

2023 STAAR Grade 8 Social Studies Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
1	Option A is correct	The First Amendment includes specific freedoms, including the freedom of religion. One effect of this includes protecting ministers who deliver religious messages to anyone who chooses to listen.
	Option B is incorrect	The First Amendment protects the freedom of religion, including the freedom to not engage with any religion. Because of this, political leaders cannot require religious tests to hold office.
	Option C is incorrect	The Establishment Clause, which is part of the First Amendment, ensures that a national religion cannot be established.
	Option D is incorrect	An effect of the First Amendment does not include political leaders requiring churches to pay taxes.

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Item#	Rationale
2	Option C is correct C

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4	Option D is correct	To balance the interests of both the large and small states, the framers divided the power between the two houses. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to acquire information about the founding of the United States.
	Option A is incorrect	The Great Compromise did not address issues of voting rights.
	Option B is incorrect	The Great Compromise solved the issues of state representation , not issues between Federalists and Anti -Federalists.
	Option C is incorrect	The Great Compromise focused on representation, not taxation.

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Item#	Rationale	
5	Option B is correct	The plantation system in the southern colonies focused on agriculture, especially the growing of cash crops. This was made possible by the region's longer growing season. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to interpret information from a chart.
	Option A is incorrect	The characteristics of the New England colonies during the late 1600s supported shipbuilding and lumber harvesting rather than agriculture. The industrialization of the northern economy would not occur until the 1800s.
	Option C is incorrect	The economy of the southern colonies relied on agriculture and cash crops. Industrialization occurred primarily in the North and did not begin until the 1800s.
	Option D is incorrect	While the New England colonies did have a large portion of their population living in rural areas, it was not in order to increase agricultural production.

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Item#	Rationale	
6	Option D is correct	Spain primarily colonized large parts of North and South America for reasons that included wanting to find sources of gold and spreading Catholicism. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to analyze a primary source to acquire information to answer a historical question.
	Option A is incorrect	England primarily established colonies in North America to gain land, to exercise religious freedom, and to seek wealth.
	Option B is incorrect	France primarily established colonies in North America to develop trade opportunities and spread the Catholic faith.
	Option C is incorrect	Germany did not colonize large areas of North or South America, nor did they aim to spread the Catholic faith.

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7	Score 2 points for correct answers that include reference to any two:	<p data-bbox="709 289 1010 321"><u>Proclamation of 1763:</u></p> <p data-bbox="709 342 1629 375">The British restricted/prevented westward expansion and settlement.</p> <p data-bbox="709 396 863 428"><u>Stamp Act:</u></p> <p data-bbox="709 449 1438 482">All colonists had to pay taxes on documents and paper.</p>

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8	Option A is correct	Congress is granted the ability to pass laws over presidential veto by securing a two-thirds majority in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to use valid primary sources to acquire information about the United States.
	Option B is incorrect	While Congress has the power to ratify amendments, this power was not a way of addressing the grievance in the excerpt.
	Option C is incorrect	While the House of Representatives has the power to introduce tax bills, this power is not a way of addressing the grievance in the excerpt.
	Option D is incorrect	While the Senate has the power to ratify treaties, this power is not a way of addressing the grievance in the excerpt.

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Item#	Rationale	
9	Option D is correct	Pro-slavery Southerners wrote the Lecompton Constitution, but it was never accepted by Congress. The Lecompton Constitution permitted slavery and did not allow free blacks to live in Kansas. For this item, the student applies critical -

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10	Option C is correct	Areas to the east of the Appalachian Mountains were more densely populated because the Appalachians were a barrier to westward expansion. For this item, the student applies critical -thinking skills to interpret information from a map.
	Option A is incorrect	There are no very densely populated areas in the southern states on the map. Most very densely populated areas are located in the northern and mid -Atlantic states

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11	Option D is correct	<p>contributed to the rapid growth of the U.S. textile industry because it introduced British industrial production methods to the United States economy. For this item, the student applies critical -thinking skills to analyze a primary source to acquire information to answer a historical question.</p>
	Option A is incorrect	<p>during U.S. textile industry . Labor laws</p>

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12	Option D is correct	The Pilgrims landed in this location, which is Plymouth, Massachusetts. For this item, the student applies critical -thinking skills to organize and interpret information from a map.
	Option A is incorrect	The location indicated was the first permanent English settlement of Jamestown, Virginia.
	Option B is incorrect	This location is Baltimore, Maryland, and is not where the Pilgrims landed.

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Item#	Rationale
13	Option V W D W H V I ThDC QO O 9.96 274. 268.73 493.3 Tm (T)Tj ET Q q 261.53 427.66 458.33 81.72 re W* n approve amendments . is correct

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Item#	Rationale	
14	Option B is correct	The Reconstruction Act of 1867 created five military districts in the South and gave the U.S. military martial -law powers to enforce federal laws and protect the rights of African Americans.
	Option A is incorrect	Martial law was established by the Reconstruction Act of 1867 and gave authority to U.S. troops to enforce laws, not to prevent businesses from being taken over, a practice embodied in the term carpetbaggers .
	Option C is incorrect	The U.S. military provided supplies to formerly enslaved people along the Atlantic Coast but did not supply weapons.
	Option D is incorrect	The Fourteenth Amendment contained a clause that former Confederate leaders could not run for state or national office , but it did not prevent African Americans from running for public office. During Reconstruction , thousands of African Americans were elected to local, state , and federal offices.

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15	Option experiences of individuals correct	The First Great Awakening placed greater importance on the experiences of the individual than on religious doctrine.	

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Item#	Rationale	
16	Option D is correct	The list includes government al actions that affected trade and the colonial economy. Following the American Revolution, the newly established United States supported the development of a government that would intervene in the affairs of private businesses at a minimal level. For this item, the student applies critical - thinking skills to interpret information.
	Option A is incorrect	The list includes government al actions that affected trade and the colonial economy . These laws encouraged the Founders to limit government interference with private

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Item#	Rationale	
17	Option B is correct	The city of Vicksburg , Mississippi, was in the middle of the Confederate States of America. It was a strategic victory for the Union Army because it gave them more control of the Mississippi River .
	Option A is incorrect	The Battle at Chattanooga , not the Battle of Vicksburg, paved the way for the siege targeting Atlanta.
	Option C is incorrect	The Battle of Vicksburg did not prevent a Confederate invasion of the North , as Vicksburg was in the middle of the Confederacy, not on the border .
	Option D is incorrect	The victory at Antietam , not Vicksburg, paved the way for Lincoln s Emancipation Proclamation .

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Item#	Rationale	
18	Option C is correct	Industrialization in the 1800s attracted immigrants who came seeking employment opportunities, especially in the Northern cities . The increased immigrant population led to increased nativist feelings.

Option A is incorrect

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Item#	Rationale
19	Option C is correct

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Item#	Rationale	
21	Option B is correct	The addition of the territory ceded by Mexico led to increased debate over expanding slavery.
	Option A is incorrect	The Mexican Cession is associated with increasing debate over the expansion of slavery and increased sectional tension, not with the unification of different cultural groups.
	Option C is incorrect	The border established in 1848 following the

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Item#	Rationale	
22	Option B is correct	In <i>Gibbons v. Ogden</i> , the U.S. Supreme Court held that states may be subject to federal regulation of commerce. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills to use valid primary sources to acquire information about the United States.
	Option E is correct	The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that states had the authority to regulate trade only within their borders; only the federal government could regulate trade between states.

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Item#	Rationale	
24	Part A: Option B is correct	James Madison advocated for federalism because it split government al power between two levels, state and federal. Each has i ts powers, and some are shared , ultimately limiting the power of each. For this item, the student applies critical thinking skills to use a valid primary source to acquire information about the United States.
	Part A: Option A is incorrect	James Madison advocated for federalism because it split the government into different levels of power between state governments and the national government .
	Part A: Option C is incorrect	James Madison does not argue that federalism will prevent conflict.
	Part A: Option D is incorrect	James Madison s mention of security refers to securing the rights of the people, not military security.
	Part B: Option D is correct	James

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25	Option A is correct	Thinkers of the Enlightenment, such as John Locke, helped inspire citizens to seek out representative government. For this item, the student applies critical -thinking skills by doing an analysis to categorize information.
	Option B is incorrect	The ideas of John Smith and other English soldiers did not lead to the growth of representative government.
	Option C is incorrect	This is an economic need that does not fit with the table and would not be a reason for the growth of representative democracy .
	Option D is incorrect	This is an economic interest, and it is not related to the growth of a representative government.

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27	Declares wars and Makes the laws are powers of the Legislative Branch The U.S. Constitution give

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29	Option C is correct	Henry David Thoreau was an abolitionist who believed that slavery was wrong and that the U.S. -Mexican War was an excuse to expand slavery in the United States. He did not want his tax

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Item#	Rationale	
30	Option D is correct	The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the war between the United States and Mexico. Mexico ceded parts of its territory, which included most of the present-day southwestern United States. For this item, the student applies critical -thinking skills by inter preting information from a map.
	Option A is incorrect	This land was acquired following a war with Mexico , not Spain .
	Option B is incorrect	The war was fought against Mexico, not Great Britain.
	Option C is incorrect	This land was acquired through a treaty with Mexico, not France.

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Item#	Rationale	
31	<p>Score two points for correct answers that include a reference to both:</p>	<p><u>Price of wheat:</u> The price of wheat went up. Wheat was more expensive.</p> <p><u>Reason price increased:</u> When there was less wheat, more people wanted to buy it, so sellers raised their prices. When there was less wheat, it had to be imported from other areas, so the price increased. For this item, the student applies critical -thinking skills by analyzing information to acquire information about the United States.</p>
	Score 1 point:	Response provides only half of the correct details.
	Score 0 points:	Does not provide a response, or the response is incorrect or irrelevant.

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32	Option A is correct	The Declaration of Sentiments, modeled after the Declaration of Independence, listed areas in which women faced inequality and demanded women be granted the right to vote. For this item, the student applies critical -thinking skills to analyze a primary source to acquire information to answer a historical question.
	Option B is incorrect	This document was created in support of the suffrage movement . This document listed inequalities faced by women and demanded women be granted the right to vote. The excerpt does not include references to the temperance movement.
	Option C is incorrect	This document was created in support of the suffrage movement. This document listed inequalities faced by women and demanded women be granted the right to vote . The excerpt does not include references to abolitionist beliefs.
	Option D is incorrect	This document was created in support of the suffrage movement. This document listed inequalities faced by women and demanded women be granted the right to vote. The excerpt does not include references to education reform.

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35	Option A is correct	There were many battles before Saratoga, but this was a major victory that convinced the French to form an alliance with the United States and support the Americans in their war for independence against Great Britain.
	Option B is incorrect	The Declaration of Independence was signed on July 4, 1776, and thus preceded the victory at Saratoga in October 1777.
	Option C is incorrect	There were many more battles after Saratoga before the end of the American Revolution

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36	Option D is correct	The gold rush increased mining in the West , which was a major economic activity in the region during th e 1850s. For this item, the student applies c ritical-thinking skills by organizing and interpreting information in a chart.
	Option A is incorrect	Tariffs would likely have either a positive or negative effect on both regions , not just the West.
	Option B is incorrect	The West did not reduce its agricultural output during this time but instead saw an increase in agricultural production as its population grew.
	Option C is incorrect	The West experienced an increase, not a decrease, in demand for consumer goods as its population grew because of the gold rush.

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37	Option history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most [harmful enemies] of Republican Government	This line from the excerpt emphasizes the effect President Washington believed forming permanent alliances would have on the U.S. government. For this item, the student applies critical-thinking skills by drawing conclusions about a primary source.
	Option The name of American, which belongs to you, in your national capacity is incorrect	This line from the excerpt emphasizes national identity ; it does not address the formation of permanent alliances.
	Option habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and morality are indispensable supports is incorrect	This line from the excerpt emphasizes ideals President Washington considered important ; it does not address the formation of permanent alliances.
	Option Promote then as an object of primary importance, Institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge is incorrect	This line from the excerpt emphasizes the importance of educational institutions ; it does not address the formation of permanent alliances.
	Option As a very important source of strength & security, cherish public credit incorrect	This line from the excerpt emphasizes the importance of public credit ; it does not address the formation of permanent alliances.

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38	Option C is correct	The excerpt is about the freedom of the press, which

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39	Option C is correct	President Davis believed that the secession of the Southern states was a necessity forced by the actions of the United States and that the Confederacy would be the new government for the South, while President Lincoln believed in the p 1 Tf 1w gover

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