

Grade 3 Student Learning Assessments (SLA3) – Fall 2015 Pilot Quick Facts for Parents

What are SLAs?

SLAs are digitally based provincial assessment tools that provide a beginning of the year “check in”. This enables parents and teachers to learn about and identify student strengths and areas of growth at the start of the school year. SLAs support student learning while effectively assessing literacy and numeracy based on Alberta’s current programs of study.

What are the purposes of SLAs?

The three purposes of the SLAs are to:

- improve student learning (primary purpose)
- enhance instruction for students
- ensure the education system meets the needs of students and achieves the outcomes of the *Ministerial Order on Student Learning*.

Provincial assessment programs, including SLAs, are meant to complement, not replace, day-to-day teacher observations and classroom assessment. They are sources of information that must be interpreted, used, and communicated within the context of regular and continuous assessment by classroom teachers.

Why the change to SLAs?

Knowing early in the school year, rather than at the end, what students know and are able to do and areas for growth will serve as a useful reference and enable collaboration between parents and teachers to help students learn and grow during the year. Also, the SLAs are flexible and can be completed over a number of days rather than on a specific day and time. This gives teachers greater flexibility and students the opportunity to take the assessment “when ready”.

The SLAs are digitally based and allow students to show their learning in ways that are not possible with paper-based tests like the Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs). As such, the SLAs are a more inclusive assessment tool.

What is the structure of the SLA3?

This literacy and numeracy assessment consists of digital interactive questions (marked by Alberta Education) and performance tasks (marked locally):

- digital interactive literacy questions
- literacy performance task
- digital interactive numeracy questions
- numeracy performance task.

Why are we Piloting the SLA3?

The purpose of the SLA3 Pilot is to improve, in a deliberate and thoughtful manner, the SLA3 tool as well as the related administration processes and supports for everyone involved. The SLA3 is set to enter its second Pilot year in fall 2015. The goal of the Pilot is to ensure the SLA3 is a valuable assessment tool for teachers, parents, and students before transitioning from PATs to SLAs in Grade 6 and Grade 9.

Who will participate in the Pilot SLAs?

Similar to last fall, participation in the Grade 3 SLA Pilot is optional at the school authority level. As a reminder, the Grade 3 PATs were concluded in June 2014.

What are the important dates for the fall 2015 SLA3 Pilot?

September 14—October 9, 2015	4-week administration window for the digital interactive literacy and numeracy questions
September 14—November 1, 2015	7-week administration window for the literacy and numeracy performance tasks
By November 16, 2015	Teachers and school administrators can access individual student reports and class reports (digital and print) via the SLA Teacher Dashboard. Parents can access their child’s individual results report (including a print copy) via their child’s school.

Will my child need to study for the SLA3?

Your child does not need to study to do this assessment. However, students should be familiar with using a computer or similar technology.

Are there any practice questions my child can do before the SLA3 Pilot?

Yes. Students can try out the practice questions and released questions from last year that are located at <https://public.education.alberta.ca/assessment/>.

When will I know my child’s results?

By November 16, 2015, schools and teachers will be able to access detailed digital individual student and class reports of the results of the digital interactive questions (marked by Alberta Education) through the SLA Teacher Dashboard. New for 2015, a print function has been built into the SLA Teacher Dashboard to allow teachers and administrators to print individual student reports. Results of the performance tasks (marked locally by teachers) will also be available, via schools, shortly after completion of the Pilot administration period.

Parents will be able to access their child’s individual results via their child’s school. Schools are expected to share students’ SLA3 individual results reports with students’ parent(s) or guardian(s).

Teachers and parents/guardians are encouraged to discuss students’ SLA3 results together, as professional teachers are in the best position to interpret the results.

Whom should I contact if I have questions about the SLA3?

You can discuss your questions with your child’s teacher and school principal.

You can also contact Nicole Lamarre, Director of Student Learning Assessments, Alberta Education, (in English and in French) at Nicole.Lamarre@gov.ab.ca or by telephone at 780-422-3535. Call 310-0000 for toll-free access within Alberta.

Want to know more?

More information and resources for the SLA3 are available on the:

- [Alberta School Councils’ Association](http://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/) website (http://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/)
- [Alberta Education](http://education.alberta.ca/department/ipr/slas/) website (http://education.alberta.ca/department/ipr/slas/).