



State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

Grade 8 Social Studies

Short Constructed-Response Scoring Guide

Spring 2026

General Information

Beginning with the 2022–2023 school year, social studies assessments include short constructed-response questions at every assessed grade level. Students are asked to provide a short response to a question. Responses are scored using a prompt-specific, two-point rubric.

This State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) constructed-response scoring guide provides student exemplars at all score points for constructed-response questions from the STAAR grade 8 social studies operational test. The questions are presented as they appeared on the test, and responses were scored based on the two-point rubrics that were developed with the input of Texas educators. A response earns a specific score point based on the completeness of the response provided as measured against the rubric.

The responses in this guide are actual student responses submitted online during the testing window. To protect the privacy of individual students, all names and other references of a personal nature have been altered or removed. Otherwise, the responses appear as the students wrote them and have not been modified.

Grade 8 Social Studies Short Constructed Response

Prompt

Did Alexander Hamilton support or oppose a national bank?

What was one reason for Hamilton’s support or opposition?

Think about the questions carefully. Then enter your answer to **BOTH** questions in the box provided.

Item-Specific Rubric

Score: 2

Score 2 points for correctly stating that Alexander Hamilton supported a national bank and providing any one of the following reasons why:

- The national government should be a strong, centralized federal government.
- The national government should assume state debts from the Revolutionary War.
- The national government should have a powerful Treasury Department.
- The national government should promote economic growth and manufacturing.

Score: 1

The response provides only half of the correct details.

Score: 0

The response is incorrect or irrelevant.

Sample Student Responses

Score Point 0

Response 1

oppose national bank

The response incorrectly identifies Hamilton's position ("oppose national bank") and does not address the second question.

Response 2

He opposed it because he had not trusted the bank and a bunch random people with his money.

The response addresses both questions; however, in the response, Hamilton's position is incorrect ("He opposed it"), and the reason given is irrelevant ("because he had not trusted the bank").

Response 3

hamilton opposed the national bank because he thought it was corrupt and unfair that the wealthy people were getting paid or getting credit but not the "normal" citizens so thats why he opposed and helped the normal citizens by cutting off the contract of the bank with the wealthy.

The response does address both questions; however, the response incorrectly identifies Hamilton's position ("hamilton opposed the national bank"), and the reason is irrelevant ("he thought it was corrupt and unfair").

Response 4

Alexander hamilton wanted to oppose national banks because he didnt agree about paying state debt or tax

The response incorrectly identifies Hamilton's position ("Alexander hamilton wanted to oppose national banks"). This reason touches on the issue of debt mentioned in the rubric by incorrectly stating Hamilton was opposed/against it ("he didnt agree about paying state debt or tax"), and therefore this response does not receive credit.

Score Point 1

Response 1

Support

This response receives credit for correctly identifying Hamilton’s position (“Support”), but no reason is given.

Response 2

1. He supported the national bank because it help the wealthy and he was wealthy.
2. it helped him more than the average people because he was wealthy.

The response correctly identifies Hamilton’s position (“He supported the national bank”), but the reasons given are irrelevant (“it helped him more than the average people because he was wealthy”).

Response 3

Hamilton supported national banks. It helped people have an officeant way of living.

The response receives credit for correctly identifying Hamilton’s position (“Hamilton supported national banks”). However, the reason given is too vague (“helped people have an officeant way of living”).

Response 4

Alexander Hamilton opposed the national bank
He believed that the bank would help pay of the debt under America name

The response incorrectly identifies Hamilton’s position (“Alexander Hamilton opposed the national bank”). However, the response provides a correct reason based on point two from the rubric (“He believed that the bank would help pay of the debt”).

Score Point 2

Response 1

He supports the national bank because he wants the economy to grow

The brief response effectively answers the first question (“He supports the national bank”) and identifies a reason from the fourth rubric point (“he wants the economy to grow”).

Response 2

Alexander Hamilton supported the national bank. One reason he supported it was because he saw it as a way to get the United States onto a national currency.

The response correctly identifies Hamilton’s position (“Alexander Hamilton supported the national bank”) and provides a reason that is addressed by the third rubric point (“to get the United States onto a national currency”).

Response 3

Alexander Hamilton supported the idea of the national bank because he believed it would help the United States get out of debt after the american revolutionary way. One of his reasons was to help the united states with its debt.

The response correctly identifies Hamilton’s position (“Alexander Hamilton supported the idea of the national bank”), and the reason addresses the second point in the rubric (“help the United States get out of debt after the american revolutionary way”).

Response 4

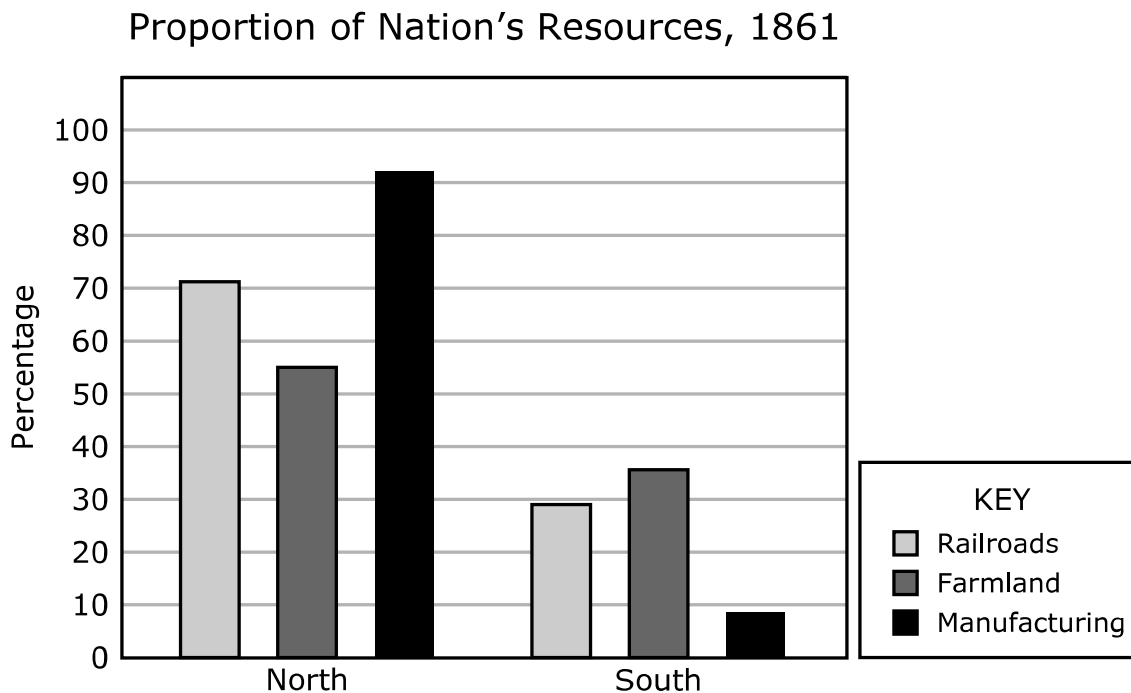
Alexander Hamilton supported the national bank. One of the reasons for this was that he was a federalist and he wanted a strong goverment and he wanted to help America’s economy. He believed that with the building of the national bank the economy would grow. Which was actually correct the economy grew and it helped America.

The response correctly identifies Hamilton’s position (“Alexander Hamilton supported the national bank”) and addresses multiple reasons listed in the rubric (“he wanted a strong goverment and he wanted to help America’s economy”).

Grade 8 Social Studies Short Constructed Response

Prompt

This graph compares the resources of two regions in the United States during the 1860s.



Source: Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History

How did the economic differences between these two regions affect the outcome of the Civil War?

Explain one economic difference **AND** its effect.

Think about the question carefully. Then enter your answer in the box provided.

Item-Specific Rubric

Score: 2

Score 2 points for correct answers that identify **both** a difference and its effect on the war.

- The strength of the North's economy made it easier for the Union to withstand the pressure of war.
- The weaknesses of the South's economy when it came to manufacturing and transportation made it more difficult to deal with the pressure of war.
- The agricultural production in the more productive and mechanized North helped maintain supplies for the Union.
- The less productive and more labor-intensive agricultural production in the South hurt supply lines for the Confederacy.
- There was better industrial production to support the war effort in the North.
- There was decreased economic production in the South during the war because of the war's impact on transportation and farm productivity.
- More job opportunities and immigrants in the North led to more soldiers.
- Lower immigration rates because of a lack of manufacturing jobs in the South led to a smaller fighting force.
- More railroads in the North made it easier to transport goods and soldiers.

Score: 1

The response provides only half of the needed details.

Score: 0

The response is incorrect or irrelevant.

Sample Student Responses

Score Point 0

Response 1

Because one is higher then the other

The response receives no credit because it is too vague. The student does not identify which region has the advantage of what resource and does not address how this difference affected the outcome of the Civil War.

Response 2

Between these two regions north affected the outcome of the civil war

The response receives no credit because the student does not identify a difference in resources between the regions. The attempt at answering the second part of the prompt also fails in that there is no explanation as to why a difference in resources affected the outcome of the war.

Response 3

the south uses slaves to use as free labor and the north has pepole orking for the goverment there getting payed to work

The response receives no credit because although the use of slave labor by the South was an issue in the war, it is not directly related to the three resources cited in the graph, nor is it specifically cited as an acceptable answer in the rubric.

Response 4

The economic difference between these two regions affect the outcome of the Civil War by showing that the south was greatly out numbered.

The response receives no credit because the difference cited by the student and the resulting effect ("the south was greatly out numbered") are too vague and broad to address how this difference affected the outcome of the Civil War.

Score Point 1

Response 1

Railroads. If the north have more railroads the that means they have more forms of transportation. This basically led to the north being able to keep up with the south because they can get around faster.

The response receives partial credit for correctly identifying a difference (“If the north have more railroads the that means they have more forms of transportation”). The attempt to describe the significance of the advantage in railroads on the outcome of the war (“This basically led to the north being able to keep up with the south because they can get around faster”) fails in that it is both too vague and inaccurate: the North did not need to “keep up with the south.” It was rather that the South was trying to keep up with the North.

Response 2

It made the north have an advantage over transportation and supplies. The railroads made it possible to move from place to place really easy.
The supplies they can make because of factories while south had to trade to get their stuff.

The response receives partial credit for correctly identifying a difference in resources between the two regions (“It made the north have an advantage over transportation and supplies”). The use of the word “advantage” denotes a difference, while the terms “transportation” and “supplies” are acceptable substitutes for “railroads” and “manufacturing” used in the graph. The attempt to explain the effect of these advantages on the outcome of the war (“The railroads made it possible to move from place to place really easy. The supplies they can make because of factories while south had to trade to get their stuff”) is not creditable as it lacks specificity as to what military advantage accrues from these advantages. In fact, the military aspect of these resources is not mentioned at all.

Response 3

The north had more of everything,more manufacturing, more railroads and more farming,meaning that the north made more money,had more land,more food and other things and probally overall lived better than people in the south did

The response receives partial credit for correctly identifying a difference in resources between the two regions (“The north had more of everything,more manufacturing, more railroads and more farming”). However, the attempt to address the second part of the prompt (“meaning that the north made more money,had more land,more food and other things and probally overall lived better than people in the south did”) is not creditable in that it does not explain what military impact these advantages had that affected the outcome of the war.

Response 4

The north had more railroads, farmland, and manufacturing so the North was able to travel quicker and produce more foods and different machines/mechanics.

The response receives partial credit for identifying an economic difference between the North and the South (“The north had more railroads, farmland, and manufacturing”). The attempt to explain the impact of these advantages (“so the North was able to travel quicker and produce more foods and different machines/mechanics”) is not creditable in that the military significance to the outcome of the war is not clearly or explicitly stated.

Score Point 2

Response 1

The economic differences between the north and the south was that the north had more resources than the south. The effect was that the south was short on resources and didn't have a good enough army to face the north of the civil war.

The response receives full credit for correctly identifying an economic difference between the regions ("the north had more resources than the south") and the impact of that difference in the outcome of the war ("The effect was that the south was short on resources and didn't have a good enough army to face the north").

Response 2

The north had a better manufacturing system than the south which allowed them to make more weapons and equipment to win the war.

The response receives full credit for correctly identifying an economic difference between the regions ("The north had a better manufacturing system than the south") and its effect on the outcome of the war ("which allowed them to make more weapons and equipment to win the war").

Response 3

In the diagram the North has more factories which supplies them with weapons during the war, on the other hand the South has much less factories which means that they had less weapons at the time, and this cost them (the south) the war.

The response receives full credit for correctly identifying an economic difference ("the North has more factories . . . the South has much less factories") and its effect on the outcome of the war ["which means that they had less weapons at the time, and this cost them (the south) the war"].

Response 4

The economic differences caused the Civil War to result in the North winning. This was because the North had more resources than the South in every aspect. For example, the North had more railroads, and the effect was that the north could transport goods and soldiers to multiple places and faster than the South. The North also had more manufacturing resources, which caused them to have better weapons.

The response receives full credit for correctly identifying an economic difference (“the North had more resources than the South in every aspect . . . more railroads . . . more manufacturing”) and its effect on the outcome of the war (“the north could transport goods and soldiers to multiple places and faster than the South. The North also had more manufacturing resources, which caused them to have better weapons”).

