



# Grade 9 Assessment Highlights Social Studies

Alberta Provincial Achievement Testing **2021–2022**

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**This document was written primarily for**

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Students

Teachers                    ✓        Grade 9 Social Studies

Administrators            ✓

Parents

General Audience

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***2021–2022 Social Studies 9 Assessment Highlights***

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This document contains assessment highlights from the *2022 Grade 9 Social Studies Provincial Achievement Test*.

Assessment highlights provide information about the overall test, the test blueprint, and student performance on the 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. Assessment highlights reports for all provincial achievement test subjects and grades are posted on the Alberta Education website every year in the fall.

The examination statistics that are included in this document represent both French and English writers. If you would like to obtain English-only statistics or French-only statistics that apply to your school, please refer to your detailed reports, which are available on the Stakeholder File Exchange (SFX).

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# The 2022 Grade 9 Social Studies Provincial Achievement Test

This report provides teachers, school administrators, and the public with an overview of the performance of all students who wrote the *2022 Grade 9 Social Studies Provincial Achievement Test*. It complements the detailed school and jurisdiction reports.

## How many students wrote the test?

A total of 25 130 students in Alberta had results reported provincially for the *2022 Grade 9 Social Studies Provincial Achievement Test*. Security breaches occurred over the last few days of the 2021–2022 PAT administration window. To maintain the validity and comparability of provincial results, students most likely impacted by these security breaches have been excluded from the provincial cohort.

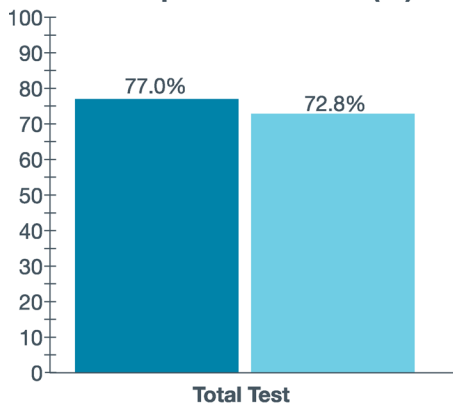
## What was the test like?

The *2022 Grade 9 Social Studies Provincial 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.

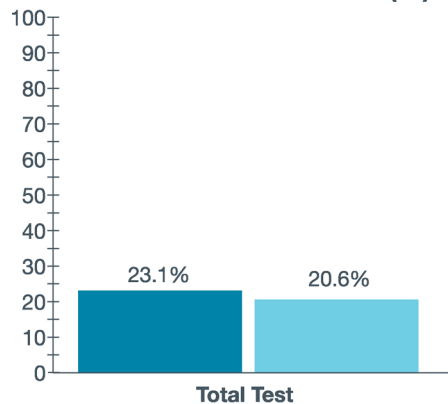
## How well did students do?

The percentages of students meeting the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence in 2022 are lower than in 2019, as shown in the graphs below. Out of a total possible score of 50 on the test, the provincial average was 31.5 (63.0%).

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



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



**2019 Achievement Standards:** The percentages of students in the province that met the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence on the *2019 Grade 9 Social Studies Provincial Achievement Test* (based on results reported provincially)

**2022 Achievement Standards:** The percentages of students in the province that met the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence on the *2022 Grade 9 Social Studies Provincial Achievement Test* (based on results reported provincially)

# Test Blueprint and 2022 Student Achievement

In 2022, 72.8% of all students who had results reported provincially for the *Grade 9 Social Studies Provincial Achievement Test* achieved the acceptable standard on the test, and 20.6% of all students who wrote achieved the standard of excellence. Student achievement on the *2022 Grade 9 Social Studies Provincial Achievement Test* averaged 31.5 out of a total possible score of 50 (63.0%).

The blueprint below shows the reporting categories and test sections (curricular content areas) 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.

Test Section (Curricular Content Area)	REPORTING CATEGORY		Provincial Student Achievement (Average Raw Score and Percentage)
	Knowledge and Understanding <sup>1</sup>	Skills and Processes <sup>2</sup>	
<p><b>The Political and Judicial System (9.1.4, 9.1.5)<sup>3</sup></b> 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</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how federal laws are passed</li> <li>• branches of the federal government</li> <li>• selection of MPs and senators</li> <li>• accountability of MPs and senators</li> <li>• the role of federal political parties</li> <li>• the role of media in political issues</li> <li>• lobby groups and government decisions</li> <li>• how political and legislative processes meet the needs of Canadians</li> <li>• participation in Canada’s justice system</li> <li>• citizens’ legal roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• the Youth Criminal Justice Act</li> </ul>			<p><b>6.9/11 (62.7%)</b></p>

<sup>1</sup>**Knowledge and Understanding**—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

<sup>2</sup>**Skills and Processes**—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

<sup>3</sup>Bolded numbers in parentheses refer to specific outcomes in the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies to which the reporting categories are cross-referenced.

Test Section (Curricular Content Area)	REPORTING CATEGORY		Provincial Student Achievement (Average Raw Score and Percentage)
	Knowledge and Understanding <sup>1</sup>	Skills and Processes <sup>2</sup>	
<p><b>The Individual and Collective Rights (9.1.6, 9.1.7)<sup>3</sup></b> 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</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognition of individual rights</li> <li>• exercising individual rights</li> <li>• conditions in the workplace</li> <li>• rights and responsibilities of citizens</li> <li>• recognition of collective rights</li> <li>• the needs of Francophone minorities</li> <li>• the needs of Francophones in Québec</li> <li>• the rights of official-language minorities</li> <li>• how the Indian Act recognizes the status and identity of Aboriginal peoples</li> <li>• Treaty 6, Treaty 7, and Treaty 8</li> <li>• legislation and Métis cultures and rights</li> </ul>			<p><b>6.8/11 (61.8%)</b></p>
<p><b>Immigration (9.1.8)<sup>3</sup></b> Students critically assess how legislative processes address issues of immigration by exploring and reflecting on questions and issues regarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• factors influencing immigration policies</li> <li>• changes to Canadian policies on immigration and refugees</li> <li>• immigration and Aboriginal peoples</li> <li>• provincial immigration policies</li> <li>• immigration policies in Québec</li> <li>• immigration policies and the Charter</li> <li>• how Canada benefits from immigration</li> </ul>			<p><b>5.2/8 (65.0%)</b></p>

<sup>1</sup>**Knowledge and Understanding**—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

<sup>2</sup>**Skills and Processes**—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

<sup>3</sup>Bolded numbers in parentheses refer to specific outcomes in the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies to which the reporting categories are cross-referenced.

Test Section (Curricular Content Area)	REPORTING CATEGORY		Provincial Student Achievement (Average Raw Score and Percentage)
	Knowledge and Understanding <sup>1</sup>	Skills and Processes <sup>2</sup>	
<p><b>Economic Decision Making (9.2.4)</b><sup>3</sup> Students analyze principles and practices of market and mixed economies by exploring and reflecting on questions and issues regarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>principles of a market economy</li> <li>government intervention</li> <li>Canada's mixed economy</li> <li>consumers in market and mixed economies</li> <li>consumer individual and collective identity</li> <li>the economic impact of labour unions</li> <li>government intervention in the economy in Canada and in the United States</li> <li>the basic economic problem of scarcity</li> </ul>			<b>5.2/8 (65.0%)</b>
<p><b>Consumerism, Quality of Life, and Political Decision Making (9.2.5, 9.2.6)</b><sup>3</sup> 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</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>indicators of quality of life</li> <li>individual consumer behaviour</li> <li>how marketing affects consumerism</li> <li>consumerism and quality of life</li> <li>consumerism as a power of a collective</li> <li>consumerism and economic growth</li> <li>values underlying social programs</li> <li>economic platforms of political parties</li> <li>political party philosophies and platforms</li> <li>the underground economy</li> <li>environmental issues and quality of life</li> </ul>			<b>7.4/12 (61.7%)</b>
<b>Provincial Student Achievement (Average Raw Score and Percentage)</b>	<b>12.6/19 (66.3%)</b>	<b>18.9/31 (61.0%)</b>	<b>Total Test Raw Score = 50</b>

<sup>1</sup>**Knowledge and Understanding**—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

<sup>2</sup>**Skills and Processes**—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

<sup>3</sup>Bolded numbers in parentheses refer to specific outcomes in the Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies to which the reporting categories are cross-referenced.



# Commentary on 2022 Student Achievement

The following is a discussion of student achievement on the *2022 Grade 9 Social Studies Provincial Achievement Test*, highlighting 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.

Together, the first three blueprint categories encompass outcomes contained in General Outcome 9.1 Issues for Canadians: Governance and Rights, wherein students were 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:

- What is the relationship between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of Canada's federal political system? (SO 9.1.4)
- What processes are used to determine members of Parliament (MPs) and senators? (SO 9.1.4)
- To whom are members of Parliament and senators accountable? (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 (e.g., through 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 roles and responsibilities of members of the executive and legislative branches of Canada's federal political system, the role of the Senate in Canada's federal government, and the responsibility of participating in Canada's criminal justice system through jury duty. Students who met the standard of excellence additionally demonstrated strengths in exploring issues regarding the extent to which members of the executive and legislative branches of Canada's federal government are accountable to Canadians, assessing the extent to which appointment to the Senate should be based on individual merits, and evaluating viewpoints regarding the extent to which Canada's criminal justice system serves the interests of Canadians. Students who did not achieve the acceptable standard were generally able to recognize some components of the legislative and executive branches of Canada's federal political system, but many of these students struggled with questions pertaining to the selection of members of Canada's Senate and demonstrated a limited awareness of how jury duty is a legal responsibility of Canadian citizens in Canada's federal justice system.

In the section of the *2022 Grade 9 Social Studies Provincial 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:

- 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 individual rights in Canada? (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)
- How do governments recognize Métis cultures and rights through legislation (e.g., treaties, governance, land claims, Métis Settlements in Alberta)? (SO 9.1.7)

Students who met the acceptable standard were able to recognize some of the ways in which the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects the fundamental freedoms of individuals, acknowledge provisions in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms that guarantee minority-language educational rights, and identify the responsibility of the government of Canada for Aboriginal peoples. Students who achieved the standard of excellence were additionally able to appreciate the challenges faced by the federal government in balancing measures to promote national security with the protection of individual rights and freedoms in Canada, assess the extent to which minority-language educational rights have been guaranteed to official-language communities in Canada, and evaluate the far-reaching implications of the Supreme Court of Canada's recognition of the rights of Aboriginal and Métis peoples. For students who did not meet the acceptable standard, frequently proved challenging questions that required addressing issues arising from the restriction of rights contained in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the interests of national security, examining the applicability of minority-language educational rights to individual cases in Canada, or synthesizing information related to differing viewpoints on the recognition of the collective rights of Aboriginal peoples.

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 (e.g., 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)

Those students who achieved the acceptable standard were able to identify the main objectives of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act of 2002 and recognize factors related to the eligibility of economic-class immigrants to Canada. Students achieving the standard of excellence could also examine the impact of legislation enacted by the federal government on Canada's immigration laws as well as appreciate the benefits of immigration in strengthening Canada's economy. Students who did not meet the acceptable standard sometimes had difficulty formulating conclusions with regard to Canada's policies on immigration and refugees from the details presented, as well as with the acknowledgement of conflicting viewpoints related to the extent to which Canada's immigration policies serve the interests of Canadians.

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 were required to demonstrate an understanding of and appreciation for 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)
- How has the emergence of labour unions impacted market and mixed economies? (SO 9.2.4)

Students who met the acceptable standard were able to recognize the role played by labour unions in Canada's economy and to identify differences in how market-oriented and mixed economies address the three basic economic questions that arise from scarcity. Students who achieved the standard of excellence were additionally able to form generalizations regarding the significant events in the history of labour unions in Canada and the role of labour unions in contemporary society and assess the extent to which government intervention is beneficial to the economy. Students who did not achieve the acceptable standard were often challenged by questions that required an understanding of the impact of labour unions on conditions in the workplace, or the exploration of differing beliefs regarding the extent to which government should intervene in the economy.

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? (SO 9.2.5)
- How does marketing impact consumerism? (9.2.5)
- How does consumerism provide opportunities for and limitations on impacting quality of life? (SO 9.2.5)
- How do the economic platforms of political parties differ from one another (e.g., Democrat versus Republican, Liberal versus Conservative)? (SO 9.2.6)
- How is a political party's philosophy reflected in its platform (e.g., social programs, specific taxes, taxation model)? (SO 9.2.6)

Students achieving the acceptable standard were able to identify advantages and disadvantages of consumerism, recognize factors that guide consumer behaviour, and acknowledge basic features of the economic platforms of the Democratic and Republican political parties in the United States. Students who achieved the standard of excellence could also delve deeply into the implications of consumer spending in Canada for household debt, evaluate the impact of marketing on consumerism, and appreciate the impact of Democratic and Republican policies on the provision of social programs in the United States. Those students who did not meet the acceptable standard often had difficulty interpreting data regarding consumer spending and household debt in Canada, determining the motivation underlying consumer actions, and recognizing the differing perspectives of the Democratic and Republican political parties on the provision of social programs in the United States.

Overall, student achievement on the *2022 Grade 9 Social Studies Provincial Achievement Test* was strong. Most students (72.8%) were able to achieve the acceptable standard, and 20.6% of all students achieved the standard of excellence. Of all students who wrote the test, 27.2% did not achieve the acceptable standard.

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# 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, the provincial achievement test in each 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.