



# Grade 6 Assessment Highlights English Language Arts

Alberta Provincial Achievement Testing **2021–2022**

This document was written primarily for:

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

Alberta Education, Government of Alberta

2021–2022

*English Language Arts 6 Assessment Highlights*

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You can find [provincial achievement test-related materials](#) on the Alberta Education website.

Additional topics of interest are found in the [General Information Bulletin](#).



This document contains assessment highlights from the *2022 Grade 6 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test*.

*Assessment Highlights* provides information about the overall test, the test blueprint, and student performance on the provincial achievement test that was administered in 2022. Also provided is information on student performance at the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence on selected items from the *2022 Grade 6 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test*. This information is intended for teachers and is best used in conjunction with multi-year and detailed school reports that are available to schools via the Stakeholder File Exchange (SFX). *Assessment Highlights* for all provincial achievement test subjects and grades are posted on the Alberta Education website every year in the fall.

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# The 2022 Grade 6 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test

This report provides teachers, school administrators, and the public with an overview of the performance of those students who wrote the *2022 Grade 6 English Language Arts 6 Provincial Achievement Test*. It complements the detailed school and jurisdiction reports.

## How many students wrote the test?

A total of 47 527 students in Alberta wrote the *2022 Grade 6 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test*.

## What was the test like?

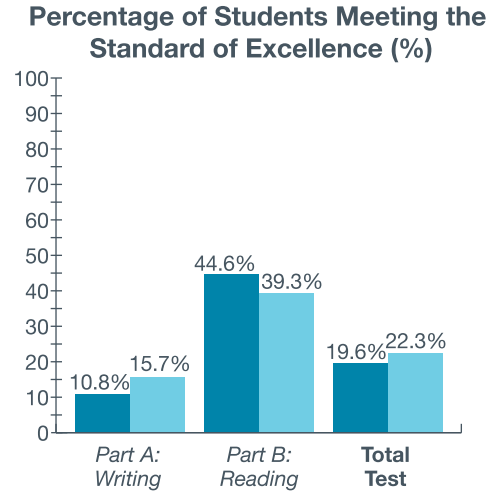
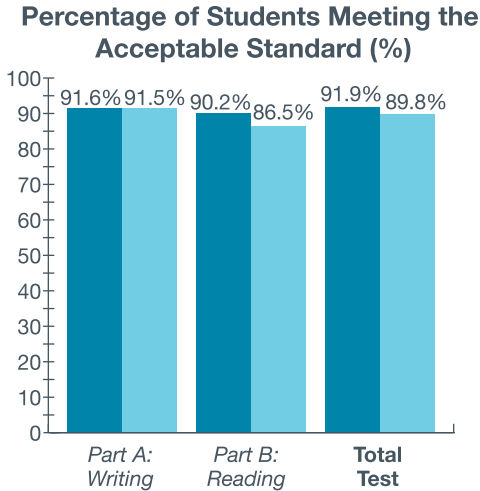
The *2022 Grade 6 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test* had two parts that were weighted equally.



*Part A: Writing* consisted of a NARRATIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENT (worth 35 marks) and a Functional Writing Assignment (worth 20 marks) for a total of 55 marks. The narrative writing assignment provided a coloured picture to which students 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 2022 and 2019 are shown in the graphs below. Out of a total score of 100 on the test (parts A and B), the provincial average was 67/100 (67%). 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.



-  2019 Achievement Standards: The percentage of students in the province that met the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence on the 2019 Grade 6 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test (based on those who wrote)
-  2022 Achievement Standards: The percentage of students in the province that met the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence on the 2022 Grade 6 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test (based on those who wrote)

# Part A: Writing—2022 Test Blueprint

The blueprints for *Part A: Writing* identify the scoring/reporting categories by which student writing is assessed and by which 2022 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
<b>Assignment I: Narrative Writing</b>		
<p><b>Content*</b> (selecting ideas and details to achieve a purpose) 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>Meets the standard of excellence</p> <p>Approaches the standard of excellence</p> <p>Clearly meets the acceptable standard</p> <p>Does not clearly meet the acceptable standard</p>
<p><b>Organization*</b> (organizing ideas and details into a coherent whole) Students organize their ideas to produce a unified and coherent narrative that links events, details, sentences, and paragraphs.</p>		
<p><b>Sentence Structure</b> (structuring sentences effectively) Students control sentence structure and use a variety of sentence types, sentence beginnings, and sentence lengths to enhance communication.</p>		
<p><b>Vocabulary</b> (selecting and using words and expressions correctly and effectively) Students choose specific words and expressions that are accurate and effective and that enhance voice.</p>		
<p><b>Conventions</b> (using the conventions of written language correctly and effectively) Students use conventions accurately and effectively to communicate.</p>		
<b>Assignment II: Functional Writing</b>		
<p><b>Content*</b> (thought and detail) 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>Insufficient</p>
<p><b>Content Management*</b> (using the conventions of written language correctly and effectively) 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>		

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



# Part A: Writing—2022 Student Achievement

In 2022, 91.5% of students who wrote the *Grade 6 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test* achieved the acceptable standard on *Part A: Writing* and 15.7% of students who wrote the test achieved the standard of excellence. These results are consistent with previous administrations of *Part A: Writing* of the provincial achievement test, with slightly more students achieving the standard of excellence than in 2019.

## Student achievement by assignment and reporting category

The quality of the writing on the 2022 *Grade 6 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test* is very 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 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	4.2	3.9	5.4	5.4	5.7	3.8	4.3
	4.5	5.2	4.9	5.3	5.7	5.6	4.6	4.9
Approaches the Standard of Excellence	4.0	15.9	15.3	18.0	18.2	19.6	15.0	15.6
Clearly Meets the Acceptable Standard	3.5	16.2	15.6	14.9	15.7	13.9	13.8	14.1
	3.0	47.3	46.5	42.8	46.7	38.4	41.5	40.7
	2.5	5.9	7.4	7.4	4.8	8.2	8.5	8.4
Does Not Clearly Meet the Acceptable Standard	2.0	4.0	5.0	4.8	2.4	7.0	9.0	9.0
	1.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.8	1.3	1.1
Clearly Below the Acceptable Standard	1.0	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.4	1.5	1.0
Insufficient/ No Response	0	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	1.0	1.0

\* Scores of 4.5, 3.5, 2.5, and 1.5 occur only when local marks and central marks are averaged. In 2022, 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 2022 Student Achievement

During the 2022 scoring session, 165 teachers from throughout the province scored 48 120 student test booklets. Teachers who marked the tests were pleased with the quality of most papers, especially in light of the disruptions to learning that may have occurred as a result of the COVID pandemic in prior years.

On *Part A: Writing* of the 2022 Grade 6 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test, students who wrote the test achieved an average of 65.5 out of a total of 100 (65.5%). The provincial average on the Narrative Writing Assignment was 23.3 out of 35 (66.57%), and the provincial average on the Functional Writing Assignment was 12.7 out of 20 (63.5%).

## Narrative Writing Assignment

In the 2022 Narrative Writing Assignment, students were required to use a picture prompt to write a narrative response. The colour picture prompt shows a person running on a track with another person timing them.

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:

- Billy was a boy who really likes to win. Billy has a lot of trophies and medals in his room. one day at school Billy saw a poster for a running contest. "Oh wow a running contest? I want to sign up so I can win!" Said Billy determined. Once he walked away he saw Taylor signing up for the contest with a smirk on his face. Taylor was a mean boy who didn't like Billy. Billy didn't like Taylor either. The next day was a Saturday. Billy asked his friend Bella to help him train for the contest. He waited for Bella on the field, but then he saw Taylor walking to the field with his friend. Finally Bella came and they started training.
- Beep! Oliver wakes up to the sound of his alarm clock. He races down out of his bedroom and down the stairs almost falls because he's in so much of a rush, considering today's the day he's been waiting for ever since the day he made it on his school running team. Ever year for the past ten years his school races against their rivals as the third race of the season, and every year his school loses. Excepted not this year because Oliver is the fastest runner for miles. Once he's down the stairs, he heads into the kitchen. Where his mom is waiting for him with his spinach strawberry banana protein shake. She hands it to Oliver whispering "Hurry up we have to leave in 15 minutes, be quiet though the rest of the house is sleeping."

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:

- Bang! “Hahaha!” Lily fell to the ground, smacking her palms in to the hard, polished floor. “Oops!” snickered Tara as she tucked her foot back under her desk after tripping her. Hot angry tears welled up in Lillys blue eyes as she gathered u pall the books she had dropped back into her arms, and slowly walked away. Lilly hated Tara. Tara was the leader of the cheerleading squad, and hated Lilly for no reason. Normally Lilly wouldn’t have cared, but ever since her tough-as-nails bestie named Jen had moved away, things were different. Lilly was alone, and sometimes it was as if she was invisible.... Lilly ran hard and stumbled in the middle of the track. To her horror, her laces had come loose and she tripped, flying to the side of the track, and knocking over a trash can. Lilly quickly stood up and hid behind the bleachers. She cried and cried, and stayed where she was until everybody left. Slowly, she stood up, and began to leave, when a voice called out from behind her. “Lilly!” she turned around to find a girl standing there. “Hi! I’m the coaches daughter and I’m here to help you. We’re giving you another shot....”

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 2022 Functional Writing Assignment presented students with the situation of writing a news article. The students were provided with information about First Nations artist Margaret Nazon and her beaded images of space. From this 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:

- Galaxy Beads

On April 5th Mr. Black's class at Kindler elementary school went to an museum that displayed first Nations Margret Nazons hand made galaxy Bead work the beautiful beads were hand stitiched onto a nice black velvet Background. In the traditional first nations beading technigues her wonder full bead work is baced off of images of space. from her home in Tsiigehtchic in the north west Territories she said "Designing and creating are the pathways for me to express my true self"

- Amazing artwork using beads

First nation artist Margret Nazon recreates amazing space images using beads stitched onto black velvet background She started in 2009 and continues to use her amazing talent. She lives in Tsiigehtichic, Northwest Territories, and attend college in Lethbridge in fashion design course. Sparkling colours and shapes of space images reminded Margret of bead work. Her art is now exhibited all over Canada. She sewed her own clothing when she was young. Margret Nazon is a true artist..

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:

- Art, Out of this World!

Taylor Greene

Monday, April 15, 2019

On Wednesday, April 10th, 2019, Miss Smith's sixth grade class at Kindler Elementary School in Kindler, Alberta, visited Kindler Museum to attend a special exhibit, featuring art by First Nations artist, Margaret Nazon.

Margaret Nazon does beadwork, inspired by images of space, because the sparkling colours and shapes reminded her of beadwork. She learned basic sewing skills from her mother, and uses traditional First Nations beading techniques. "I was fascinated by images taken by the Hubble Space Telescope, so I turned it into art", she says. She started creating beaded space images in 2009, and is a member of International Association of Astronomical Artists.

To make her art, she stitches beads onto a black velvet background, and creates "beaded" galaxies, supernovas, stars, and planets, and her art is exhibited all over Canada.

Margaret was bor in Tsiigehtchic, Northwest Territories, and is a member of the Gwich' First Nation's group. She attended residential school, and sewed her own clothing at a young age. She went to college in Lethbridge, taking a fashion design course. "Designing and creating are the pathways for me to express my true self.", says Margaret. For more information, go to [www.Kindler-museum.com/more](http://www.Kindler-museum.com/more).

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 2022 Grade 6 English Language Arts Provincial 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—2022 Test Blueprint and Student Achievement

In 2022, 86.5% of students who wrote the *Grade 6 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test* achieved the acceptable standard on *Part B: Reading*, and 39.3% of students who wrote achieved the standard of excellence. These results are consistent with previous administrations of *Part B: Reading* of the provincial achievement test.

Student achievement on *Part B: Reading* of the 2022 *Grade 6 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test* averaged 34.3 out of a total score of 50 (68.6%).

The blueprint on the following page shows the reporting categories and language functions by which 2022 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	
<p><b>Identifying and Interpreting Ideas and Details</b> Students recognize explicit or implicit ideas and details, and make inferences about the relationships between ideas and details.</p>			10.9/15 (72.7)
<p><b>Interpreting Text Organization</b> 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.</p>			7/10 (70%)
<p><b>Associating Meaning</b> Students use contextual clues to determine the connotative meaning of words, phrases, and figurative language.</p>			5.6/9 (62.2%)
<p><b>Synthesizing Ideas</b> Students make generalizations by integrating information from an entire selection in order to identify the purpose, theme, main idea, or mood of the selection.</p>			10.8/16 (67.5%)
<p><b>Provincial Student Achievement Average Raw Score and Percentage</b></p>	14.8/21 (70.5%)	19.5/29 (67.2%)	<i>Part B:</i> <i>Reading</i> Total Test Raw Score = 50

## Part B: Reading—Commentary on 2022 Student Achievement

The following discussion addresses specific areas of strength and weakness demonstrated by students who wrote the 2022 *Grade 6 English Language Arts Provincial Achievement Test*.

When compared to 2019, students performed less strongly in three of the four reporting categories on the Reading Comprehension Test. This was the case in the category **Identifying and Interpreting Ideas and Details**, which are questions that ask students to recognize explicit or implicit ideas and details, and make inferences about the relationships between ideas and details. Similarly, in **Associating Meaning** – in which students are meant to use contextual clues to determine the connotative meaning of words, phrases, and figurative language – students’ performance was significantly lower than in 2019. This is also the case in the category **Synthesizing Ideas**, in which students make generalizations by integrating information from an entire selection in order to identify the purpose, theme, main idea, or mood of the selection. The category in which student performance was slightly stronger was **Interpreting Text Organization**. In this category, 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.



# 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.

## Provincial 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. The exemplars documents contain sample responses with scoring rationales that relate student work to the scoring categories and scoring criteria.

## Previous provincial 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 provincial achievement test subject.

## Involvement of teachers

Teachers of grades 6 and 9 are encouraged to take part in activities related to the Provincial Achievement Test 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.