

Suggested Diploma Preparation Activities: Social Studies & English

Remember, there are two parts to your diploma exam: Part A which is the written portion and Part B which is the reading based multiple choice portion. Each exam is written on a different day, so please check the Alberta Education website www.education.alberta.ca to confirm the dates and times of your exams.

General Preparation:

Read, highlight important information and make your own side notes on each of the following documents:

- subject Diploma Information Bulletin for each of your exams
- subject Guide for Students for each of your exams

IMPORTANT: You need to prepare specifically for each part.

Preparation Strategies for Part A Written:

- Review **Samples of Student Writing** documents (can be found on the Alberta Education website as well as one example in this package) to get a better understanding of what Excellent, Proficient and Satisfactory student responses look like.
- Review examples of previous Part A writing prompts and questions.
- Review the scoring guide(s) that will be used to assess our written responses
- Practice writing 2-3 full released exams Part A. Complete a self-assessment using the applicable scoring guides. You can submit your practice exams to your teacher for review and assessment. Book a time to review at least one of your finished practice exams with your subject teacher.
- Practice of the writing should begin at least a month prior to your diploma exam to allow plenty of time for practice, review, feedback and revision.

You are ready to write your Diploma Part A when:

- You know you can complete an entire exam in the time allowed (usually 2 hours in length, but check for your specific subject)
- Your responses include clear support and examples for the position taken (your thesis), are well organized, and use precise language and solid grammar skills
- Your responses clearly communicate your expected level of understanding and skill in a written response format
- You feel confident you have done all you can do to prepare yourself for the exam

Preparation Strategies for Part B Multiple Choice:

- View the ELive Diploma Preparation session for writing the Part B (Multiple Choice) section of the exam.
- Complete the full practice exam (which is an actual old diploma exam)
- Mark your test with the provided key
- Go back and review each item you answered incorrectly and try to determine why you answered it incorrectly. Did you just not know the material being tested? Did you not understand the question? Did you misread the question but did ultimately know the answer upon your review?
- Indicate the correct answer and then to identify key words and phrases in the question which were meant to lead you to the correct answer.
- On the exam blueprint page at the end of the exam, find and circle the number of every item you answered incorrectly. This blueprint tells you what part of the curriculum the item was testing you on. By knowing and understanding what exactly part(s) of the curriculum you do not understand, you can make a very detailed and specific studying list. For the English diplomas there is actually a list which identifies each item (instead of the blueprint chart in social studies), what it was testing and the percentage of students in the province who answered the question correctly
- Based on what patterns of misunderstanding you notice emerge from the previous bullet, make your specific and customized study list.

You are ready to write your Diploma Part B when:

- You know you can complete an entire exam in the time allowed (usually 2 hours in length, but check for your specific subject)
- Your responses clearly communicate your expected level of understanding and skill in a multiple choice response format
- You feel confident you have done all you can do to prepare yourself for the exam

There are many other exam writing strategies that we can discuss if you feel as though you have exam anxiety or your exam results do not mirror your course work achievements.

Diploma Exam preparation needs to be a conscious process; this is a perfect example of the law of physics “for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction”. Please start your diploma preparation NOW! Slow and steady wins the race, remember the turtle and the hare.