

# Parent Guide

To the Yukon  
Achievement  
Tests

Grades 3, 6 and 9

# Information About the Yukon Achievement Tests

---

**This school year, your child in grade 3, 6 or 9, will write Yukon Achievement Tests in Mathematics and Language Arts (Reading and Writing).**

**Here are brief answers to questions often asked by parents.**

## **Background**

On August 25th, 1999, Lois Moorcroft, the Minister of Education, approved a new Yukon student assessment plan that will provide a better overall check of the educational system and of student achievement. The new plan takes effect for the 1999 - 2000 school year. The plan introduces the mandatory Yukon Achievement Tests. These new tests are given in grades 3, 6 and 9 and are based on the curriculum in the areas of numeracy and literacy.

## **Why are Yukon students being tested?**

The Department of Education, in partnership with school councils, parents and teachers, is responsible to make sure that what is being taught is being learned. One way to ensure this is happening is by testing students at important points in their school career. By closely monitoring the results of the Yukon Achievement Tests, the Department is able to:

- to determine if students are learning what they are expected to learn;

- report to Yukoners how well students have achieved territorial standards at given points in their schooling; and
- assist schools and the territory in monitoring and improving student learning.

## **Who writes the tests?**

All Yukon students in grades 3, 6, and 9 write the tests. Students in French Programs write French Language Arts (Reading and Writing) tests and the French versions of the Mathematics tests.

A small number of students with special needs who would not benefit from this type of testing may be excused.

For students on an Individual Education Plan (IEP), appropriate arrangements for necessary assistance to write the tests will be made.

## **How are Achievement Test results used?**

Each fall, schools receive a detailed report on their students' results. This report provides information on individual

students, class groupings and the entire grade. This information is used by teachers to identify instructional areas that need improvement.

The Department of Education receives territorial reports, as well as the school reports. These reports are used by Superintendents and educational consultants to see if changes are needed in territorial programs or policies.

### **Do the Achievement Tests assess everything?**

A single test cannot assess everything. For example laboratory skills, creative thinking, oral language expression, and many other skills are best evaluated by the classroom teacher. The clearest picture of students' growth and development is gained when a wide variety of assessment information is considered.

### **How are Achievement Tests developed?**

The Yukon is a member of the Western Canada Protocol (WCP). This is a group made up of Departments of Education in western Canada. This group works on developing common curriculum and common tests.

Questions for the tests are developed by experienced classroom teachers, and are then field tested with grade 3, 6, and 9 students before being used on the tests.

### **When are the tests written?**

Students in grades 3 and 6 will write the tests near the end of the school year. For

schools on the semester system, the tests will be written in late January, as well as near the end of the year.

### **How long do these tests take to write?**

For grade 3 and 6 students, suitable breaks are provided, and various components of the tests are scheduled over several days so that only one test is written in a day. For grade 9 students, the tests are scheduled on separate days.

For students in grade 3:

- *Reading* 70 minutes
- *Writing* 60 minutes
- *Mathematics* 66 minutes

For students in grades 6:

- *Reading* 90 minutes
- *Writing* 120 minutes
- *Mathematics* 90 minutes

For students in grade 9:

- *Reading/Writing* 120 minutes
- *Mathematics* 120 minutes

### **How can I see what the tests look like?**

Early in the school year, teachers are provided with detailed information on the tests, along with a series of sample questions to use in practice with the students. Parents are encouraged to ask teachers to view the material at parent-teacher interviews, or by making special arrangements with their child's teacher.

## **How are the tests marked?**

Tests can be marked in two ways. First, classroom teachers may mark the tests themselves so that they have the results right away and take into account any special circumstances that might have affected a student's mark.

Second, all the tests are sent to an independent scoring service where teams of experienced grade level teachers, who do not know the students, mark the tests. This ensures that all tests are marked in the same way.

The results from the independent scoring are shared with Yukon classroom teachers for two main reasons. First, because the service provides several detailed reports about the entire class and the entire grade. This is very valuable information for planning instruction. Second, the report is shared with teachers so that they can compare their own scoring with that of the scoring service.

## **Do the Achievement Tests affect report card marks?**

For grades 3 and 6, the teacher decides whether to mark the tests and use the results for the student's report card. For grade 9, the test marks count as 25% of the students' final grade in the subjects tested.

## **How can I get the Achievement Test results?**

Parents who would like to know how their child did on a Yukon Achievement Test can do so by asking their child's teacher. The first parent-teacher meeting of the school year is an ideal time to ask about the results.

To view school-wide or territory-wide results, parents should contact the school administrator.

### **More questions?**

If you have additional questions or comments about the achievement tests, please speak with your child's teacher or school principal.

If you would like more information about the Yukon Student Assessment Plan, a general Information Guide is available from your school, or you may contact the Department of Education at the number below to receive a copy:

Department of Education  
Student Information and  
Assessment  
Box 2703  
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

phone: 867-667-8178 or  
867-667-3707