

## Performance Standards: The Achievement Chart

A Guide for Elementary and Secondary Students and their Parents/Guardians



### Assessment & Evaluation Practices Today

In May 2010, the Ontario Ministry of Education released the 1st Edition of Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools (Grades 1-12).

The purpose of this policy document is to:

- update, clarify, consolidate, and coordinate policy; and
- achieve fairness, transparency, equity, and consistency across the province in the assessment, evaluation and reporting of student learning.

Many of us were educated in systems that compared students to each other. One of the greatest changes in education in Ontario over the past 15 years has been the change to assessment and evaluation of students. In schools today, the measurement of how well students are achieving the learning goals is done with reference to a standard set of criteria.

Teachers now use content and performance standards, rather than comparing students to others in their class, course, or grade, or using the teacher's own criteria and standards.

### Consistent Standards

Content standards are the Ontario Ministry of Education's curriculum expectations for every grade and course.

Performance standards are outlined in the achievement chart, which is a standard province-wide guide used by all teachers as a framework to assess and evaluate student achievement. It supports teachers in making consistent judgements about the quality of student learning based on clear performance standards.



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## The Achievement Chart

The achievement chart provides a way to organize the knowledge and skills students need to demonstrate into four broad categories of knowledge and skills.

It also describes a range of four levels (performance standards) that are used to measure/define the quality of a student's achievement of the expectations in a particular subject.

Teachers assess and evaluate student work with reference to the achievement chart that is standard across the province.

### Achievement Chart Categories

**Knowledge & Understanding**—subject specific content acquired in each grade/course and the comprehension of its meaning.

**Thinking**— the use of critical and creative thinking skills and processes.

**Communication**—conveying of meaning through various forms.

**Application**—use of knowledge and skills to make connections within and between various contexts.

### The Achievement Chart by Level

Categories	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>	Demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of content	Demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of content	Demonstrates considerable knowledge and understanding of content	Demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of content
<b>Thinking</b>	Uses planning, processing and critical/creative thinking skills with limited effectiveness	Uses planning, processing and critical/creative thinking skills with some effectiveness	Uses planning, processing and critical/creative thinking skills with considerable effectiveness	Uses planning, processing and critical/creative thinking skills with a high degree of effectiveness
<b>Communication</b>	Expresses and organizes ideas and information for different audiences and purposes with limited effectiveness	Expresses and organizes ideas and information for different audiences and purposes with some effectiveness	Expresses and organizes ideas and information for different audiences and purposes with considerable effectiveness	Expresses and organizes ideas and information for different audiences and purposes with a high degree of effectiveness
<b>Application</b>	Applies knowledge and skills in familiar and new contexts with limited effectiveness	Applies knowledge and skills in familiar and new contexts with some effectiveness	Applies knowledge and skills in familiar and new contexts with considerable effectiveness	Applies knowledge and skills in familiar and new contexts with a high degree of effectiveness

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## Levels of Achievement

Level 4—The student demonstrates the specified knowledge and skills with a high degree of effectiveness. Achievement surpasses the provincial standard. This does not mean that the student has achieved expectations beyond those specified for the grade/course.

Letter Grade: A, Percentage Mark: 80-to-100%

Level 3—The student demonstrates the specified knowledge and skills with considerable effectiveness. This represents the provincial standard for achievement. Parents of students achieving at level 3 can be confident that their children will be prepared for work in subsequent grades or courses.

Letter Grade: B, Percentage Mark: 70-to-79%

Level 2—The student demonstrates the specified knowledge and skills with some effectiveness. Achievement approaches the provincial standard. Students performing at this level need to work on identified learning gaps to ensure future success.

Letter Grade: C, Percentage Mark: 60-to-69%

Level 1—The student demonstrates the specified knowledge and skills with limited effectiveness. Achievement falls much below the provincial standard. Students must work at significantly improving learning in specific areas if they are to be successful in the next grade/course.

Letter Grade: D, Percentage Mark: 50-to-59%

## How do teachers support a common understanding of the performance standards with their students?

Students, parents and teachers are partners in the learning and assessment process. Teachers support students by helping them to:

- understand what they are expected to know, understand, and be able to do in order to successfully demonstrate the content standards; and
- understand learning goals and the quality of work that represents learning at each performance standard.

To support students in their learning, teachers:

- share learning goals and success criteria to help students develop a clear understanding of the quality of work that meets the provincial performance standards;
- share samples of student work that represent different levels of achievement;
- provide students with multiple opportunities to receive, give and use descriptive feedback from their teachers, peers and self; and
- teach students to set their own goals and monitor growth in relation to the learning skills and work habits and curriculum expectations.

## Reference

[\*Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools \(Grades 1-12\)\*](#) is available from [The Ontario Ministry of Education's website](#).

