all the time available to you to *read* the assignment carefully and to *think* about what you are being asked to do; to *plan* your writing so that it is focused, unified, and coherent; and to *proofread* your writing.

- *Read all the instructions carefully and do what the assignments ask you to do.* The time you spend reading and thinking about the assignments is time well spent. Many students find that highlighting or underlining key words in the assignments helps them to focus on what is expected.

- *Plan your writing using the pages provided.* You should choose a planning strategy that helps you to focus your ideas.

- *Use your reference materials.* You are allowed to use print versions of a commercially published dictionary and a commercially published thesaurus when writing *Part A*. Use a dictionary to look up the meanings of words that you want to use but are not completely sure about and to ensure that you spell words correctly. Use a thesaurus to find a more precise word for the context you are developing, but be careful not to overuse a thesaurus.

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- *Keep in mind the characteristics of effective writing.*
  - Awareness of audience (appropriateness of tone and use of correct language)
  - Completeness of information (enough detail to fulfill purpose)
  - Relevance of information (all details pertain to the purpose)
  - Clarity of information (all details are specific and easily understood by the reader)

- *Proofread your work and correct errors directly on your first draft.* You may double-space your writing if you think it will allow you to make corrections more easily.

Part B: Reading

- *Read the material using the strategy that works best for you.* You should either
  - read the selection and think carefully about it before you try any of the multiple-choice questions associated with the reading selection **OR**
  - read the questions first and then read the selection, keeping in mind the questions you will need to answer.

Each set of multiple-choice questions is designed to take you back through the reading selection in a certain way. The questions are ordered according to the location of the answers in the passage. For example, the answer to the first question will likely appear near the beginning of the passage, and so on. Questions relating to the reading selection as a whole will appear at the end of the set of questions.

- *Consider all forms of information provided.* Information will be presented not only in words but also in visual forms, such as cartoons, pictures, or charts.

- *Take the time to reread the lines that are referred to in a question.* Many questions contain quotations from the selection with line references indicated. It is always worthwhile to reread the lines that are referenced and to consider the meanings of these lines in both their immediate context in the selection and the context of the selection as a whole.

- *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.

- *Work from partial knowledge when it is appropriate to do so.* If a correct or best answer does not become obvious fairly quickly, you may want to eliminate the answers that seem least appropriate and then use your judgement to select an answer from those that remain.

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 questions that could be used on future achievement tests. As well, the teachers have an opportunity to comment on the appropriateness and quality of the test questions.

The field test request process has been modernized. Through the use of a new online field test request system, teachers can now create and modify field test requests and check the status of these requests. Information regarding the field test process and the request system is available at http://www.education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/forms.aspx.

Once the completed requests are received by the Provincial Assessment Sector, 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.

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 Provincial 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 English Language Arts and must have a minimum of two years' experience teaching the course.

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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