

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Social Studies Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
1	Option C is correct	The Louisiana Purchase was made in 1803 and resulted in the United States gaining a large amount of territory west of the Mississippi River. This negotiated agreement with France resulted in the United States roughly doubling in size. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and interpret information from maps.
	Option A is incorrect	The Missouri Compromise happened in 1820 and emerged to address the issue of slavery in new states such as Missouri. These new states were formed in the territory added through the Louisiana Purchase shown on the maps.
	Option B is incorrect	The Treaty of Ghent was signed in 1814, and it ended the War of 1812. The treaty resolved territorial disputes in the Great Lakes region, but it did not result in the addition of the vast amount of territory shown on the maps.
	Option D is incorrect	The Adams-Onís Treaty was signed in 1819, after the changes shown on the map. The treaty added Florida, rather than land west of the Mississippi River, to the United States.

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2	Option J is correct	Separation of powers refers to the division of power among the three branches of government. The diagram shows these branches and the primary power given to each by the U.S. Constitution. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and interpret information from a diagram.
	Option F is incorrect	The concept of federalism involves the division of governing power between the national government and state governments. The diagram only addresses the responsibilities and powers of the national government.
	Option G is incorrect	Although popular sovereignty is about power, it is the idea that the power of government originates with the people. The diagram is about how governmental power is distributed.
	Option H is incorrect	As applied to the U.S. Constitution, the concept of republicanism refers to the idea that the people are represented in the government by officials who are elected by the people.

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3	Option B is correct	The economy of the Southern states relied on the production of cash crops such as cotton. To increase their profits, Southern plantation owners chose to rely on the forced labor of unpaid, enslaved people. Using the labor of enslaved people maximized profits for Southern plantation owners. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to contrast two regions of the United States.
	Option A is incorrect	The economy of the Southern states relied on the labor of enslaved people, who did not receive a wage, rather than on wage labor. This was a result of an economy based on plantation agriculture. The more industrial economy and society of the North relied on wage labor.
	Option C is incorrect	The South did have a variety of natural resources. However, land was the natural resource that most influenced the economy of the South. To earn a profit from the land, plantation owners established an agricultural system that relied on the labor of enslaved people.
	Option D is incorrect	While it did have some large cities—such as Richmond, New Orleans, and Charleston—the South was predominantly a rural society; it was the North that had an abundance of cities.

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4	Option J is correct	After Parliament passed the Intolerable Acts in 1774, delegates from the colonies met in what became known as the First Continental Congress. During the First Continental Congress, the delegates organized unified resistance to the acts. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to identify cause-and-effect relationships.
	Option F is incorrect	One of the Intolerable Acts included a requirement for the colonists to pay for the destruction of the tea dumped in Boston Harbor during the Boston Tea Party. However, this requirement was from Parliament. The American colonies reacted by resisting this and other parts of the Intolerable Acts.
	Option G is incorrect	In 1774, when the colonists planned their resistance to the Intolerable Acts, they were not seeking independence. Benjamin Franklin’s trip to France in search of military aid occurred several years after the American Revolution had begun and independence had been declared.
	Option H is incorrect	The colonies lacked the power to impose taxes on British imports. Instead, the American colonists boycotted British imports.

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Item #	Rationale	
5	Option C is correct	The Fourteenth Amendment ensured that all citizens had the same “privileges or immunities” under the law. This meant that people could not be denied the right to serve on a jury or to have a jury of one’s peers. As a result, African Americans had the legal right to serve on juries, and African American defendants had the legal right to have African Americans on their juries. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and interpret information from an illustration.
	Option A is incorrect	The Great Compromise refers to the compromise over the issue of representation in the federal government. This compromise resulted in different forms of representation in the Senate and the House of Representatives. It was reached during the Constitutional Convention and occurred almost 100 years before the illustration was published.
	Option B is incorrect	The two-party system traces its origins to the disagreement over ratification of the Constitution. From this era until the end of the Civil War, slavery was legal, and African Americans had few opportunities to serve on juries.
	Option D is incorrect	The election of qualified judges had no direct impact on whether African Americans had the legal right to serve on juries. This right was legally protected by the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment.

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Item #	Rationale	
6	Option G is correct	Virginia had hot summers and mild winters, which provided a suitable climate for large-scale farming of tobacco. Furthermore, the rivers of Virginia and the fertile soil supported the cultivation of cash crops such as tobacco. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to draw conclusions.
	Option F is incorrect	The rocky soil and cold winters of Massachusetts did not support large-scale agriculture or the growth of cash crops such as tobacco.
	Option H is incorrect	The rocky soil and cold winters of Rhode Island did not support large-scale agriculture or the growth of cash crops such as tobacco.
	Option J is incorrect	Pennsylvania did have good soil and a relatively mild climate, but wheat rather than tobacco was the primary crop grown there. For this reason, Pennsylvania became known as a "breadbasket" colony.

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7	Option A is correct	Due process requires that legal matters be resolved according to established rules and principles. In the United States, the rights to a speedy and public trial, an impartial jury, and legal counsel are due-process rights that have been established either through constitutional amendment or U.S. Supreme Court decisions. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to categorize information.
	Option B is incorrect	Eminent domain is established by the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. It involves due process because it requires the government to provide just compensation when taking private property for public use. Eminent domain does not involve the due-process rights to a speedy and public trial, an impartial jury, and legal counsel.
	Option C is incorrect	The right to free speech is established by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. However, it is not a due-process right because it is not specifically designed to protect the rights of an accused person; rather, it protects an individual from prosecution or persecution by the government based on the individual's spoken or written words.
	Option D is incorrect	Federalism is the division of power between the national government and the state governments. The idea that governing power is divided among different levels does not involve the ideas listed in the diagram.

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Item #	Rationale	
8	Option H is correct	John Brown raided Harpers Ferry to start a rebellion by enslaved people. The raid increased tensions between the North and the South. It also furthered the narrative that slavery could be abolished only through violence. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to use a secondary source to acquire information about the United States.
	Option F is incorrect	John Brown was from the North. He opposed slavery, and his raid showed that some Northerners were willing to fight against slavery rather than in defense of it.
	Option G is incorrect	Southerners did oppose high tariffs. However, John Brown was from the North. Furthermore, John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry was motivated by a desire to end slavery rather than a desire to protest high tariffs.
	Option J is incorrect	Several years before his raid on Harpers Ferry, John Brown was involved in "Bleeding Kansas," where the prospect of popular sovereignty prompted supporters and opponents of slavery to try to influence how the territory would vote on the issue. However, in Virginia, popular sovereignty was not an issue; rather, John Brown sought to start a rebellion of enslaved people.

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Item #	Rationale	
9	Option B is correct	The Radical Republicans were a group of legislators who became influential during Reconstruction. They believed that African Americans should have the same rights as white citizens and that the federal government should ensure those rights. They also believed that Confederate leaders should be punished for their actions. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to categorize information.
	Option A is incorrect	Although many of the leaders who became known as the Radical Republicans were in power before the Civil War, they gained influence and power during the debate over Reconstruction.
	Option C is incorrect	The early republic era occurred during the early 1800s. The Radical Republicans controlled the U.S. Congress during Reconstruction.
	Option D is incorrect	Although many of the leaders who became known as the Radical Republicans were in power during the antebellum era, they were not able to control legislation or impact policy until Reconstruction.

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Item #	Rationale	
10	Option G is correct	Eli Whitney promoted the use of interchangeable parts in the manufacturing of guns. The use of interchangeable parts in the manufacturing process required fewer skilled workers and facilitated the mass production of products. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to draw a conclusion.
	Option F is incorrect	The spinning jenny was invented by James Hargreaves and was used in textile manufacturing rather than weapons manufacturing.
	Option H is incorrect	Whitney did invent a cotton gin that mechanized the processing of cotton. Although the cotton gin led to increased demand for enslaved workers on cotton plantations, the excerpt is about how using interchangeable parts to manufacture guns affected production.
	Option J is incorrect	James Watt is credited with improving the steam engine, which impacted railroad commerce. Eli Whitney's work was focused on the cotton gin and the use of interchangeable parts in weapons manufacturing.

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Item #	Rationale	
11	Option A is correct	The English Bill of Rights listed the rights of citizens, such as the right to free speech. This idea of listing the rights of the people and guaranteeing certain rights such as free speech influenced the framers of the U.S. Constitution. The Bill of Rights in the U.S. Constitution therefore reflects the influence of the English Bill of Rights. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to identify cause-and-effect relationships.
	Option B is incorrect	The Mayflower Compact reflects the principle of self-government rather than the rights of individuals.
	Option C is incorrect	The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut was written to establish the governance of the colony and focuses on the idea of people governing themselves. It does not focus on the rights of individuals.
	Option D is incorrect	The Articles of Confederation established the first government of the United States. The rights cited in the document are those belonging to the federal and state governments. In contrast, the Bill of Rights added to the U.S. Constitution is about individual rights.

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Item #	Rationale	
12	Option F is correct	The Three-Fifths Compromise determined that three-fifths of a state's enslaved people would be counted as part of the population when determining representation in the U.S. House of Representatives. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to draw a conclusion.
	Option G is incorrect	While the Three-Fifths Compromise did address the issue of slavery, it did not focus on the slave trade. Instead, it focused on how enslaved people would be counted as part of the population. The debate over the importation of enslaved people was settled by the agreement that the practice would cease twenty years after the U.S. Constitution was approved.
	Option H is incorrect	The Three-Fifths Compromise did not address the concept of federalism. Instead, it focused on how enslaved people would be counted for the purposes of state taxation and representation.
	Option J is incorrect	The Three-Fifths Compromise addressed the issue of how many representatives a state would have in the U.S. House of Representatives. However, the agreement to have a House of Representatives as part of a bicameral legislature was reached through the Great Compromise.

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Item #	Rationale	
13	Option B is correct	The three headlines describe situations in which states claimed their rights against the federal government. Both Kentucky and South Carolina claimed the right to declare a federal law null and void, though the U.S. Supreme Court rejected the theory of nullification by the states. The delegates at the Hartford Convention debated their rights to secede and to amend the Constitution based on their interpretation of states' rights. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to compare information.
	Option A is incorrect	The Alien and Sedition Acts, which prompted the Kentucky Resolution, were about the issues of naturalization and free speech. The Hartford Convention was a response to the War of 1812. The Nullification Crisis in South Carolina began over the issue of tariffs. None of these focused on slavery.
	Option C is incorrect	The issue of taxation without representation was a central cause of the Revolutionary War. The Kentucky Resolution dealt with the relationship between the federal and state governments. While the Hartford Convention was about the policies of the federal government, trade rather than taxation was the central focus. The Nullification Crisis was about taxes on imports, but South Carolina was challenging the tariff rate rather than whether the state had been fairly represented when tariff laws were passed.
	Option D is incorrect	The situations in all three headlines did not originate through popular sovereignty, or the people voting on the issues. Instead, they resulted from state leaders' opposition to actions taken by the federal government.

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14	Option J is correct	The First Amendment protects the right of individuals to practice the religion of their choice. The fact that evangelists led religious meetings in New England without fear of arrest or persecution demonstrates how the First Amendment protected the freedom of religion. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to draw a conclusion.
	Option F is incorrect	The Know-Nothing Party opposed immigrants, especially Roman Catholic immigrants. The fact that the party attracted members is an example of the growth of nativist prejudice rather than religious freedom.
	Option G is incorrect	The Mormons migrated as a result of religious persecution, which is the opposite of the intent of the First Amendment.
	Option H is incorrect	The First Amendment is specifically aimed at preventing government from interfering with the free exercise of religion, which would include restricting opportunities because of a person's religion. Even though this restriction initially applied only to the federal government, it was extended to state and local governments with the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment.

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15	Option B is correct	George McClellan was the Union Commander of the Army of the Potomac from July 1861 until November 1862. Ulysses S. Grant served as the general-in-chief of the Union Army. He located his headquarters within the Army of the Potomac from May 1864 until April 1865.
	Option A is incorrect	Both McClellan and Grant served in the Union Army and were not Confederate generals.
	Option C is incorrect	Neither McClellan nor Grant served in the Confederate Army. They were both Union officers.
	Option D is incorrect	McClellan and Grant were both Union officers. However, General George Meade led the Army of the Potomac during the Battle of Gettysburg. Neither McClellan nor Grant was at the Battle of Gettysburg.

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Item #	Rationale	
16	Option F is correct	The Erie Canal provided a transportation route from the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes. Improved trade in the Great Lakes region helped open the Midwest for further settlement. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and interpret information from a map.
	Option G is incorrect	This transportation route had little impact on the South, although it did encourage the construction of canals in the region. By the time of the Erie Canal, indentured servitude was not a common part of the economic system in the North.
	Option H is incorrect	This transportation route increased access to the Midwest, but it did not greatly impact the West. The increased transport of goods along this route solidified the role of the Northeast as the commercial center of the nation. Agricultural production was centered in the South and later expanded into the Midwest.
	Option J is incorrect	The Erie Canal expanded trade with the Old Northwest, but it did not directly impact access to or trade with the West. Because of its location, the canal did not have a direct impact on shipping costs in the South.

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Item #	Rationale	
17	Option A is correct	The Kansas-Nebraska Act negated the Missouri Compromise and allowed the territories of Nebraska and Kansas to decide the issue of slavery based on popular sovereignty. This reignited the debate over the expansion of slavery and increased sectionalism. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to identify a cause-and-effect relationship.
	Option B is incorrect	The Kansas-Nebraska Act established that the territories could decide the issue of slavery based on the principle of popular sovereignty. It did not provide tax incentives to companies or industries.
	Option C is incorrect	The act did not permit enslaved people to purchase their freedom once they reached either territory. The fate of people who escaped slavery was still governed by the Fugitive Slave Act.
	Option D is incorrect	The Kansas-Nebraska Act addressed the issue of slavery in the territories. It did not promise homesteads to immigrants. The Homestead Act offered land to settlers.

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Item #	Rationale	
18	Option G is correct	Washington encouraged the nation to remain uninvolved in the politics of other countries in order to prevent the newly formed United States from getting drawn into European wars that could threaten the political independence of the country. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to draw a conclusion.
	Option F is incorrect	Washington’s advice to stay out of European politics did not address the issue of colonization. France and Spain maintained colonies in the Americas at this time, and Washington did not suggest that the United States should take action to liberate these colonies. Rather, it was the Monroe Doctrine that later challenged European colonization of the Americas.
	Option H is incorrect	Washington encouraged commercial ties with other countries. Trade embargoes were used in the early 1800s by presidents seeking to stay neutral in conflicts between Great Britain and France.
	Option J is incorrect	Washington’s advice focused on the need for the nation to remain uninvolved in the affairs of European nations. He encouraged commerce with Europe, but he did not suggest that economic growth should be gained through the transatlantic slave trade.

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Item #	Rationale	
19	Option D is correct	In searching for the Northwest Passage, explorers hoped to find a sea route to the Pacific Ocean. This passage would have provided an alternative route to Asia from Europe that did not involve sailing around the tip of either Africa or South America. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to identify a cause-and-effect relationship.
	Option A is incorrect	The Seven Cities of Gold were supposedly located in the southwestern region of the modern-day United States. The Northwest Passage was a sea route across the northern regions of the continent.
	Option B is incorrect	During the search for the Northwest Passage, sailors already had the technology to cross the Atlantic Ocean. The search for the Northwest Passage was a quest to find a way of traveling from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean through the northern regions of the continent.
	Option C is incorrect	Explorers searching for the Fountain of Youth explored Florida and the Caribbean. The search for the Northwest Passage happened in northern Canada.

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Item #	Rationale	
20	Option G is correct	Dorothea Dix was an activist who advocated for people who experienced mental illness. She repeatedly lobbied Congress and state legislatures to improve care for people experiencing mental illness. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and interpret information from a report.
	Option F is incorrect	Sojourner Truth was an abolitionism activist who spoke against and worked to abolish slavery.
	Option H is incorrect	Harriet Beecher Stowe was an author who, in both her writing and her life, advocated for the abolition of slavery. She did not address the plight of people facing mental illness.
	Option J is incorrect	Elizabeth Cady Stanton primarily focused her activism on the issues of women’s rights and the battle for female suffrage, although she was also involved in other reform movements such as abolitionism.

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Item #	Rationale	
21	Option D is correct	In 1620, the colonists used the Mayflower Compact to declare their intent to unite for the purpose of forming a government. By agreeing to establish the laws by which they all would live, they established a form of self-government. This idea of self-government later influenced other colonies. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and interpret information from a diagram.
	Option A is incorrect	The Mayflower Compact established the principle that the colonists would govern themselves. In 1787, the Founding Fathers used the U.S. Constitution to create a legislature with two houses.
	Option B is incorrect	The Mayflower Compact acknowledged that the colonists were still subjects of the English king. The colonists used the Declaration of Independence to declare independence in 1776.
	Option C is incorrect	The colonists wrote the Mayflower Compact as an agreement that they would all work together to govern themselves. Enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke popularized the concept of natural or unalienable rights. Thomas Jefferson later included the idea of unalienable rights in the Declaration of Independence when he wrote about "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

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Item #	Rationale	
22	Option F is correct	During the colonial era, Parliament used the Quartering Act to require colonists to provide food, housing, and other provisions to British troops in America. The colonists opposed this practice and listed it as a grievance in the Declaration of Independence. The Founding Fathers later prohibited the practice through their inclusion of the Third Amendment in the Bill of Rights. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to identify a cause-and-effect relationship.
	Option G is incorrect	By the time that the Third Amendment was proposed in 1789, the United States was independent and British troops no longer were stationed in the country.
	Option H is incorrect	The prohibition of the quartering of troops does not address the funding of the military. Instead, it protected citizens from having to house soldiers against their will.
	Option J is incorrect	Prohibiting the national government from forcing citizens to house soldiers did not impact state militias. The purpose of the amendment was to protect citizens from what had been seen as an egregious practice by the British.

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Item #	Rationale	
23	Option B is correct	In the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson emphasized the idea that people have certain unalienable rights. This concept of natural rights formed the ideological basis of the colonists' fight for independence. In addition, Jefferson included a list of grievances that showed how the British government had violated those rights. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to make a generalization.
	Option A is incorrect	The Declaration of Independence only declared the colonies' independence; the Articles of Confederation provided the structure for the first government of the United States.
	Option C is incorrect	The Declaration of Independence listed the colonists' grievances and declared their independence. Military strategy was developed by leaders such as George Washington.
	Option D is incorrect	Thomas Jefferson was responsible for the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. However, when he wrote the Declaration of Independence in 1776, his focus was on gaining freedom from Great Britain rather than acquiring territory from France.

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Item #	Rationale	
24	Option H is correct	In 1845, Mexico recognized the border with Texas as being defined by the Nueces River. Texas recognized the Rio Grande, located farther south, as being the border. The United States and Mexico both had troops in the area between the rivers, and this dispute erupted into war. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to identify a cause-and-effect relationship.
	Option F is incorrect	The United States planned for Texas to be annexed into the United States as a slave state. The United States did not gain any other territory from Mexico until the end of the war, nor did it ban slavery in the new territories.
	Option G is incorrect	The issue of statehood for New Mexico was not debated until after the war, as the territory had belonged to Mexico before the war.
	Option J is incorrect	U.S. acquisition of the Mexican Cession was an outcome rather than a cause of the war. Because of Mexico's defeat, the United States gained territory in the Southwest.

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Item #	Rationale	
25	Option C is correct	The map shows the routes of the transatlantic slave trade. The plantation system in the Americas depended on the forced labor of enslaved people, who received no wages. This demand spurred the growth of the slave trade. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and interpret information from a map.
	Option A is incorrect	The factory system involved the use of workers who were paid a wage. The map shows the routes used to deliver Africans forced into slavery to the Americas.
	Option B is incorrect	A successful steamboat was not invented until the early 1800s. The transatlantic slave trade began in the 1500s.
	Option D is incorrect	The mechanical loom for weaving cloth was invented in the late 1800s, long after the start of the transatlantic slave trade in the 1500s.

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Item #	Rationale	
26	Option G is correct	The colonists believed that the best way to protect the rights of life, liberty, and property was to have representation in government. Thomas Jefferson addressed these ideas in the Declaration of Independence and explained that the purpose of government was to preserve unalienable rights. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to use a primary source to acquire information about the United States.
	Option F is incorrect	The colonists did not have the power to establish royal courts, and they wanted courts composed of their peers.
	Option H is incorrect	The mercantile system was rooted in the concept that colonies existed to benefit the mother country. This idea certainly shaped the British approach to the colonies. However, mercantilism would have helped lead to colonial support for liberty rather than the other way around.
	Option J is incorrect	While the colonists did believe in a right to liberty, they did not apply this concept to all people. Indentured servitude was a form of unfree labor, and slavery was not abolished until the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865.

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Item #	Rationale	
27	Option D is correct	Impressment was one of the main causes of the war, and Great Britain ended the practice of forcing American sailors into the British Navy as a result of the war. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to identify a cause-and-effect relationship.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the War of 1812 extended into Canada, Great Britain retained control of that country at war's end.
	Option B is incorrect	Great Britain and the United States did dispute control of land in the Northwest, but the borders there were settled by treaty in 1846 rather than through the War of 1812.
	Option C is incorrect	Congress limited trade with these countries before the war, but after the war, the United States resumed trading with both nations.

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Item #	Rationale	
28	Option F is correct	The Missouri Compromise involved the addition of two states to the nation. Missouri was added as a slave state and Maine as a free state. This agreement maintained the balance of slave and free states in Congress. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to identify a cause-and-effect relationship.
	Option G is incorrect	The Three-Fifths Compromise involved how enslaved people would be counted for representation and was agreed to during the drafting of the Constitution in 1787. The Missouri Compromise was negotiated in 1820.
	Option H is incorrect	Southerners were allowed to pursue people fleeing slavery as a result of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. The Missouri Compromise did not address this issue.
	Option J is incorrect	The slave trade was abolished in Washington, D.C., as a result of the Compromise of 1850 rather than of the Missouri Compromise.

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Item #	Rationale	
29	Option B is correct	Andrew Jackson believed that the board of the bank was biased in favor of the northern states because they were more urban and industrialized. As a result, he believed that the bank favored the wealthy and was unfair toward people who lived in rural areas. He also claimed that the bank was unconstitutional. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to identify a cause-and-effect relationship.
	Option A is incorrect	Jackson's objection to the bank was based on his belief that it unfairly benefited the rich. He did not complain about its efficiency.
	Option C is incorrect	Jackson believed the bank unfairly promoted industrial growth at the expense of rural and agricultural interests.
	Option D is incorrect	The Bank of the United States was a national bank, so it did not favor states' rights over those of the federal government.

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Item #	Rationale	
30	Option J is correct	The jobs offered by factories and the offer of housing both contributed to the migration of people from rural areas to cities. This caused an increase in the rate of urbanization. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to categorize information.
	Option F is incorrect	The factory system replaced the cottage system of production. The cottage industry involved people completing tasks in their homes rather than working in a factory for money.
	Option G is incorrect	The growth of factories contributed to urban development rather than to rural development. The opportunities offered by factories encouraged people from rural areas to migrate to cities.
	Option H is incorrect	Factory work was often exploitative, and the increase in demand for unskilled labor in the factories limited the rights of workers because workers could be easily replaced. Therefore, workers had few rights as the United States became more industrialized during the nineteenth century.

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Item #	Rationale	
31	Option B is correct	The Fifteenth Amendment extended voting rights to African American men. Because Republicans controlled Congress during Reconstruction and led the effort to ratify the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments, they gained the support and vote of African Americans. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to identify a cause-and-effect relationship.
	Option A is incorrect	The Fifteenth Amendment addressed voting rights rather than immigration.
	Option C is incorrect	The Twelfth Amendment, not the Fifteenth Amendment, changed the way the president and vice president were elected.
	Option D is incorrect	The Dawes Severalty Act of 1887, not the Fifteenth Amendment, is the legislation that divided tribal lands into individual plots.

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Item #	Rationale	
32	Option J is correct	The mild climate of the Mid-Atlantic colonies contributed to a longer growing period than was available in the New England colonies. The mild climate meant that the time between the first freeze of the year and the last freeze of the year was shorter, so the growing season was longer. The colonies farther north had longer winters and therefore shorter growing seasons. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to identify a cause-and-effect relationship.
	Option F is incorrect	The Mid-Atlantic colonies did have thick forests. However, climate rather than the presence of trees was the reason for a longer growing season.
	Option G is incorrect	The Mid-Atlantic colonies did have navigable rivers, but any impact that rivers had on the region's temperature was not enough to significantly lengthen the growing season.
	Option H is incorrect	The Mid-Atlantic colonies did have substantial flat land that was good for farming, but there was also a good bit of land that was elevated. In addition, the Mid-Atlantic colonies did not have the rocky soil that was common in the New England colonies.

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Item #	Rationale	
33	Option B is correct	As the nation industrialized, immigration increased. These increases in immigration aroused nativist sentiments. These sentiments encouraged people to believe that immigrants were taking jobs from U.S. citizens. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and interpret information from a visual.
	Option A is incorrect	Jefferson Davis, who became the president of the Confederacy, was certainly affirming states' rights in 1857. However, neither states' rights nor tariffs were a central cause of nativist sentiment.
	Option C is incorrect	The United States was an independent country in 1857, having gained its independence in the previous century.
	Option D is incorrect	The Battle of San Jacinto happened in 1836, more than two decades before the slogan shown in the visual.

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Item #	Rationale	
34	Option H is correct	The Mississippi state legislature elected Hiram Rhodes Revels to the U.S. Senate on January 20, 1870. This action made him the first African American to win a seat in the U.S. Congress. Revels took his seat in Congress the following month.
	Option F is incorrect	Before he became a U.S. senator, Hiram Rhodes Revels was a pastor and educator. Phillis Wheatley was the first African American to be published. Her collection of poems was published in 1773, more than 50 years before Revels was born in 1827.
	Option G is incorrect	The term “carpetbagger” describes Northerners who moved to the South during Reconstruction. These people generally had selfish ambitions. In contrast, Hiram Rhodes Revels was born in North Carolina. Before becoming a public servant as a U.S. senator, Revels traveled throughout the United States to meet people’s religious and educational needs.
	Option J is incorrect	Revels recruited soldiers for black regiments in the Union Army and served as a chaplain for a black regiment. The U.S. armed forces were not integrated until the twentieth century.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Social Studies Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
35	Option B is correct	The case of <i>Gibbons v. Ogden</i> involved interstate commerce and which level of government had the right to regulate trade and grant monopolies. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Congress had the power to regulate commerce between states based on Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to summarize information.
	Option A is incorrect	The 1824 case of <i>Gibbons v. Ogden</i> did not involve the rights or status of enslaved people. This issue was addressed in the 1857 <i>Dred Scott</i> case.
	Option C is incorrect	The nullification crisis was debated during the same era as <i>Gibbons</i> ; however, <i>Gibbons</i> focused on the right to hold a monopoly on transportation routes and not the issue of tariffs.
	Option D is incorrect	The case focused on whether the states or the U.S. Congress had the power to regulate interstate commerce, so it was about federalism rather than the separation of powers.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Social Studies Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
36	Option G is correct	The Battle of Antietam occurred in Maryland, and the Battle of Gettysburg occurred in Pennsylvania. Both states were under Union control during the Civil War. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to make a contrast.
	Option F is incorrect	Both battles were victories for the Union forces rather than for the Confederacy.
	Option H is incorrect	Virginia seceded in 1861. The Battle of Antietam was fought in 1862, and Gettysburg was fought in 1863, so neither battle was an attempt to keep Virginia in the union.
	Option J is incorrect	The capital of the Confederacy was Richmond, Virginia. Neither Antietam nor Gettysburg was fought in Virginia.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Social Studies Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
37	Option C is correct	By arguing that commerce should be "left most free to individual enterprise," Jefferson advocates for government having minimal regulation over business and industry. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to use a primary source to acquire information about the United States.
	Option A is incorrect	Protective tariffs are a form of government intervention on behalf of certain businesses. Jefferson suggests that the government leave business and agriculture to private individuals and entities.
	Option B is incorrect	In this excerpt, Jefferson argues in favor of government remaining uninvolved in business. Controlling the amount of competition would necessitate government intervention in business.
	Option D is incorrect	In this excerpt, Jefferson advocates for a limited role of the government in business and commerce. Although Jefferson would later approve the use of federal revenue to fund internal improvements, the quoted text is not promoting such action.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Social Studies Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
38	Option F is correct	The North had an extensive network of railroads before the war broke out. This network facilitated the transportation of both soldiers and supplies to the areas where they were needed. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to draw a conclusion.
	Option G is incorrect	The Oregon Trail was used during the Civil War. However, it was used primarily by people leaving Oregon to join the Union or Confederate army or by people seeking to flee the war.
	Option H is incorrect	The climate and terrain of the Northern states were not conducive to producing cotton. Furthermore, Union troops wore uniforms made mostly of wool.
	Option J is incorrect	By the time of the Civil War, railroads had replaced canals as the most efficient means of transportation.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Social Studies Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
39	Option C is correct	Because the United States imported most of its manufactured goods from Europe during the early 1800s, the decision to stop trade with Great Britain and France caused the United States to increase its own manufacturing. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to identify a cause-and-effect relationship.
	Option A is incorrect	The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed between the United States and Mexico in 1848 to end the U.S.-Mexican War. It was not an effect of the War of 1812.
	Option B is incorrect	The Monroe Doctrine (1823) did deal with foreign relations, but it was about European colonization of the Americas rather than trade with Europe.
	Option D is incorrect	The banning of trade with France and Great Britain decreased profits from international commerce because that commerce was drastically reduced.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Social Studies Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
40	Option J is correct	George Washington was the first president of the United States. He served two terms, appointed cabinet members, and recommended the use of the title "Mr. President." For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to categorize information.
	Option F is incorrect	John Adams was the second president of the United States. The traditions described in the diagram had already been established by George Washington when Adams became president.
	Option G is incorrect	Thomas Jefferson served two terms as president, but he was following George Washington's example in doing so. The other traditions described in the diagram had also already been established by Washington.
	Option H is incorrect	James Madison served two terms, but he was the third president to do so. The other traditions described in the diagram had also already been established by Washington.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Social Studies Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
41	Option A is correct	The Northwest Ordinance established guidelines that governed how territories could be organized to become states. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and interpret information from a visual.
	Option B is incorrect	The Treaty of Paris (1763) concluded the French and Indian War. At the time, America was not yet independent, so there would have been no reason to establish guidelines for admitting new states to the union.
	Option C is incorrect	The Bill of Rights outlines the rights of individuals rather than providing guidelines for how new states are added to the nation.
	Option D is incorrect	The Alien and Sedition Acts addressed the naturalization of immigrants and speech that was critical of the government. They did not establish rules for new states.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Social Studies Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
42	Option J is correct	African Americans in the United States were denied citizenship rights before the Civil War and the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment, regardless of whether they were enslaved. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to compare information.
	Option F is incorrect	Because African Americans were not recognized as citizens, they were typically prevented from testifying in court.
	Option G is incorrect	While free blacks may have had to pay taxes, enslaved people generally did not.
	Option H is incorrect	While free blacks may have had to pay taxes, enslaved people did not, because the government viewed them as property rather than as people.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Social Studies Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
43	Option A is correct	The Maryland Colony was established as a refuge for English Catholics, though it did grant protection for all people who followed the different forms of Christianity. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to make a generalization.
	Option B is incorrect	The colony of Maryland was established by English Catholics, not Spanish Catholics. In the 1600s, the vast majority of Spanish workers settled in Spanish colonies, not English colonies.
	Option C is incorrect	The Irish families who fled the natural disaster of the potato blight did not migrate until the 1840s, well after the colonial period had ended.
	Option D is incorrect	Very few migrants traveled from Russia to North America during the colonial period. Migration from Russia increased in the later nineteenth century.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Social Studies Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
44	Option J is correct	Harriet Tubman, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and William Lloyd Garrison all advocated for the abolition of slavery and supported female suffrage. Therefore, all three demonstrated a commitment to rights and freedoms. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to categorize information.
	Option F is incorrect	Agricultural innovators during this era were people such as John Deere and Cyrus McCormick.
	Option G is incorrect	Tubman, Stanton, and Garrison focused on individual rights rather than westward expansion.
	Option H is incorrect	All three people wanted to abolish slavery. They would have opposed states' rights, which were used to support the continuation of slavery.