

**Alberta Provincial
Achievement Testing**

**Assessment
Highlights
2015–2016**

**GRADE
9**

Social Studies

Alberta  Government

This document contains assessment highlights from the 2016 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test.

Assessment highlights provide information about the overall test, the test blueprints, and student performance on the 2016 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test. Also provided is commentary on student performance at the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence on selected items from the 2016 achievement test. This information is intended for teachers and is best used in conjunction with the multi-year and detailed school reports that are available to schools via the extranet. **Assessment highlights reports** for all achievement test subjects and grades will be **posted on the Alberta Education website every year** in the fall.

Released test items, which contained approximately 25% of the total number of test items from previously secured achievement tests, were mailed to school administrators each fall from 2004 to 2006 and had been made available to teachers in only print form because of copyright limitations. **Every second year**, as of the fall of 2007, **a complete test** for all achievement test subjects and grades (except grades 6 and 9 Français/French Language Arts and Grade 9 Knowledge and Employability courses) will be posted on the Alberta Education website. A test blueprint and an answer key that includes the difficulty, reporting category, and item description for each test item will also be included. These materials, along with the program of studies and subject bulletin, provide information that can be used to inform instructional practice.

For further information, contact Harvey Stables, Grade 9 Humanities Assessment Standards Team Leader, at Harvey.Stables@gov.ab.ca; Nicole Orr, Grade 9 Humanities Assessment Standards Examiner, at Nicole.Orr@gov.ab.ca; or Nicole Lamarre, Director, Student Learning Assessments and Provincial Achievement Testing, at Nicole.Lamarre@gov.ab.ca at the Provincial Assessment Sector or call 780-427-0010. To call toll-free from outside Edmonton, dial 310-0000.

The Alberta Education Internet address is education.alberta.ca.

This document was written primarily for:

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

Copyright 2016, the Crown in Right of Alberta, as represented by the Minister of Education, Alberta Education, Provincial Assessment Sector, 44 Capital Boulevard, 10044 108 Street NW, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 5E6, and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Special permission is granted to **Alberta educators only** to reproduce, for educational purposes and on a non-profit basis, parts of this document that do **not** contain excerpted material.

Excerpted material in this document **shall not** be reproduced without the written permission of the original publisher (see credits, where applicable).

Contents

The 2016 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test	1
2016 Test Blueprint and Student Achievement	2
Commentary on 2016 Student Achievement	3
Achievement Testing Program Support Documents.....	8

The 2016 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test

This report provides teachers, school administrators, and the public with an overview of the performance of all students who wrote the 2016 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test. It complements the detailed school and jurisdiction reports.

How Many Students Wrote the Test?

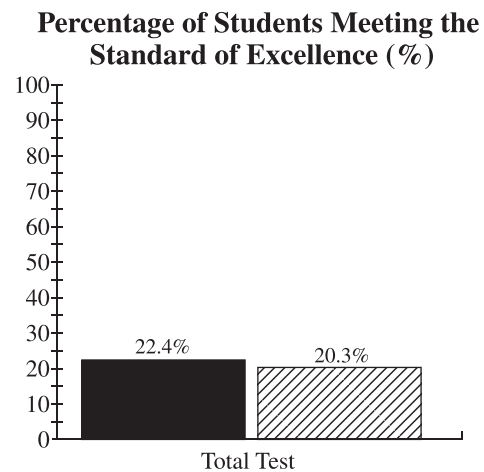
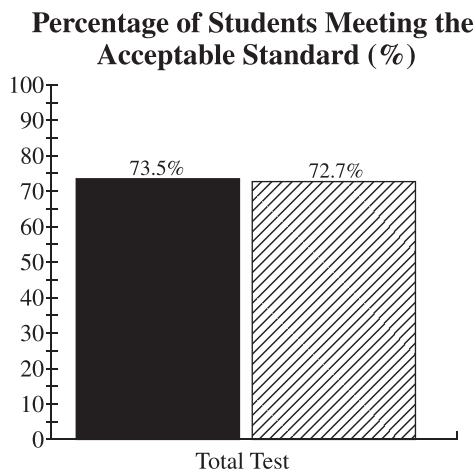
A total of 38 990 students wrote the 2016 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test.

What Was the Test Like?

The 2016 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test consisted of 50 multiple-choice questions based on specific outcomes (SOs) within each of the two general outcomes (GOs) in the *2007 Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies*: GO 9.1 Issues for Canadians: Governance and Rights and GO 9.2 Issues for Canadians: Economic Systems in Canada and the United States.

How Well Did Students Do?

The percentages of students meeting the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence in 2016 are consistent with 2015, as shown in the graphs below. Out of a total possible score of 50, the provincial average on the test was 31.6 (63.2%). The results presented in this report are based on scores achieved by all students who wrote the test, including those in French-immersion and Francophone programs. Detailed provincial assessment results that provide English-only statistics or French-only statistics that apply to individual schools are contained in school and jurisdiction reports that are available on the extranet.



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

 2016 Achievement Standards: The percentage of students in the province who met the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence on the 2016 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test (based on those who wrote).

2016 Test Blueprint and Student Achievement

In 2016, 72.7% of all students who wrote the Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test achieved the acceptable standard, and 20.3% of all students who wrote achieved the standard of excellence. Student achievement on the 2016 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test averaged 31.6 out of a total score of 50 (63.2%).

The blueprint below shows the reporting categories and test sections (curricular content areas) by which 2016 summary data are reported to schools and school authorities, and it shows the provincial average of student achievement by both raw score and percentage.

Test Section (Curricular Content Area)	Reporting Category		Provincial Student Achievement (Average Raw Score and Percentage)
	Knowledge and Understanding ¹	Skills and Processes ²	
The Political and Judicial System (9.1.4, 9.1.5)³ Students examine the structure of Canada's federal political system and analyze the role of citizens and organizations in Canada's justice system by exploring and reflecting on questions and issues regarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how federal laws are passed • branches of the federal government • selection of MPs and senators • accountability of MPs and senators • the role of federal political parties • the role of media in political issues • lobby groups and government decisions • how political and legislative processes meet the needs of Canadians • participation in Canada's justice system • citizens' legal roles and responsibilities • the Youth Criminal Justice Act 			7.0/11 (63.6%)
Individual and Collective Rights (9.1.6, 9.1.7)³ Students critically assess the impact of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms on legislative processes in Canada and how increased demand for recognition of collective rights has impacted legislative processes in Canada by exploring and reflecting on questions and issues regarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognition of individual rights • exercising individual rights • conditions in the workplace • rights and responsibilities of citizens • recognition of collective rights • the needs of Francophone minorities • the needs of Francophones in Québec • the rights of official-language minorities • the Indian Act • Treaty 6, Treaty 7, and Treaty 8 • legislation and Métis cultures and rights 			7.2/11 (65.5%)
Immigration (9.1.8)³ Students critically assess how legislative processes address issues of immigration by exploring and reflecting on questions and issues regarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • factors influencing immigration policies • changes to Canadian policies on immigration and refugees • immigration and Aboriginal peoples • provincial immigration policies • immigration policies in Québec • immigration policies and the Charter • how Canada benefits from immigration 			4.7/8 (58.8%)
Economic Decision Making (9.2.4)³ Students analyze principles and practices of market and mixed economies by exploring and reflecting on questions and issues regarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • principles of a market economy • government intervention • Canada's mixed economy • consumers in market and mixed economies • consumer individual and collective identity • the economic impact of labour unions • government intervention in the economy • the basic economic question of scarcity 			5.0/8 (62.5%)
Consumerism, Quality of Life, and Political Decision Making (9.2.5, 9.2.6)³ Students critically assess the relationship between consumerism and quality of life in Canada and the United States and the interrelationship between political decisions and economic systems by exploring and reflecting on questions and issues regarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • indicators of quality of life • individual consumer behaviour • how marketing affects consumerism • consumerism and quality of life • consumerism as a power of a collective • consumerism and economic growth • values underlying social programs • economic platforms of political parties • political party philosophies and platforms • the underground economy • environmental issues and quality of life 			7.7/12 (64.2%)
Provincial Student Achievement (Average Raw Score and Percentage)	12.7/19 (66.8%)	18.8/31 (60.6%)	Total Test Raw Score = 50

¹**Knowledge and Understanding**—includes the breadth and depth of information, concepts, evidence, ideas, and opinions fundamental to decision making as identified in the *Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies (2007)*.

²**Skills and Processes**—includes the application of critical and creative thinking, historical thinking, geographic thinking, decision making, problem solving, and media literacy to relevant situations as identified in the *Grade 9 Social Studies Program of Studies (2007)*.

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

Commentary on 2016 Student Achievement

The following is a discussion of student achievement on the 2016 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test. Sample questions from the test are provided to highlight the achievement of students who met the acceptable standard, students who met the standard of excellence, and students who did not meet the acceptable standard. For each question, the keyed answer is marked with an asterisk.

Together, the first three blueprint categories encompass outcomes contained in General Outcome 9.1 Issues for Canadians: Governance and Rights, wherein students are expected to analyze Canada’s political and legislative processes and their impact on issues pertaining to governance, rights, citizenship, and identity. In the **Political and Judicial System** blueprint category (composed of 11 questions), students were expected to examine the structure of Canada’s federal political system (Specific Outcome 9.1.4) and analyze the role that citizens and organizations play in Canada’s justice system (Specific Outcome 9.1.5) by exploring and reflecting on questions and issues pertaining to:

- How are laws passed in the federal political system? (SO 9.1.4)
- To whom are members of Parliament and senators accountable? (SO 9.1.4)
- To what extent do political and legislative processes meet the needs of all Canadians? (SO 9.1.4)
- What is the role of political parties within Canada’s federal political system? (SO 9.1.4)
- What is the intention of the Youth Criminal Justice Act? (SO 9.1.5)

Students who achieved the acceptable standard were able to demonstrate a basic understanding of the structure of Canada’s federal political system, the idea that members of Parliament and senators should be accountable to Canadian citizens, and the main intentions of the Youth Criminal Justice Act. Students who met the standard of excellence additionally demonstrated strengths in exploring issues regarding the extent to which Canada’s political and legislative processes meet the needs of all Canadians, assessing the extent to which the legislative branch of Canada’s government is responsible to citizens, and evaluating multiple viewpoints related to the effectiveness of the Youth Criminal Justice Act in addressing youth crime. Students who did not achieve the acceptable standard were generally able to identify the main roles played by key institutions in the three branches of Canada’s federal political system. However, many of these students struggled with questions pertaining to checks and balances that exist between the House of Commons and the Senate in Canada’s federal political system and demonstrated a limited awareness of the principles underlying the Youth Criminal Justice Act regarding recognition of the reduced level of maturity of youth offenders and consideration of the circumstances underlying a young person’s offending behaviour. The following question illustrates some of these differences in student achievement on the 2016 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test.

In question 1 (blueprinted as a **Knowledge and Understanding** question), students were required to demonstrate their knowledge of the political role played by the legislative branch of Canada’s federal government (SO 9.1.4).

- | |
|---|
| <p>1. In Canada’s political system, the “Legislative branch” (Source I) is mainly responsible for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">*A. debating and voting on laws proposed for CanadaB. interpreting and applying existing laws in CanadaC. making amendments to the Constitution of CanadaD. nominating members of the Supreme Court of Canada |
|---|

The correct answer (option **A**) was chosen by 79.5% of all students who wrote the test. These students were able to draw upon their knowledge of the roles played by members of both the House of Commons and the Senate (depicted in the source as being part of the legislative branch of Canada’s political system) in debating and voting on bills that have been introduced in Parliament. Although option **B** (selected by 14.3% of all students) contains a reference to laws in Canada, this choice reflects a confused understanding of the separation of powers among the branches of Canada’s federal government, wherein the judicial branch is responsible for interpreting and applying laws that have been enacted by Canada’s Parliament. Option **C** (selected by 4.6% of all students) presents the incomplete understanding that the legislative branch exercises the power to amend the Constitution of Canada, an action that entails political processes that extend beyond the power of the legislative branch of the government of Canada. Option **D** (selected by

only 1.5% of all students) reflects the misunderstanding that the legislative branch of Canada’s government possesses the power to nominate individuals for appointment to the Supreme Court of Canada, a power that is exercised by the prime minister as a member of the executive branch of Canada’s government. Overall, the correct answer for this question was selected by 83.2% of those students who achieved the acceptable standard, 96.7% of those students who met the standard of excellence, and 59.8% of those students who did not achieve the acceptable standard.

In the section of the 2016 achievement test blueprinted for curricular content pertaining to **Individual and Collective Rights** (composed of 11 questions), students were required to assess, critically, the impact of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms on legislative processes in Canada (Specific Outcome 9.1.6) and assess, critically, how the increased demand for recognition of collective rights has impacted legislative processes in Canada (Specific Outcome 9.1.7) by exploring and reflecting on questions and issues regarding:

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

Students who met the acceptable standard were able to recognize some of the ways in which the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects the rights of individuals, acknowledge provisions in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms that guarantee the rights of Francophones in minority settings, and identify the role of the Indian Act in recognizing the collective rights of First Nations peoples. Students who achieved the standard of excellence were additionally able to appreciate the societal implications of the Canadian government’s promotion of the rights of individuals, assess the extent to which minority-language educational rights have been guaranteed to official-language communities in Alberta, and examine the values underlying disparate viewpoints and perspectives pertaining to amendments to the Indian Act. For students who did not meet the acceptable standard, questions that required an understanding of how rights contained in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms are interpreted when applied to individual cases, making connections among historical events related to official-language rights in Canada, or synthesizing information related to the inherent rights of First Nations peoples frequently proved challenging. Some of these differences in student achievement on the 2016 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test are demonstrated in the following question.

In question 14 (blueprinted as a **Skills and Processes** question), students were required to examine four case studies to determine the court cases in which citizens’ language rights were protected (SO 9.S.1).

- 14.** Based on the information in Source III, the cases that demonstrate the Court Challenges Program’s ability to protect language rights are
- A.** Case W and Case X
 - B.** Case W and Case Z
 - *C.** Case X and Case Y
 - D.** Case Y and Case Z

Of all students who wrote the test, 85.6% chose the keyed response (option C). These students were able to analyze the information presented regarding four successful Court Challenges Program cases in order to determine that Case X (in which an individual’s right to a criminal trial, “to be held before a judge and jury who spoke both official languages, was ordered”) and Case Y (in which the decision of the Ontario government to “close the only fully Francophone hospital in the Ottawa region” was overturned in order

to protect the rights of “the minority Francophone community in Ontario”) illustrate how the language rights contained in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms have been guaranteed. Option **A** (selected by 6.5% of all students) is partly correct in that it identifies Case X (a case pertaining to the preservation of language rights) but incorrectly includes Case W (a case unrelated to language rights in which non-resident band members of the Batchewana Indian Band were granted the right to participate in “the selection of the band council”). Option **B** (selected by 4.4% of all students) incorrectly identifies both Case W and Case Z (a case unrelated to language rights in which the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that an individual “living in poverty should not face any form of imprisonment” if unable to pay “a mandatory minimum fine”). Option **D** (selected by 3.5% of all students) is partly correct in that it identifies Case Y (a case pertaining to the preservation of language rights) but incorrectly includes Case Z. Of those students who met the acceptable standard, 91.8% answered this question correctly. Of those students who met the standard of excellence, 98.5% chose the correct answer. Of those students who did not achieve the acceptable standard, 64.2% selected the correct response.

In the **Immigration** blueprint category (composed of 8 questions), students were expected to assess, critically, how legislative processes attempt to address emerging issues of immigration (Specific Outcome 9.1.8) by exploring and reflecting on questions and issues related to:

- What factors influence immigration policies in Canada (i.e., economic, political, health, security)? (SO 9.1.8)
- How are provincial governments able to influence and implement immigration policies? (SO 9.1.8)
- How is the implementation of immigration policies in Québec an attempt to strengthen the French language in North America? (SO 9.1.8)

Those students who achieved the acceptable standard were able to identify factors related to Canada’s policies on immigration and refugees and demonstrate a basic understanding of the intent underlying the implementation of immigration policies in Québec. Students achieving the standard of excellence could also assess the impact of changes to Canada’s immigration policies on both immigrant applicants and on Canadian society as a whole as well as appreciate the complexities inherent in balancing the rights of immigrants to Québec with the interests of the provincial government in preserving the cultures and identities of Francophones in Québec. Students who did not meet the acceptable standard sometimes had difficulty analyzing the social and economic implications of changes to Canada’s immigration policies as well as with the acknowledgement of conflicting viewpoints related to the impact of provincial immigration policies aimed at strengthening Québec’s unique cultural identity on immigrants to Québec. Such differences in student achievement on the 2016 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test are shown in the following question.

In question 30 (blueprinted as a **Skills and Processes** question), students were required to draw a conclusion regarding the issue to which information in three sources is most closely related (SO 9.S.4).

- 30.** To which of the following issues is the information in all three sources **most closely** related?
- A.** Should immigrants to Québec be encouraged to speak both English and French?
 - *B.** To what extent should immigration policies in Québec promote the use of French?
 - C.** Should labour shortages be addressed by encouraging immigrants to move to Québec?
 - D.** To what extent should the federal government regulate immigration policies in Québec?

Of all students who wrote the test, 57.1% were able to determine—from information in three sources that include a chart identifying “Some Factors Used to Select Immigrants to Québec,” a bar graph illustrating the percentages of immigrants to Québec in four immigration classes who speak French, English, or neither French nor English, and a newspaper article that focuses on differing viewpoints regarding a “Québec government plan to force new immigrants to sign a declaration” promising “to learn French”—that the issue to which this information is most closely related pertains to the extent to which provincial immigration policies in Québec should promote the use of French, and chose the keyed response (option **B**). Option **A** (selected by 14.3% of all students) presents a conclusion that is based on a superficial understanding of the information presented in that, although two of the sources contain some information related to immigrants’ knowledge of English or French, all three sources together present information that centres on the extent to which facility in French should be a factor in the selection of immigrants to

Québec. Option **C** (selected by 4.5% of all students) identifies the flawed inference that all three sources focus on an issue related to the need to address labour shortages by encouraging immigrants to live in Québec, but this issue is not explicitly addressed by any of the information presented in the sources. Option **D** (selected by 24.1% of all students) incorrectly suggests that the information presented in all three sources is most directly related to how the federal government plays an overarching role in the administration of Canada’s immigration policies, but this choice overlooks the emphasis in the information presented in all three sources on the power of the provincial government to implement immigration policies in Québec. Of those students who met the acceptable standard, 59.0% answered this question correctly. Of those students who met the standard of excellence, 87.6% chose the correct answer. Of those students who did not achieve the acceptable standard, 30.9% selected the correct response.

The final two blueprint categories encompass outcomes within General Outcome 9.2 Issues for Canadians: Economic Systems in Canada and the United States, in which students are required to demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of how economic decision making in Canada and the United States impacts quality of life, citizenship, and identity. With regard to curricular content in the blueprint category related to **Economic Decision Making** (composed of 8 questions), students were required to compare and contrast the principles and practices of market and mixed economies (Specific Outcome 9.2.4) by exploring and reflecting on questions and issues pertaining to:

- What are the principles of a market economy? (SO 9.2.4)
- Why do governments intervene in a market economy? (SO 9.2.4)
- Why is Canada viewed as having a mixed economy? (SO 9.2.4)
- 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 identify the main purposes of labour unions in an economic system and were able to recognize instances of government intervention in the economy. Students who achieved the standard of excellence were additionally able to form generalizations regarding the societal implications of labour action in market and mixed economies and explore the values underlying conflicting viewpoints pertaining to initiatives used by Canada’s government to foster the financial well-being of Canadians. Students who did not achieve the acceptable standard were often challenged by questions that required evaluation of the benefits and drawbacks of labour unions in market and mixed economies or synthesis of information in multiple sources to determine the central economic issue arising from government intervention in the economy. The following question illustrates some of these differences in student achievement on the 2016 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test.

In question 36 (blueprinted as a **Skills and Processes** question), students were required to analyze information in a press release to determine how a supporter of a market economy would respond to the government action described (SO 9.S.1).

- 36.** A supporter of a market economy would **most likely** respond to the information in Source II by
- A.** petitioning the government to set interest rates for financial institutions
 - B.** encouraging the finance minister to provide housing for all citizens
 - C.** lobbying the government to stabilize prices in the housing industry
 - *D.** criticizing the finance minister for introducing new mortgage rules

Of all students who wrote the test, 41.3% were able to analyze information in a Department of Finance press release—related to the federal government’s implementation of new regulations on mortgages—and draw on their knowledge of economic practices in a market economy in order to determine that a supporter of a market economy would most likely be critical of how the finance minister’s new mortgage rules require increased government intervention in the economy, and chose the keyed response (option **D**). Option **A** (selected by 19.7% of all students), option **B** (selected by 13.3% of all students), and option **C** (selected by 25.5% of all students) each present a government action—such as setting interest rates, providing public housing, or implementing price controls on the housing industry—that would require a degree of intervention in the economy that is inconsistent with the beliefs of a supporter of a market economy. Of those students who met the acceptable standard, 38.4% answered this question correctly. Of those students who met the standard of excellence, 82.3% chose the correct answer. Of those students who did not achieve the acceptable standard, only 16.4% selected the correct response.

In the blueprint category that encompasses questions that involve **Consumerism, Quality of Life, and Political Decision Making** (composed of 12 questions), students were expected to assess, critically, the relationship between consumerism and quality of life in Canada and the United States (Specific Outcome 9.2.5) and assess, critically, the interrelationship between political decisions and economic systems (Specific Outcome 9.2.6) by exploring and reflecting on questions and issues regarding:

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

Students achieving the acceptable standard were able to identify basic factors that influence individual consumer choices, recall the effect that consumer decisions have on decisions made by businesses, and acknowledge the impact of economic development on the environment. Students who achieved the standard of excellence could also recognize the detrimental effects of excessive consumer spending, were able to examine the impact of consumer behaviour on quality of life, and could appreciate the difficulty of reconciling differing viewpoints related to the impact of economic development on wildlife habitats. Those students who did not meet the acceptable standard often had difficulty exploring the economic consequences of choices made by consumers, as well as with recognizing the far-reaching effects of economic development on the environment. Some of the aforementioned differences in student performance are evident in the following question taken from the 2016 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test.

Question 43 (blueprinted as a **Knowledge and Understanding** question) required that students know the business practice to which the term *marketing* refers (SO 9.2.5).

43. The term “Marketing” (Source II) refers to the practice by which businesses
- A. raise prices for goods and services
 - *B. generate demand for goods and services
 - C. increase the supply of goods and services
 - D. utilize resources to create goods and services

The keyed response (option **B**) was selected by 68.1% of all students who wrote the test. These students were able to apply their knowledge of the ways through which businesses strive to influence consumer behaviour in order to correctly define marketing as a practice employed by businesses to generate increased consumer demand for goods and services. Option **A** (selected by 13.8% of all students) presents an idea related to how businesses may increase the prices of goods and services for sale, but this practice would likely be antithetical to strategies intended to promote marketing. Option **C** (selected by 10.7% of all students) presents an idea related to how businesses may increase the supply of goods and services that are available for sale, but this practice would likely result in a decrease rather than an increase in consumer demand. Option **D** (selected by 7.2% of all students) presents an idea related to how businesses exploit resources in order to provide goods and services to consumers, but this is a business practice that is largely unrelated to marketing. Many students who achieved the acceptable standard were able to choose the correct answer, with 72.6% choosing the keyed response. The majority of students who achieved the standard of excellence (95.8%) chose the correct answer, while 38.9% of students who did not meet the acceptable standard correctly answered the question.

Overall, student achievement on the 2016 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test was strong. Most students (72.7%) were able to achieve the acceptable standard and 20.3% of all students achieved the standard of excellence. Of all students who wrote the test, 27.3% did not achieve the acceptable standard.

Achievement Testing Program Support Documents

The Alberta Education website contains several documents that provide valuable information about various aspects of the achievement testing program. To access these documents, go to the [Alberta Education website](#). Click on one of the specific links to access the following documents.

Achievement Testing Program *General Information Bulletin*

The [General Information Bulletin](#) is a compilation of several documents produced by Alberta Education and is intended to provide superintendents, principals, and teachers with easy access to information about all aspects of the achievement testing program. Sections in the bulletin contain information pertaining to schedules and significant dates; security and test rules; test administration directives, guidelines, and procedures; calculator and computer policies; test accommodations; test marking and results; field testing; resources and web documents; forms and samples; and Provincial Assessment Sector contacts.

Subject Bulletins

At the beginning of each school year, subject bulletins are posted on the Alberta Education website for all achievement test subjects for grades 6 and 9. Each bulletin provides descriptions of assessment standards, test design and blueprinting, and scoring guides (where applicable) as well as suggestions for preparing students to write the tests and information about how teachers can participate in test development activities.

Examples of the Standards for Students' Writing

For achievement tests in grades 6 and 9 English Language Arts and Français/French Language Arts, writing samples 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 achievement tests (parts A and B) for Grade 9 semestered students are secured and must be returned to Alberta Education. All May/June achievement tests are secured except Part A of grades 6 and 9 English Language Arts and Français/French Language Arts. Unused or extra copies of only these Part A tests may be kept at the school after administration. Teachers may also use the released items and/or tests that are posted on the Alberta Education website.

Parent Guides

Each school year, versions of the [Alberta Provincial Achievement Testing Parent Guide](#) for grades 6 and 9 are posted on the Alberta Education website. Each guide answers frequently asked questions about the 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 achievement testing program. These activities include item development, test validation, field testing, and marking. In addition, arrangements can be made through the Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia for teacher in-service workshops on topics such as interpreting achievement test results to improve student learning.