

Sample Assessment Questions

Act 35 of 2018 requires that schools develop and administer an assessment that incorporates “...United States history, government and civics that includes the nature, purpose, principles and structure of United States constitutional democracy, the principles, operations and documents of United States government and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.”

Each school entity shall determine the form of the assessment and the manner in which the assessment shall be administered and may administer the assessment at the conclusion of the course of study required under section 1605(a) or at the conclusion of another related course or instructional unit. A school entity may use the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Test <https://my.uscis.gov/en/prep/test/civics/view> to satisfy the requirement.

The following assessment questions have been downloaded from the Standards Aligned System (SAS) www.pdesas.org Assessment Creator. They are presented as an optional resource for educators in creating a local civics knowledge assessment.

NOTE: All questions are standards aligned; the relevant standard is noted in parentheses at the end of each question stem. Correct responses are bolded. Scoring rubrics for constructed response questions are included at the end of each item.

1. The foundation documents which created the United States government have common principles and ideals reflected in their content. The Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights support which principle? (Standard: 5.1.9.D)
 - A. Equal distribution of wealth among social classes.
 - B. Equal status of people in due process of the law.**
 - C. Equal punishment for equal crimes.
 - D. Equal voting rights for all citizens.
2. What is the basic purpose of all governments? (Standard 5.1.6.A)
 - A. To control people, states and communities**
 - B. To protect citizens rights and security
 - C. To regulate commerce and wealth
 - D. To unite citizens under a supreme authority
3. What form of government is established by the United States Constitution?
 - A. Direct Democracy
 - B. Representative Democracy**
 - C. Constitutional Monarchy
 - D. Democratic Oligarchy

4. A government which is formed around an individual with absolute power is:
 - A. **An aristocracy**
 - B. A confederation
 - C. A dictatorship
 - D. A monarchy

5. The United States Constitution is a document which: (Standard: 5.1.9.E)
 - A. Clarifies rights of the people
 - B. Gives rights to the people
 - C. Limits rights of the people
 - D. **Protects rights of the people**

6. The Mayflower Compact, signed in 1620, is considered a foundational document of the United States. Which one of the following reasons explains its importance?
 - A. It established rights to new immigrants
 - B. **It established self-government**
 - C. It established a social network for the people
 - D. It established women to be equal

7. The United States Constitution provides a government with a system of: (Standard 5.1.6.C)
 - A. Executive privileges
 - B. **Checks and balances**
 - C. Justifications for congress
 - D. Majority rights and responsibilities

8. The Declaration of Independence is a foundational document of freedom in the United States. Which one of the following is a principle supported in the Declaration? (Standard: 5.1.9.D)
 - A. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive, it is the obligation of the government to change.
 - B. **Governments are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed**
 - C. The military is rendered independent of and superior to the civil power.
 - D. Powers of men will be formed to ensure safety, prosperity and justice.

9. Which of the following is an example of practicing direct democracy? (Standard: 5.1.6.J)
 - A. Electoral college
 - B. House of Representatives
 - C. **Primary elections**

D. Veto power

10. What does the American Gold Rush in the 1840s have in common with the migration to Silicon Valley in the late twentieth century? (Standard: 8.3.6.C)

- A. **People were inspired to move in search of wealth and economic opportunities.**
- B. People wanted to learn about new technology to mine gold and other minerals.
- C. People relocated to large cities to help conserve natural resources found in rural areas.
- D. People moved away from developed cities and urban areas to purchase more real estate.

11. What is a possible reason that immigration to the United States rose rapidly between 1945 and 1946? (Standard: 8.3.6.C)

- A. More transatlantic flight options were available at a reasonable price.
- B. **World War II ended and many refugees from the war came to America.**
- C. The Soviet Union fell and many Eastern Europeans were left without a homeland.
- D. The Great Depression ended and America opened its borders to people who needed work.

This picture below shows a statue of Francisco Pizarro, a Spanish conquistador who played a major role in defeating the Incan Empire. The statue stands in the city of Lima, the capitol of Peru, which he founded.



This statue of Pizarro has been the subject of great controversy, causing it to be moved to new locations in Lima several times. Originally, the statue stood in front of the cathedral in the Plaza de Armas, in the city's central square, and was a popular spot for tourists. Following complaints from the Archdiocese of Lima, the statue was moved to a less prominent location in the square. Later, the mayor ordered the statue removed from the square entirely. It was eventually placed in a remote corner of the Parque de la Muralla.

Part A

12. Which statement **best** summarizes why a statue of an individual from the 16th century would be so controversial? (Standard 8.3.6.A)

- A. **While many citizens wanted to honor their colonial roots by commemorating the founder of the city with a statue, others saw Pizarro as a symbol of colonialism and oppression.**

- B. While many people wanted to honor the explorer who brought new inventions and ideas to their ancestors, others believed the city should honor only individuals native to the region.
- C. While many citizens felt the statue was a reflection of Lima’s vibrant art scene, others considered it a representation of great wealth in a city that was characterized by great poverty.
- D. While many people saw the statue of a heavily armed soldier as a symbol of war in a peaceful country, others considered Pizarro a hero from a more dangerous time who should be celebrated.

Part B

The controversial nature of the statue is one example of which larger issue?

- A. Determining how individual countries should promote national heroes
- B. Presenting individuals of historic importance as subjects of idol worship
- C. **Honoring individuals of historic importance while acknowledging their flaws**
- D. Shifting from honoring specific individuals to symbols that represent broader ideals

Part C

Identify how recent controversies regarding symbols of the Confederate Government during the American Civil War are part of the broader issue represented by the controversy surrounding the Pizarro statue. Explain one way in which the Confederate example is similar to the specific case of Pizarro’s statue and one way in which it is different. (3 points)

Part C Scoring Rubric	
3 points	The student correctly explains the similarity and differences between the Spanish conquistador and the leaders of the Confederate States of America and statues in public places.
2 points	The student correctly explains only similarities OR differences.
1 point	The student correctly explains partial correct connections.
0 points	No Response or response is incorrect or irrelevant.

13. In 1607, 144 men and boys arrived in what is now Virginia. Their settlement, called Jamestown, almost failed. Within time, however, the tiny outpost would become England’s first successful North American colony. (Standard: 8.2.6.C)

Part A

Explain one change that occurred at Jamestown that made the settlement more successful.

Part B

Explain one impact the Jamestown settlement had on U.S. history.

Part C

Explain how the economic practices of Jamestown settlers influenced later English colonies in North America.

Part A Scoring Rubric

Responses may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- John Smith made settlers plant crops instead of looking for gold.
- A major drought ended, allowing crops to succeed.
- John Rolfe improved relations with Native Americans.
- Settlers discovered that tobacco was a cash crop they could grow and sell to Europeans.

Part B Scoring Rubric

Responses may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The success of Jamestown attracted more colonists to North America.
- Slaves from Africa were brought to Jamestown, and slavery spread to other North American colonies.

Part C Scoring Rubric

Responses may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Agriculture continued to be of primary importance in later colonies.
- Tobacco became a major cash crop in the American colonies, and later in the United States.
- Trade and engagement with Native Americans was recognized as important by later European settlers.

Overall Scoring Rubric

- 3 points: The student correctly explains a change that occurred at Jamestown, an impact of Jamestown on U.S. history, and how Jamestown influenced later colonies.
- 2 points: The student correctly explains two of the three parts.
- 1 point: The student correctly explains one of the three parts.
- 0 points: Response is incorrect or irrelevant.
No response

14. Part A

How did the end of Reconstruction in 1877 change the lives of African Americans in the South? (Standard: 8.2.6.C)

- A. They were freed from slavery.
- B. **They lost the political rights they had gained in 1870.**
- C. They no longer had to pay poll taxes in order to vote.
- D. They started moving to the North as part of the Great Migration.

Part B

Explain another impact of Reconstruction on U.S. history.

Part C

Explain how the influence of Reconstruction continued during the twentieth century.

Part B Scoring Rubric

Responses may include, but are not limited to, the following:

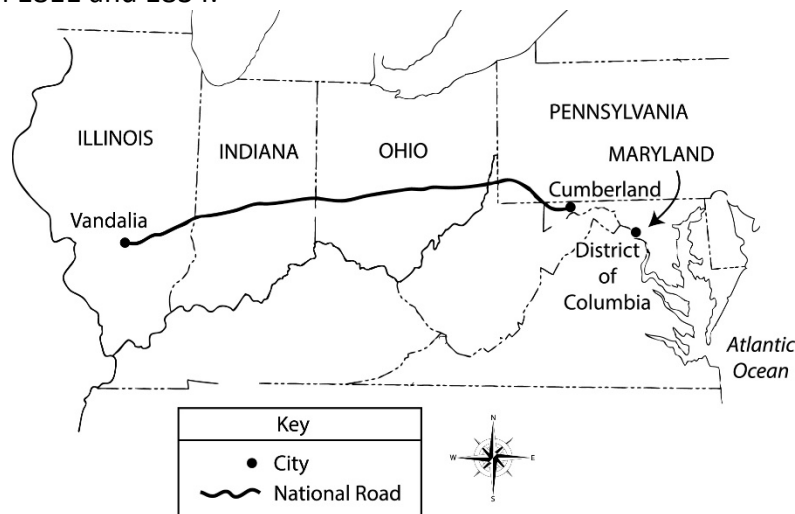
- Southern towns and railroads that had been destroyed by the war were rebuilt.
- Public schools for both black and white children were established in many Southern states.
- Senators and representatives from Southern states were readmitted to Congress.

Part C Scoring Rubric

Responses may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Reconstruction was followed by the “Jim Crow” era, in which African Americans in the South were denied voting rights and equal access to public accommodations.
- African Americans in many states did not regain the right to vote until the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

15. This map shows the National Road, the first federally funded highway in the United States, built between 1811 and 1834.



Part A

What is the primary way the National Road impacted the development of the United States? (Standard: 8.2.7.C)

- A. It created road construction jobs.
- B. **It encouraged settlers to move westward.**
- C. It allowed mail carriers to travel more easily.
- D. It cleared the land needed to make way for railroads.

Part B

How did the change described in Part A help shape the developments of the late nineteenth century?

Part C

What has been the lasting importance of the National Road in U.S. history?

Part B Scoring Rubric

Responses may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- People continued to move westward.
- The National Road was later replaced by the railroad as the primary way for settlers to move westward.

Part C Scoring Rubric

Responses may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The National Road encouraged the westward expansion of settlers, which led to conflict with Native Americans.
- The National Road encouraged the development of towns and cities in the states it crossed.
- The National Road helped the United States extend its territory to the Pacific Ocean.
- The legacy of federally funded roads continued with the creation of the Interstate Highway system in the 1950s and 1960s.

16. How did Jane Addams impact the development of the United States? (Standard: 8.3.8.A)

- A. She was a leader in the Temperance movement, which successfully advocated for the prohibition of alcohol in the Eighteenth Amendment.
- B. She was the first woman elected to Congress, broadening representation in government, and resulting in the election of more female representatives.
- C. She founded a university to expand the reach of higher education to women and other underserved communities, and wrote several books about mathematics.
- D. **She founded a settlement house to provide education and services to people who immigrated to the United States, and pioneered the field of social work.**

17. This photograph below was taken at a protest march.



Protest marches such as this one were prompted by conflict over the failure of many states to enforce which Supreme Court decision? (Standard: 8.3.8.D)

- A. Bush v. Gore
- B. Miranda v. Arizona
- C. Korematsu v. United States
- D. **Brown v. Board of Education**