

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Social Studies Item Sampler Grade 8



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OVERVIEW

This document contains samples of test items similar to those on the Wisconsin Forward Social Studies Exam. Each sample test item has been through a rigorous review process by DRC, Wisconsin Educators, and a third party, to ensure alignment with the Wisconsin Academic Standards. These items will not be used on the state assessment and may, therefore, be used in Wisconsin for professional development and student practice. The items in this document illustrate a sample of the content and types of items that students will encounter on the Forward Exam. A Summary Data table in the Appendix section identifies the alignment (standard measured), answer key, depth of knowledge, and annotations for each item.

CONNECTION TO THE STANDARDS

Wisconsin Academic Standards for Social Studies are available on the [DPI Webpage](#). Test items require students to prove their knowledge and abilities as stated in the standards.

HOW DO I USE THIS BOOK?

Professional Development

Sample items are useful as educators engage in conversations about what students are expected to know and be able to do to demonstrate proficiency on the state assessments relative to the Wisconsin Academic Standards. Sample items can inform discussions about state and local standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Improving Instruction

Teachers may use sample items in classroom activities that help students understand how to

- review key vocabulary;
- solve problems;
- determine which answer choices are correct, which are incorrect, and why;
- approach long and/or multistep tasks;
- use good test-taking strategies.

Student Practice

Students may perform better and with less anxiety if they are familiar with the format of the test and with the types of items they will be required to answer. The Forward Exam is an online assessment; students will benefit from the use of the [Online Tools Training](#) in order to work within the system interface to answer items as they will appear on the assessment, as well as utilize the tools available to them in the online system.

Note: A student's score on the practice test cannot be converted to a scale score, used to predict performance on the Forward Exam, or used to make inferences about the student's learning.

Test Preparation

While using the Item Sampler for test preparation, care should be taken that this is done in a balanced manner and one that helps to enhance student knowledge of subject matter as well as test performance. Please note that test preparation is only useful to the extent that it is also teaching content area knowledge and skills. Therefore, the use of this resource for test preparation is of limited value to students due to the narrow opportunity for content learning. It is very important to ensure that teachers are teaching to the curriculum and not to the test, as teaching to the test narrows the focus of instruction to only that content covered by the test.

DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE



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SUMMARY DEFINITIONS OF DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE (WEBB'S DOK™)				
SUBJECT	WEBB'S DOK LEVEL 1	WEBB'S DOK LEVEL 2	WEBB'S DOK LEVEL 3	WEBB'S DOK LEVEL 4
Social Studies	<p>Requires students to recall facts (who, what, when, and where), terms, concepts, trends, generalizations, and theories. May require students to recognize or identify specific information contained in maps, charts, tables, graphs, drawings, or other graphics.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recall or recognize an event, map, or document Describe the features of a place or people Identify key figures in a particular context 	<p>Requires students to compare or contrast people, places, events, and concepts; give examples, classify or sort items into meaningful categories; describe, interpret or explain issues and problems, patterns, reasons, causes, effects, significance or impact, relationships, and points of view or processes.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the causes/effects of particular events Identify patterns in events or behavior Categorize events or figures into meaningful groupings Convert information from one form into another Explain issues or problems in their own words 	<p>Requires students to draw conclusions, cite evidence, apply concepts to new situations; use concepts to solve problems, analyze similarities and differences in issues and problems; propose and evaluate solutions; recognize and explain misconceptions; make connections and explain main concepts. Requires students to justify their arguments through application and evidence.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how changes have affected people or places Apply concepts in other contexts Form alternate conclusions Propose and evaluate solutions to problems Recognize misconceptions and explain them (in their own words) Make connections across time and place to explain a concept or big idea 	<p>Requires complexity at least at the level of DOK 3 but also an extended time to complete the task. A project that requires extended time but repetitive or lower-DOK tasks is not at Level 4. May require students to connect and relate ideas and concepts within and among content areas. May involve analyzing and synthesizing information from multiple sources; examining and explaining alternative perspectives across a variety of sources; making predictions with evidence as support; planning and developing solutions to problems.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given a situation/problem research, define and describe the situation/problem and provide alternative solutions Describe, define and illustrate common social, historical, or geographical themes and how they interrelate

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ITEM TYPES

The Wisconsin Forward Exam has multiple types of test items. However, because this item sampler is in a format that can be printed, the majority of its items are multiple-choice. In the Forward Exam, there will be a more diverse array of item types, including the ones described below.

Selected-Response (SR) Items

Selected-Response (SR) items are an efficient method for measuring a broad range of content, and can be used to assess a variety of skills. Three types of SR items are used on the online assessments: Multiple-Choice (MC), Enhanced Selected-Response (ESR), and Evidence-Based Selected-Response (EBSR). In all cases, SR items require that a student determines the correct answer(s) to the item posed from a provided list. While it is still possible for a student to perform some work directly related to determining the correct answer, the student is not required to generate the content of the answer when responding to a Selected-Response item. An exception to this requirement is Mathematics Short-Response/Gridded-Response items where students will be required to enter a short alphanumeric response.

Multiple-Choice (MC) Items

Multiple-Choice (MC) items on Wisconsin's assessments have four answer choices, including three distractors and one correct answer. Distractors for Mathematics represent common misconceptions, incorrect logic, incorrect application of an algorithm, computational errors, etc. Distractors for English Language Arts (ELA) are written to represent a common misinterpretation, predisposition, unsound reasoning, casual reading, etc. A correct response to an MC item is worth one raw point. The process skills, directives, and action statements within an MC item also specifically align with the Wisconsin Academic Standards. Multiple-Choice items are present in all grades and are used with all content areas.

Multiple-Choice items can be further defined by being linked to, or independent from, a stimulus source. Items that operate independent of a stimulus are also known as "stand-alone MC." Stand-alone items may still have tables, graphs, or other information used in support of the stem. English Language Arts uses a mixture of MC items linked to a stimulus passage and some that are stand-alone. For Mathematics, all MC items are considered stand-alone.

Enhanced Selected-Response (ESR) Items

The Enhanced Selected-Response (ESR) items are multi-part autoscored items that may consist of varying combinations of Multiple-Choice, Multiple-Response, Gridded-Response, Completion or Short-Answer, and Technology-Enhanced items that explore in greater depth and cognitive complexity the knowledge, skills, and abilities specified by the standards of each content area. Typically, this item type has a common focus and explores authentic problem-solving skills. An example of a Statistics and Probability Mathematics ESR item would utilize a data-table stimulus with Part A using a Technology-Enhanced (TE) graphing tool to create a bar graph of the data presented and Part B asking students to calculate the mean of the data using a Short-Response item.

Two-Part Evidence-Based Selected-Response (EBSR) Items

The Evidence-Based Selected-Response (EBSR) items have two parts and are designed to elicit a response based on what a student has read from a stimulus passage. EBSR items may be linked to a stimulus passage or to a stimulus passage set. There are several variations of two-part EBSR items, but all two-part EBSR items have an Accuracy piece and an Evidence piece.

The Accuracy piece of the item is Part A. Part A of a typical EBSR item will be similar to a standard MC test item. A student analyzes a passage and chooses a single, best (correct) answer from four answer choices. Part B of a typical EBSR item will elicit evidence from the stimulus passage and will require that the student selects one or more correct answers based on the response the student provided to Part A. Part B is also different from Part A in that it may have five or six answer Options rather than just four answer Options typical of an MC item and more than one Option may be correct.

Technology-Enhanced (TE) Items

Technology-Enhanced (TE) item types share the same functional structure as traditional paper and pencil test items; however, the expansive features and functions of a computer-based medium allow for the incorporation of technical enhancements into traditional elements of a test item, such as the item stem, the stimulus (if any), the response area, or a combination of all three. TE items are used in the content areas of ELA, Mathematics, and Science.

Item types such as drag-and-drop, hot spot, and in-line selection of multiple answers from drop-down menus broaden item presentation with engaging, interactive open-ended items.

A wide variety of TE item types will be present on the Wisconsin Forward Exam, including, but not limited to:

- **Clock Input**, where a student is able to add an hour hand and a minute hand to the clock;
- **Angle Draw Input**, where given a base line, the student can represent an angle;
- **Short Input**, where there are many types of short inputs that can be used (The number of characters is usually limited to a relatively small number in order to facilitate auto-scoring. The types of characters allowed can also be limited to text only, numbers only, or a mix. An equation editor can be utilized to assist the student in creating something as basic as a fraction or something more complex. The available symbols and templates in the equation builder can be customized for a testing program. Certain Short Input items can also be used in a paper-based test (PBT) as a Gridded-Response item.);
- **Bar Graph Input**, where students can produce bar graphs with prepopulated titles, labels, and scales, or the system can allow the student to populate them (The number of bars and the color of the bars is predetermined by the system. A reset feature is available that allows the student to start over from the original configuration.);
- **Number Line Input**, where students can create a graph that might involve plotting points only or points and lines (Both solid and open “dots” are available as well as line segments and rays. Number line graphs can have prepopulated titles, labels, and scales or can allow the student to populate them.);
- **Coordinate Graph Input**, which allows for the graphing and labeling of points and lines (Regions, determined by plotted lines, can be shaded. Solid and open “dots” as well as solid and dashed lines are available to the student. Coordinate graphs can have prepopulated titles, labels, and scales or can allow the student to populate them.);
- **Line Plot Input**, which is used as another way to graphically represent data (The basic structure is provided for the student. Certain labeling on the line plot can be done by the student. A reset feature is available that allows the student to start over from the original configuration.);
- **List Input**, a combination of the short input described earlier that allows the student to add input boxes (For example, it can be used for describing the steps in a process without revealing to the student the number of steps needed. The added input boxes can be rearranged and/or deleted.);
- **Drag-and-Drop Input**, a wide variety of ways are available to utilize a drag-and-drop input (The main difference between it and a drag-and-paste is that each draggable entity can be used only once with a drag-and-drop input. A reset feature is available that allows the student to start over from the original configuration.);

- **Drag-and-Paste Input**, a wide variety of ways are available to utilize drag-and-paste input (The main difference between it and a drag-and-drop is that each draggable entity can be used more than once with a drag-and-paste input. A reset feature is available that allows the student to start over from the original configuration.);
- **Drop-Down List Input**, allows for the creation of a situation where a great deal of information about a student's grasp of a concept can be determined with a single item (Students can be asked to choose from three function types, four number of real zero responses, and two inverse function responses. For one function alone, this provides 24 possible answer combinations. With the three functions, a considerable amount of information can be gained, making this almost an open-ended item type.);
- **Pictograph using Drag-and-Paste**, actually another example of drag-and-paste, but is worth mentioning on its own as it is a type of graphing often used at lower grade levels;
- **Circle Graph**, a graph that allows the student to create and label the "wedges" that represent the data (Circle graphs can have a prepopulated title or can allow the student to populate it. The color of the "wedges" is predetermined by the system.);
- **Matching**, allows for the use of text or graphics as the matching objects (The student clicks on one object and then clicks on a second object to connect them.);
- **Highlighting Text**, allows for designated text to be highlighted in a word, phrase, sentence, or paragraph; and the
- **Graphic Modification Hot Spot**, allows for one image to replace another image when a hot spot is clicked.

Text-Dependent Analysis (TDA) Items

The English Language Arts (ELA) section of the Forward Exam presents students with a Text-Dependent Analysis (TDA) item. A TDA is a text-based analysis based on a single passage or a multiple passage set that each student has read during the assessment. The passage or passage set will consist of either literary or informational text. In order to successfully answer a TDA, students must analyze and use information from the passage(s) to plan a comprehensive, holistic response. Students will then write their response including supporting evidence from the passage(s). Students will have up to 5,000 characters to formulate their response. Students' responses are scored using a rubric that takes into account both the composition and the conventions of the student's writing.

The TDA portion of the Forward Exam requires students to read the text and then respond in writing in one of two ways:

- identifying and explaining a theme or central idea, using textual evidence to support the claim about what that theme or central idea is, or
- analyzing the development of an event, character, central ideas, or theme, using textual evidence to support the explanation and analysis.

TDA Item Samplers are available at <https://dpi.wi.gov/assessment/forward/sample-items>.



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Answer the items.

1. Look at the map.



This map could best be used for which purpose?

- A. to see the regions that states belong to
- B. to check the time zones that cross the continent
- C. to determine the types of government of different states
- D. to determine relative locations of physical features on the continent

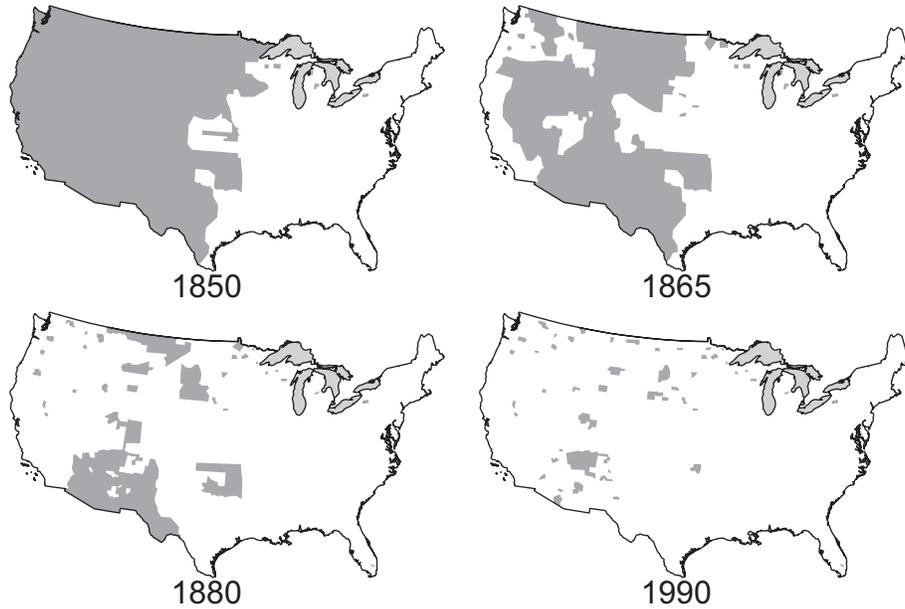
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2. What are the most likely effects of a drought on the environment? Select two answers.
- A. an increase in wildfires
 - B. an increase in landslides
 - C. a reduction in soil quality
 - D. an increase in earthquakes
 - E. an increase in landform creation
 - F. a reduction in volcanic eruptions

Go on to the next page.

Look at the maps. Then answer items 3 and 4.

American Indian Land, 1850–1990



Key

- lands transferred from American Indians to the United States
- lands held by American Indians or returned to American Indians

Go on to the next page.

3. What was one way American Indians were most likely affected by the changes shown on the maps?
- A. They were forced to move to urban areas to find factory jobs.
 - B. They were resettled in other countries by the U.S. government.
 - C. They were no longer able to follow their traditional ways of life.
 - D. They were required to perform agricultural work in the Southeast.
4. Despite the changes shown on the maps, which cultural contribution of American Indians has had the most lasting impact on the United States?
- A. taking clan or family names from the mother's side
 - B. claiming private ownership of land to use it for profit
 - C. living in harmony with the natural world and conserving resources
 - D. developing different social classes based on physical features and skills

Go on to the next page.

Answer the items.

5. Look at the list of sources a student gathered for a project on Thomas Jefferson.

Research Materials for Student Project on Thomas Jefferson

1. *Notes on the State of Virginia*, 1782, Thomas Jefferson, author. Written by Jefferson and presents his views on natural science and education.
2. *Thomas Jefferson: Founding Father*, a documentary, 2010. Presents basic biographical information about Jefferson and the times he lived in.
3. “Oh, Grab Me!” political cartoon, 1809. Makes fun of Jefferson’s embargo on trade to avoid war with France and England.
4. Letters to James Madison, 1784–1789, Thomas Jefferson, author. Jefferson’s letters written to his close friend while he served as the Ambassador to France. Suggested ideas and changes to Madison as he worked on the Constitution.

Which source would be most relevant for a student to use for a project about Jefferson’s views on how a republican government should be structured and its power limited?

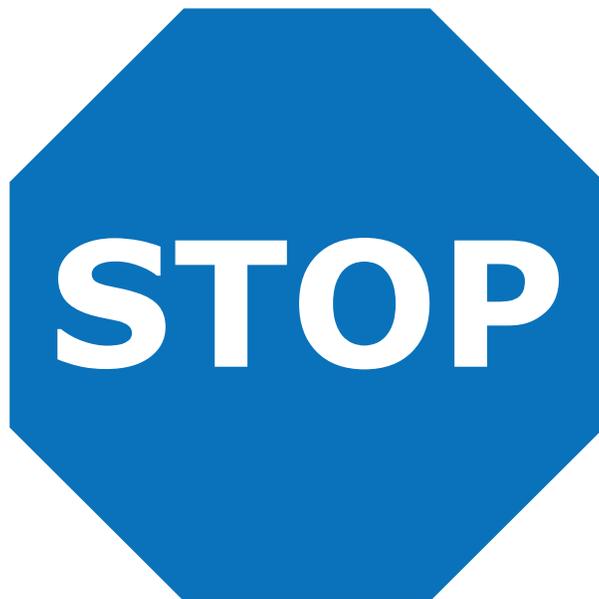
- A. 1
- B. 2
- C. 3
- D. 4

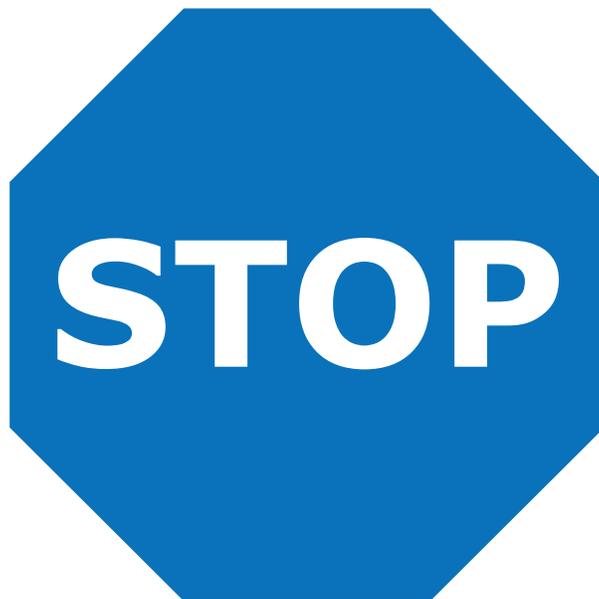
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6. While on television, a popular singer tells viewers where to buy her favorite shirt. Alexandra sees this and asks her friends to come to the mall with her to buy the shirt. Alexandra buying a shirt because a popular singer likes it is an example of
- A. media affecting consumer choices.
 - B. performers helping the less fortunate.
 - C. singers being better dressers than students.
 - D. television creating new ways for friends to interact.
7. Use the list to complete the table. Choose one cause and one consequence for the global issue and write each of them in the table.

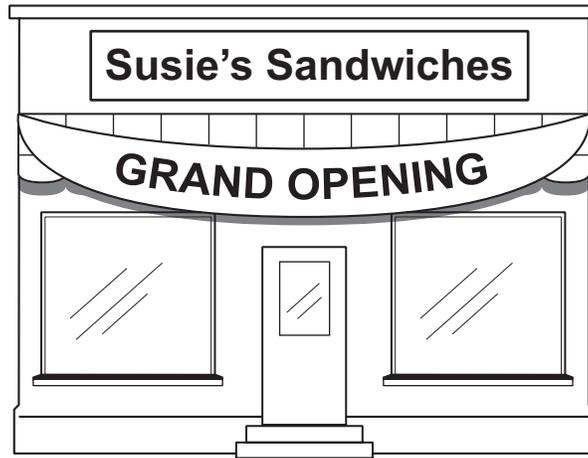
Cause	Global Issue	Consequence
	overconsumption of natural resources	

- reduced dependence on new technology**
- planned communities in urban areas**
- decreasing population in developed countries**
- destruction of natural habitats and ecosystems**
- increased consumer demand fueled by global trade**





Look at the image. Then answer items 1 and 2.



1. How will the business shown in the image most affect the standard of living in the community?
 - A. It will cost owners more in insurance and wages.
 - B. It will create new jobs and generate tax revenue.
 - C. It will encourage more tourists to visit the community.
 - D. It will cause more grocery stores in the community to close.

2. Why did Susie most likely open this business?
 - A. to earn a profit
 - B. to employ people
 - C. to bring new services to the community
 - D. to introduce new food to the community

Go on to the next page.

Read the information in the box. Then answer items 3 and 4.

Minors of the [African American] race, through their legal representatives, seek the aid of the courts in obtaining admission to the public schools of their community on a nonsegregated basis. In each instance, they had been denied admission to schools attended by white children under laws requiring or permitting segregation according to race.

—from the Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 1954

3. With which principle of the U.S. government does the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision most closely align?
 - A. majority rule
 - B. individual rights
 - C. equal opportunity
 - D. freedom of speech

4. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the African American plaintiffs in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. What did this decision eventually allow African American children to do?
 - A. attend private schools
 - B. attend integrated schools
 - C. attend schools in their own neighborhoods
 - D. attend schools that were equal to those for whites

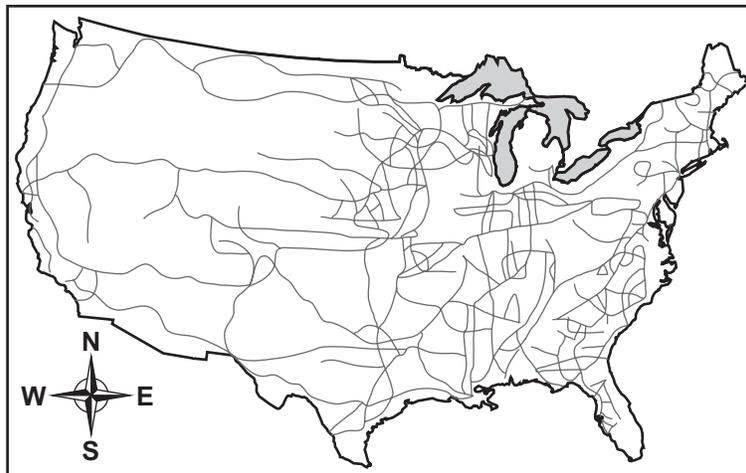
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Look at the maps. Then answer items 5 and 6.

Railroads in the United States, 1860



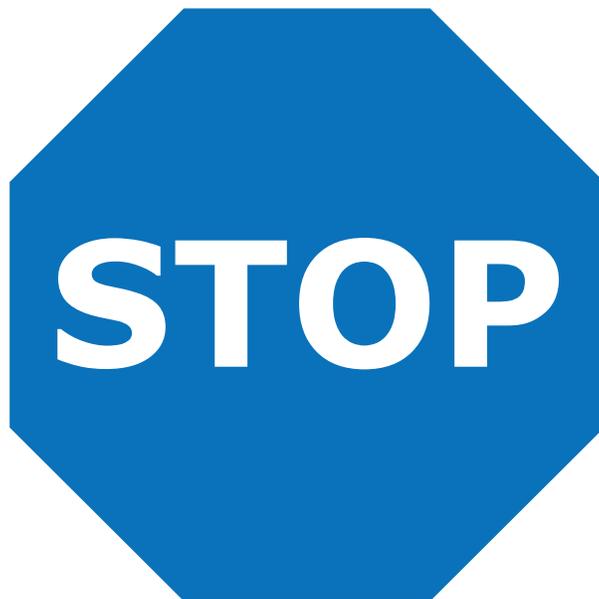
Railroads in the United States, 1890

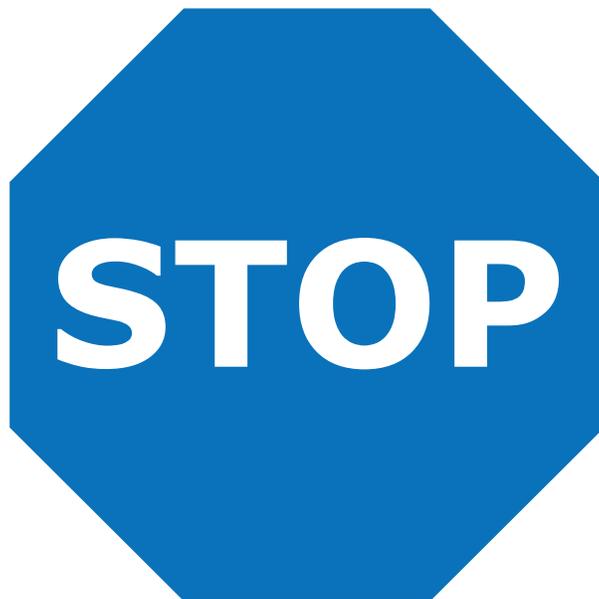


5. Which statement best describes the reason for the change between the two maps?
- A. The United States acquired the land after a war with Spain.
 - B. The United States signed a treaty with the British for use of the land.
 - C. Factory owners in the United States needed a way to get natural resources faster.
 - D. Agricultural expansion in the United States relied on having a way to get workers to the fields faster.

Go on to the next page.

6. Which statement best describes an effect of the change shown between the maps?
- A. Major urban areas became less important as trade centers.
 - B. Port cities had less need of railroads than inland cities had.
 - C. Sections of the country became less dependent on each other.
 - D. Economic opportunities increased in southern and western states.





SUMMARY DATA

Grade 8

Sample Number	Alignment	Answer Key	Depth of Knowledge	Annotations
Session 1				
1	A.8.1	D	2	Students must identify the purpose of a map. Option D is the correct response. The map shows mountain ranges and rivers of North America, so the best use of this map would be to determine the relative locations of physical features of the continent. Options A, B, and C are incorrect because regions, time zones, and government systems are not shown on the map.
2	A.8.6	A, C	3	Students must identify two long-term effects of a drought on the environment. Options A and C are the correct responses because a drought increases the likelihood of wildfires and reduces the quality of soil in the affected area. Option B is incorrect because landslides are an effect of floods, not droughts. Options D, E, and F are incorrect because earthquakes, landform creation, and volcanic eruptions are caused by plate movement.
3	B.8.3	C	3	Students must draw a conclusion from maps showing historical data. Option C is the correct response because as American Indians lost their land it limited their ability to live the way they had in the past. Options A and D are incorrect because American Indians were not forced to work in factories or in the agricultural industry. Option B is incorrect because there was never a program that relocated American Indians to another country.

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Sample Number	Alignment	Answer Key	Depth of Knowledge	Annotations
4	E.8.9	C	2	Students must identify a cultural contribution of American Indians. Option C is the correct response because American Indian practices of living in harmony with nature and conserving natural resources are things that many people in the United States still do today. Option A is incorrect because this is not common practice in the United States. Options B and D do not describe aspects of American Indian culture.
5	B.8.1	D	3	Students must identify a relevant source for a research project from a list. Option D is the correct response. The letters from Thomas Jefferson to James Madison discussing the Constitution would be the most relevant source to use for this project. Options A, B, and C can all be considered credible sources but they will not be helpful for a report about Jefferson’s views on republican government.
6	E.8.8	A	2	Students must identify an example of the media influencing choices. Option A is the correct response. Alexandra decides to purchase a product after it is promoted by someone famous on television. Options B and C describe actions that may be true of performers and popular singers but do not describe what occurs when someone is persuaded to make a choice. Option D describes something that did occur but does not describe why Alexandra was persuaded to purchase a shirt.
7	A.8.11		2	Students must identify the cause and consequence of a global issue by completing a table. Overconsumption of natural resources is caused by increased consumer demand fueled by global trade. The consequences of this demand is the destruction of natural habitats and ecosystems.

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Sample Number	Alignment	Answer Key	Depth of Knowledge	Annotations
Session 2				
1	D.8.4	B	2	Students must draw a conclusion about how investing in physical capital affects standard of living. Option B is the correct response. The new business will create jobs and pay taxes in the community. The increased tax revenue and reduction in unemployment should affect the standard of living in the community. Option A describes an effect of opening the business but this would only effect the business owners. Option C is incorrect because one business is unlikely to bring enough tourists to the area to affect standard of living. Option D is incorrect because the opening of this business will not lead to many grocery stores closing.
2	D.8.8	A	2	Students must identify a goal of an entrepreneur. Option A is the correct response. Most entrepreneurs open new businesses to earn a profit. Options B, C, and D all describe some goals of a new business, but if the business does not remain profitable it will not be able employ people, share its goods, or bring new services to the community.
3	C.8.1	C	3	Students must identify a basic principle of democracy exhibited during a historical event. Option C is the correct response. The ruling in <i>Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka</i> ended the “separate but equal” policy and allowed people of all races to attend the same school. Options A, B, and D basic principles of democracy, but they are not exhibited in the <i>Brown v. Board</i> decision.

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Sample Number	Alignment	Answer Key	Depth of Knowledge	Annotations
4	C.8.2	B	2	Students must interpret a Supreme Court decision. Option B is the correct response. The decision in <i>Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka</i> allowed African Americans to attend schools that in the past were segregated as white schools. Option A is incorrect because African Americans could attend private schools in the past. Option C is incorrect because most schools segregated by race were in neighborhoods dominated by one of the races. Option D is incorrect because, prior to the ruling schools segregated for African Americans were supposedly equal to those attended by white children.
5	B.8.7	C	2	Students must draw conclusions from two maps. Option C is the correct response because the increase of railroads in the United States was driven by the need to get natural resources to factories faster. Options A and B are incorrect because they describe how the United States acquired some of the land in the maps, not why the railroads expanded. Option D is incorrect because at this time the primary use of railroads was not to get people to work faster.
6	B.8.8	D	2	Students must draw conclusions from two maps. Option D is the correct response. When the railroads expanded economic opportunities followed. Option A is incorrect because established trading centers did not lose their status, railroads did increase the number of urban centers. Option B is incorrect because the port cities were used to transport goods to places where railroads couldn't go and were often a final destination of the railroads. Options C is incorrect because the railroads increased the interdependence of regions in the United States.

Social Studies Item Sampler Grade 8

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