

STAAR Spring 2026 U.S. History Rationales

Item Position	Rationale	
1	Option C is correct	Anthony campaigned for more than fifty years for women's suffrage. Although she died in 1906, the Nineteenth Amendment, passed in 1919 and ratified in 1920, was called the Susan B. Anthony Amendment.
	Option A is incorrect	She was not involved in the passage of the Sixteenth Amendment and is better known for her work in the women's rights, temperance, and abolitionist movements.
	Option B is incorrect	Although she supported the temperance movement, she was not a significant individual in the passage and ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment in 1917 and 1919.
	Option D is incorrect	She advocated for democratic reforms but was not a significant individual calling for term limits or for the passage in 1947 and ratification in 1951 of the Twenty-Second Amendment.

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Item Position	Rationale	
2	Option A is correct	Widespread adoption of the Internet led to the creation of faster forms of communication, including email and instant messaging.
	Option B is incorrect	The NSFNET was in part the result of funding for research projects.
	Option C is incorrect	The NSFNET was the result of investment in higher education.
	Option D is incorrect	While the Internet helped shape transportation by making it possible to transmit information between vehicles, it did not directly result in the expansion of transportation routes.

Item Position	Rationale	
3	Part A: Option A is correct	President Kennedy ordered a blockade of Cuba after the United States discovered ballistic missiles within striking distance. As a result, the Soviet Union was unable to transport resources to the island of Cuba. This blockade, along with negotiations to remove U.S. missiles from Turkey, resulted in the removal of Soviet missiles from Cuba.
	Part A: Option B is incorrect	Cuba was an ally of the Soviet Union and did not receive economic aid from the United States as a result of the Cuban Missile Crisis.
	Part A: Option C is incorrect	Neither the Soviets nor the Cubans were interested in a ground war with the United States. The blockade of Cuba successfully persuaded the Soviet Union to remove the missiles. In return for their removal, the United States agreed to remove missiles from Turkey.
	Part A: Option D is incorrect	The Kennedy administration imposed a trade embargo with Cuba; they did not pass tariffs.
	Part B: Option "The President decided upon a middle course [and] ordered a naval 'quarantine' of Cuba" is correct	An effect of the Cuban Missile Crisis was President Kennedy's use of the "quarantine," or blockade, of Cuba. This prevented the transport of resources to Cuba.
	Part B: Option "In July 1962 Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev reached a secret agreement with Cuban premier Fidel Castro" is incorrect	This statement is describing the cause of the Cuban Missile Crisis. It is not describing an effect. President Kennedy issued a public warning against these actions.
	Part B: Option "President Kennedy issued a public warning against [these actions]" is incorrect	This statement is describing President Kennedy's initial reactions to Russian actions. It is not describing an effect of the actions.
	Part B: Option "Kennedy summoned his closest advisers to . . . resolve the crisis" is incorrect	Although this statement describes President Kennedy meeting with advisers to resolve the crisis, it does not explain an effect of the crisis.

Item Position	Rationale	
4	Option B is correct	This law improved safety in urban neighborhoods by increasing government oversight of tenements and instituting basic requirements for their construction, including fire safety, plumbing, and ventilation.
	Option A is incorrect	This law relates to tenements; buildings where many people working in industry lived. The law did not decrease membership in labor unions.
	Option C is incorrect	The passage of the law was an effect of increased industrialization and subsequent urbanization that led to poor housing conditions.
	Option D is incorrect	The law relates to tenements, not political corruption. People became more aware of political machines at this time thanks to the efforts of muckrakers like Thomas Nast.

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Item Position	Rationale	
5	Option C is correct	The Civil Rights Movement included the use of boycotts and marches to protest discrimination and segregation, passage of the Civil Rights Act (1964) and Voting Rights Act (1965), and the Supreme Court ruling in Brown v. Board of Education to end segregation in public schools.
	Option A is incorrect	The Progressive era did include marches to protest for women's suffrage and passage of laws to protect and improve the lives of Americans but did not include any Supreme Court rulings granting equal access.
	Option B is incorrect	The Great Depression did include protests about unemployment and numerous laws in the New Deal to help Americans but did not include any Supreme Court rulings granting equal access.
	Option D is incorrect	Although marches and protests occurred in response to events of the Cold War, legislation to protect equal rights is a characteristic of the Civil Rights Movement.

Item Position	Rationale	
6	Option B is correct	The Vietnam War was the first war that was covered in real time by the media. Declining support for the war was influenced by graphic images shared by the media and by the opinions of people in the media like Walter Cronkite.
	Option A is incorrect	Richard Nixon claimed that the silent majority of Americans supported the Vietnam War. However, this graph shows that support for the war decreased, not increased, over time.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the Twenty-Sixth Amendment, which lowered the voting age to 18, was ratified in July 1971, it did not lead to the trend shown in the table.
	Option D is incorrect	The decline in public approval toward the Vietnam War is associated with extensive media coverage, not the unemployment rate.

Item Position	Rationale	
7	Option C is correct	The U.S. Supreme Court held that “military necessity” made internment constitutional. There was strong dissent against this decision, however.
	Option A is incorrect	The U.S. Supreme Court did not rule that the Japanese were discriminated against by the government based on their race but held the opposite and that military internment was acceptable when it was determined to be a military necessity.
	Option B is incorrect	The U.S. Supreme Court did not rule on the constitutional rights of immigrants in the United States. Immigrants once in the United States do have the same constitutional rights as everyone who lives in the United States.
	Option D is incorrect	The U.S. Supreme Court held that military internment was acceptable when it was determined to be a military necessity during war, despite the fact that only the Japanese were placed in these camps.

Item Position	Rationale	
8	Option "Mining Activity Along the El Dorado" is correct	The methods used to expand mining activity affected waterways by redirecting and contaminating them.
	Option "Timber Waiting to Be Loaded on Steamship" is correct	The need for wood to fuel steamboats for river transport led to deforestation.
	Option "Palm Sunday Avalanche" is incorrect	The image shows an event that occurred during the Klondike Gold Rush, but it was the result of physical rather than human geographic factors.
	Option "Traditional Hide Drying by American Indians" is incorrect	The image shows a traditional human impact on the environment in Alaska, including American Indians drying hides for use, and not a result of the Klondike Gold Rush.
	Option "Buffalo Hide Yard" is incorrect	Buffalo, which were native to the Great Plains, were exterminated by white settlers. Buffalo did not roam in Alaska near the location of the Klondike Gold Rush.

Item Position	Rationale	
9	Option B is correct	The excerpt refers to the Marshall Plan, an act of legislation providing aid to European countries in an attempt to prevent the spread of communism.
	Option A is incorrect	The excerpt refers to the Marshall Plan, not the Lend-Lease Act. The Marshall Plan was an act of legislation providing aid to European countries in an attempt to prevent the spread of communism. The Lend-Lease Act provided select countries with military supplies and weaponry prior to U.S. entry to World War II.
	Option C is incorrect	The excerpt refers to the Marshall Plan, not the Employment Act. The Marshall Plan was an act of legislation providing aid to European countries in an attempt to prevent the spread of communism. The Employment Act created the Council of Economic Advisers (CEA), which worked to help manage the economy as wartime production declined.
	Option D is incorrect	The excerpt refers to the Marshall Plan, not the GI Bill of Rights. The Marshall Plan was an act of legislation providing aid to European countries in an attempt to prevent the spread of communism. The GI Bill of Rights provided benefits to World War II veterans returning home.

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Item Position	Rationale	
10	Option C is correct	Actions in Latin America did increase the role of the United States as a world power.
	Option A is incorrect	The power of the United States increased as a result of the Spanish-American War.
	Option B is incorrect	The power of the United States increased as a result of this policy.
	Option D is incorrect	Dollar Diplomacy was used to safeguard financial interests in Latin America and not in Asian countries.

Item Position	Rationale	
11	Option B is correct	During the 1950s, rock and roll music in the United States overtook all other styles to become the most popular form of music among teenagers.
	Option A is incorrect	Radio broadcasting began in the 1920s.
	Option C is incorrect	Rock and roll music did not lead to restrictions on foreign cultural imports.
	Option D is incorrect	Although adults during the 1950s often frowned upon what they believed to be the harmful effects of rock and roll music, the development of rock and roll did not lead to a revival of the temperance movement.

Item Position	Rationale	
12	Option C is correct	As the Vietnam War became increasingly unpopular, Congress repealed the Tonkin Gulf Resolution and passed the War Powers Resolution. These actions were taken because Congress determined that it had ceded too much military power to the president.
	Option A is incorrect	Following the passage of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, President Lyndon B. Johnson escalated U.S. military involvement in Vietnam. President Johnson's policies were continued by the next presidential administration. It was the legislative branch that came to believe that the executive branch was too eager to engage in war.
	Option B is incorrect	Following the passage of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, President Johnson showed no hesitation in launching military actions in Southeast Asia.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the Tonkin Gulf Resolution is viewed by some historians as the legislative branch ceding some of its authority over the military to the executive branch, neither President Johnson nor President Nixon believed that Congress was ignoring its duties under Article 1, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution.

Item Position	Rationale	
13	Option “design developed by Taylor’s electronics team to enhance acoustic guitar amplification” is correct	This selection explains how robots improve music quality. By using technology, the amplification of acoustic guitars is improved.
	Option “Assembling an acoustic guitar of world-class caliber requires more technology” is incorrect	This selection explains that technology is used to improve instrument quality, but it does not explain how innovations improve products.
	Option “Technology now plays a more integral role in . . . the guitar maker’s groundbreaking designs” is incorrect	This selection explains that technology is used to improve instrument quality, but it does not explain how innovations improve products.
	Option “Taylor [Guitars] pioneered the use of . . . laser cutting and robotics in guitar construction” is incorrect	This selection explains that guitar makers use robot technology, but it does not explain how innovations improve products.
	Option “High-precision robots . . . help assemble Taylor’s acoustic pickups” is incorrect	This selection explains that guitar makers use robot technology, but it does not explain how innovations improve products.

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Item Position	Rationale	
14	Option A is correct	The political cartoon shows the end of the Spanish-American War. As a result of this war, U.S. naval operations expanded to protect maritime trade.
	Option B is incorrect	After the Spanish-American War, Spain was removed from power in Asia, and U.S. businesses were able to enter new markets.
	Option C is incorrect	The Philippines and Guam were awarded to the United States under the Treaty of Paris in 1898.
	Option D is incorrect	Following the Spanish-American War, Spain lost its colonial holdings. The Philippines and Hawai'i fell under U.S. control, though Cuba did gain independence. Only Cuba was given moneymaking abilities.

Item Position	Rationale	
15	Option B is correct	The President sent in the National Guard to assist the students to enter the building and attend school because the Constitution protects the right to equal protection under the law for all people.
	Option A is incorrect	The purpose of President Kennedy's address was to condemn the actions of Governor George Wallace in his attempt to prevent the admission of select students based on their race.
	Option C is incorrect	School segregation was ruled unconstitutional and banned in public schools with the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> .
	Option D is incorrect	The President was trying to enforce the ruling of <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> . Governor Wallace was trying to avoid the ruling.

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Item Position	Rationale	
16	Option B is correct	The decision in <i>Sweatt v. Painter</i> led to the <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> decision in 1954.
	Option A is incorrect	The decision in <i>Sweatt v. Painter</i> ruled that the University of Texas Law School had to admit Heman Sweatt because the separate law school did not offer an equal education.
	Option C is incorrect	<i>Engel v. Vitale</i> prohibited schools from enforcing prayers.
	Option D is incorrect	<i>Tinker v. Des Moines</i> established that students maintained their freedom of speech rights within schools.

Item Position	Rationale	
17	Option C is correct	During World War II, the United States significantly increased its military-industrial output, and by extension created new jobs in manufacturing. At the same time, American men enlisted in the military, creating job vacancies. This created new opportunities for both women and minorities.
	Option A is incorrect	Unemployment levels declined to record lows during World War II.
	Option B is incorrect	Federal income taxes and corporate income taxes increased during World War II.
	Option D is incorrect	Rationing programs increased during World War II.

Item Position	Rationale	
18	Option "Receivers have been developed for use in spacecraft, aircraft, ships, land vehicles, and precision-guided munitions, as well as for hand carrying" is correct	This selection explains why GPS satellites were invented. It also provides evidence to support the beneficial impact they have on the U.S. military.
	Option "guiding countless service members and equipment to ensure they are on time and on target" is correct	This selection emphasizes that GPS technology remains a critical component in guiding military assets, ensuring their accuracy and effectiveness in a wide range of operational scenarios.
	Option "GPS satellites orbit the earth every 12 hours" is incorrect	This selection describes how GPS satellites operate. It does not provide evidence to support how they have influenced the U.S. military.
	Option "consists of six orbital planes, with a minimum of four satellites per plane" is incorrect	This selection describes how GPS satellites operate. It does not provide evidence to support how they have influenced the U.S. military.
	Option "launched from Cape Canaveral [Florida] into nearly circular 11,000-mile altitude orbits" is incorrect	This selection describes how GPS satellites operate. It does not provide evidence to support how they have influenced the U.S. military.

Item Position	Rationale	
19	Option D is correct	One American value esteemed by Alexis de Tocqueville was a laissez-faire approach to the economy. Under this system, also known as a free-enterprise economy, individuals make decisions about what to produce, how much to produce, and at what price. Individuals own more of the resources and the means of production.
	Option A is incorrect	This is an example of populism, which emphasizes the power of citizens to reform and change the government.
	Option B is incorrect	This is an example of egalitarianism, which emphasizes equal rights and opportunities for all citizens.
	Option C is incorrect	This is an example of a liberty enjoyed by all Americans.

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Item Position	Rationale	
20	Option A is correct	Carson’s book changed how many people viewed their relationship to the environment and helped usher in the environmental movement.
	Option B is incorrect	Farmers continued to plant crops as needed, although with the use of fewer pesticides.
	Option C is incorrect	This was not an outcome of the book’s influence.
	Option D is incorrect	Her book was about exposing the dangers of chemicals.

Item Position	Rationale	
21	"Ideas Used to Support the Treaty of Versailles" Option "Prevention of future wars" is correct	Many Americans supported the Treaty of Versailles as a way to avoid future wars.
	"Ideas Used to Oppose the Treaty of Versailles" Option "Increased involvement in foreign affairs" is correct	Some U.S. Senators opposed ratification of the Treaty of Versailles because they believed that the League of Nations might pull the U.S. into foreign conflicts.
	"Ideas Used to Support or Oppose the Treaty of Versailles" Option "Reduction in international trade" is incorrect	The terms of the Treaty of Versailles did not include a reduction in international trade relations for the United States.
	"Ideas Used to Support or Oppose the Treaty of Versailles" Option "Increased prices of imports" is incorrect	Increased tariffs were not included in the arguments for and against the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles.
	"Ideas Used to Support or Oppose the Treaty of Versailles" Option "Expansion of executive power" is incorrect	Although President Wilson strongly supported the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles, it would not have increased his executive power.

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Item Position	Rationale	
22	Option C is correct	The excerpt describes the investment in roads, bridges, sewers and water storage.
	Option A is incorrect	Although U.S. expansionism impacted Guam in many ways, the excerpt does not discuss how it allowed businesses competition in foreign markets.
	Option B is incorrect	The involvement of the United States in Guam did not lead to the encouragement of citizens becoming involved in the political process.
	Option D is incorrect	Although U.S. expansionism in Guam did lead to the spread of Christianity, the excerpt describes the impact of the United States on the infrastructure of Guam.

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Item Position	Rationale	
23	Option D is correct	The United States continued its Cold War policy of trying to contain communism at all costs. This would eventually lead the United States into a full-scale war in Vietnam.
	Option A is incorrect	The U.S. effort to stop the spread of fascist Germany, Italy, and Japan occurred during World War II.
	Option B is incorrect	A communist government was established under Ho Chi Minh in North Vietnam as a result of the Geneva Accords in 1954. The creation of a new communist government in Southeast Asia increased Cold War tensions in the region based on the Domino Theory.
	Option C is incorrect	The United States continued its Cold War policy of trying to contain communism at all costs. This would eventually lead the United States into a full-scale war in Vietnam.

Item Position	Rationale	
24	Option A is correct	The Interstate Commerce Act prevented railroads from offering preferential shipping rates to larger corporations, which had harmed small businesses and farmers. By attempting to end this practice, the Interstate Commerce Act opened up markets for smaller businesses and farmers.
	Option B is incorrect	As the Progressive Movement became more popular in the late 1800s and early 1900s, Congress passed additional regulations that monitored and limited the anti-competitive practices of corporations.
	Option C is incorrect	The Interstate Commerce Act addressed the problem of railroad monopolies by setting guidelines for how the railroads could do business.
	Option D is incorrect	The Interstate Commerce Act did not hinder manufacturing in the United States.

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Item Position	Rationale	
25	Option C is correct	The Newlands Reclamation Act supported irrigation projects that brought water to farmers in areas lacking sufficient rainfall or groundwater.
	Option A is incorrect	The Newlands Reclamation Act did not allow for the expansion of railroads in western states. Instead, it supported irrigation projects to bring water to farmers in areas lacking sufficient water resources.
	Option B is incorrect	The Newlands Reclamation Act did not reduce infrastructure development in western lands. Instead, it supported irrigation projects to bring water to farmers in areas lacking sufficient water resources.
	Option D is incorrect	The Newlands Reclamation Act supported irrigation projects that brought water to farmers in areas lacking sufficient rainfall or groundwater.

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Item Position	Rationale	
26	Option A is correct	Sally Ride was significant because she was the first American woman in space. Her flight broke down gender barriers in the space industry, which historically was male dominated. Dr. Ride orbited the earth on board the space shuttle <i>Challenger</i> in 1983, which demonstrated the importance of science education for girls.
	Option B is incorrect	Sally Ride was not known as a civil rights leader.
	Option C is incorrect	Sally Ride was not known for inspiring political participation.
	Option D is incorrect	Sally Ride was not known for inspiring labor reform.

Item Position	Rationale	
27	Option A is correct	The Constitution includes a system of checks and balances to prevent abuses of power by the three branches of government. Roosevelt tried to alter the balance of power by adding more Supreme Court justices sympathetic to his policies because the courts systems had been challenging some of his New Deal programs.
	Option B is incorrect	The Constitution provides for federalism, a division of power between the federal and state governments. The headline does not have anything related to state governments, and Roosevelt’s court reorganization plans did not involve state power.
	Option C is incorrect	The Constitution provides for limited government because the federal government only has the powers given to it in the U.S. Constitution. The headline shows Roosevelt trying to reform the judicial branch, but his plan was to add more justices, not to limit the federal government’s power.
	Option D is incorrect	The Constitution provides for republicanism when the opinions and interests of U.S. citizens are represented by elected members of Congress. Roosevelt was planning to reform the court system, not to alter the legislative branch.

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Item Position	Rationale	
28	Option B is correct	This law was intended to promote the development of American Indian arts and crafts and to promote the economic welfare of American Indian tribes and the American Indian wards of the government by expanding the market for their products.
	Option A is incorrect	The federal government had previous experience with negotiating with American Indian groups.
	Option C is incorrect	This legislation is not associated with giving the federal government control over state budgets to upgrade American Indian-owned factories.
	Option D is incorrect	This legislation is not associated with granting the federal government control over American Indian-produced exports.

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Item Position	Rationale
29	For SCR items, please refer to the scoring guide.

Item Position	Rationale	
30	Option D is correct	The Dust Bowl was a result of poor farm management. Farmers did not feel the need to restrict how much farmland was used or how intensively it was cultivated. As a result, over-farming in certain areas depleted the soil, making it easily spread by wind. The extended drought during this period further contributed to the loss of topsoil.
	Option A is incorrect	While agricultural decline did occur during the 1930s, it was not because of poor banking practices and high interest rates.
	Option B is incorrect	Consumer demand decreased during the 1930s; it did not increase because of expanding urban areas.
	Option C is incorrect	The Dust Bowl was a result of factors inside the United States; it did not occur because of intensified competition from imports.

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Item Position	Rationale	
31	Option C is correct	The Civil Rights Act of 1964 specifically provided “relief against discrimination in public accommodations.”
	Option A is incorrect	This was the goal of the unratified Equal Rights Amendment of 1972, which has yet to be passed.
	Option B is incorrect	This was accomplished by the Fair Housing Act of 1968.
	Option D is incorrect	This was accomplished by the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Item Position	Rationale	
32	Option A is correct	Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon spearheaded the move to reduce income taxes under Presidents Warren Harding and Calvin Coolidge. This helped to expand the economy as people bought more goods and services with the money they no longer had to use for taxes.
	Option B is incorrect	The federal government followed a laissez faire policy during the 1920s, which reflected the belief that market forces would naturally address any societal problems. Welfare policies are not associated with causing the prosperity of the 1920s.
	Option C is incorrect	During the 1920s the United States adopted higher tariffs on imported goods aimed to protect American businesses from foreign competition and stimulate domestic production, such as the Fordney-McCumber Tariff of 1922.
	Option D is incorrect	During the 1920s, agricultural prices were falling due to overproduction, increased mechanization, and decreased demand after the end of World War I.

Item Position	Rationale	
33	Option C is correct	The United States' creation of atomic bombs demonstrated a willingness to invest heavily in new technology. Despite its high costs, this new technology was deemed necessary to win the war.
	Option A is incorrect	Although ground troops were prioritized during World War I, World War II introduced different military strategies including island hopping and nuclear weapons.
	Option B is incorrect	The photograph shows an effect of the development of nuclear weapons. Earlier in World War II, naval forces in the Pacific relied less on battleships and more on aircraft carriers to ensure air superiority.
	Option D is incorrect	The atomic bomb was developed by the U.S.-led Manhattan Project to achieve a decisive military advantage. The project was primarily financed and coordinated domestically, with targeted scientific collaboration rather than broad allied aid driving its creation.

Item Position	Rationale	
34	Option "South Korea" is correct	The invasion of North Korea into South Korea occurred across the 38th parallel. As a result of North Korean armies crossing this boundary, the Korean War began.
	Option "China" is incorrect	China was not invaded. Therefore, this did not contribute to U.S. entrance into the Korean War.
	Option "U.S.S.R." is incorrect	The U.S.S.R. was not invaded. Therefore, this did not contribute to U.S. entrance into the Korean War.
	Option "North Korea" is incorrect	North Korea was not invaded. Therefore, this did not contribute to U.S. entrance into the Korean War.
	Option "Japan" is incorrect	Japan was not invaded. Therefore, this did not contribute to U.S. entrance into the Korean War.

Item Position	Rationale	
35	Part A: Option B is correct	Master Sergeant Roy Benavidez was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor by President Ronald Reagan in 1981 for his actions described in the excerpt, including putting others' needs in front of his own.
	Part A: Option A is incorrect	Although Master Sergeant Roy Benavidez was wounded during his service, he stayed in the U.S. Army until his retirement in 1976.
	Part A: Option C is incorrect	Master Sergeant Roy Benavidez was not given the rank of general as a result of his actions. The highest rank he reached in the U.S. Army was master sergeant.
	Part A: Option D is incorrect	While Master Sergeant Roy Benavidez did secure important documents and was awarded a medal for his actions, it was not the Presidential Medal of Freedom.
	Part B: Option C is correct	This statement describes that Benavidez put the lives of his fellow soldiers above his own by continuing to carry the wounded to the helicopter while under enemy fire. This is how he earned the Congressional Medal of Honor.
	Part B: Option A is incorrect	This statement describes that Benavidez served in the Vietnam War and not how he earned the Congressional Medal of Honor.
	Part B: Option B is incorrect	This statement describes how Benavidez was injured during combat; however, he was not awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for being wounded.
	Part B: Option D is incorrect	This statement describes how Benavidez was rescued after saving his fellow soldiers first; however, he was not awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for being rescued.

Item Position	Rationale	
36	Option D is correct	These three states were known for having political machines that ran the big cities (New York City, Philadelphia, Chicago) and helped provide for immigrants in return for their vote in elections.
	Option A is incorrect	Nativists disliked immigrants and opposed immigration. Nativists wanted to severely limit or, ideally, eliminate immigration to the United States.
	Option B is incorrect	Congress did not attempt to restrict Asian immigration until the 1924 Johnson-Reed Act.
	Option C is incorrect	State governments did not promote deportations to limit European immigration. Deportations were used by the federal government after the Red Scare as a means of returning immigrants considered a political threat to their homelands.

Item Position	Rationale	
37	Option B is correct	Following the Supreme Court’s ruling in <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> (1896) establishing the “separate but equal” principle, the Supreme Court slowly started applying the Equal Protection Clause to strike down segregation policies in such cases as <i>Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada</i> (1938), <i>Shelley Kraemer</i> (1948), <i>Sweatt v. Painter</i> (1950), <i>McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents</i> (1950), and <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> (1954).
	Option A is incorrect	While the Supreme Court did uphold the protection of political speech in <i>Tinker v. Des Moines</i> (1965), and refined this protection through later decisions, this decision was not based on the Supreme Court’s interpretation of the Equal Protection Clause or any other part of the Fourteenth Amendment.
	Option C is incorrect	While the Supreme Court did overturn the convictions of religious minorities in its decision in <i>Wisconsin v. Yoder</i> (1972), this decision was based on its interpretation of the First Amendment and not on an interpretation of the Equal Protection Clause.
	Option D is incorrect	While the principle of “separate but equal” was established by the <i>Plessy</i> decision in 1896, the Supreme Court started slowly restricting the application of this principle during the twentieth century through a series of cases, such as <i>Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada</i> (1938), <i>Shelley v. Kraemer</i> (1948), <i>Sweatt v. Painter</i> (1950), <i>McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents</i> (1950), and <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> (1954).

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Item Position	Rationale	
38	Drop-Down 1: Option "Iran" is correct	In the 1980s, the U.S. secretly sold weapons to Iran during the Iran-Contra Affair.
	Drop-Down 1: Option "Iraq" is incorrect	Weapons were not secretly sold to Iraq.
	Drop-Down 1: Option "Afghanistan" is incorrect	Weapons were not secretly sold to Afghanistan.
	Drop-Down 2: Option "anti-communist rebels in Nicaragua" is correct	The money from the sale of weapons was then used to help anti-communist rebels in Nicaragua in violation of a law passed by Congress.
	Drop-Down 2: Option "pro-Islamic leaders in Lebanon" is incorrect	The money was not secretly provided to pro-Islamic leaders in Lebanon.
	Drop-Down 2: Option "anti-democratic rioters in China" is incorrect	The money was not secretly provided to anti-democratic rioters in China.
	Drop-Down 2: Option "pro-Western sympathizers in East Germany" is incorrect	The money was not secretly provided to pro-Western sympathizers in East Germany.

Item Position	Rationale	
39	Option C is correct	President Clinton supported NAFTA because he believed expanding free trade would strengthen the U.S. free-enterprise system by increasing access to international markets and boosting American economic competitiveness.
	Option A is incorrect	NAFTA was designed to reduce trade barriers and encourage the globalization of U.S. goods, not restrict or prohibit their access to foreign markets.
	Option B is incorrect	Protecting the environment was not the reason why this law was passed.
	Option D is incorrect	Lower wages for workers in the U.S. was a strong criticism of the law and an unintended consequence.

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Item Position	Rationale	
40	Option D is correct	Southern states passed Jim Crow laws that were used for all aspects of African American lives. One purpose of the laws was to keep African Americans separate from white people.
	Option A is incorrect	Southern states passed Jim Crow laws that were used to discriminate against African Americans, but they didn't prevent African Americans from working for pay.
	Option B is incorrect	Jim Crow laws did not force African Americans to buy imported home merchandise.
	Option C is incorrect	Jim Crow laws did not deny African Americans chances to move out of state.

Item Position	Rationale	
41	Option C is correct	The FDIC was established to insure (protect) bank account deposits up to a certain amount of money. This remains the FDIC's primary role, with the current maximum insured amount in a single bank account set at \$250,000.
	Option A is incorrect	Although government-subsidized health care is available to qualifying people living in the United States, the FDIC does not provide this benefit.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the federal government has provided direct financial assistance to the unemployed at various points since the Great Depression, the FDIC has never played a role in providing this benefit.
	Option D is incorrect	The FDIC only insures money deposited in bank accounts. It does not protect money that individuals invest in the stock market.

Item Position	Rationale	
42	Drop-Down 1: Option "free enterprise" is correct	Free enterprise has led businesses in the United States to compete against each other. This has resulted in businesses creating new technological innovations in order to gain a competitive advantage.
	Drop-Down 1: Option "government oversight" is incorrect	Government oversight/regulation has at times restricted technological innovation and growth rather than promoting it.
	Drop-Down 1: Option "defense spending" is incorrect	Defense spending can encourage business competition, but this is usually specific to defense industries rather than businesses as a whole.
	Drop-Down 2: Option "develop new technologies to gain an economic advantage" is correct	Businesses compete to gain a competitive edge over their rivals. In the technology field, this has led to the creation of new technological innovations in an effort by businesses to beat their competitors.
	Drop-Down 2: Option "transition to federal ownership of some technology industries" is incorrect	While businesses produce technology for the military, this has not led to the nationalization of tech industries.
	Drop-Down 2: Option "produce items domestically to protect technology development" is incorrect	Countries engage in international trade in an effort to further their economic advantage over their competitors.

STAAR Spring 2026 U.S. History Rationales

Item Position	Rationale	
43	Option B is correct	By 1932, the Great Depression resulted in around 25% of the U.S. population being unemployed and suffering food insecurity.
	Option A is incorrect	International warfare did not create major food shortages in the United States during the 1930s.
	Option C is incorrect	International trade restrictions did not keep food from being imported into the United States during the 1930s.
	Option D is incorrect	Widespread political conflict did not create a financial crisis in the American economy.

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Item Position	Rationale	
44	Option "States and localities received [funding] through federal grant programs for health care, transportation, energy, housing, and education." is correct	The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, also known as the stimulus bill, focused on funding public-sector projects and programs in order to stimulate the economy and create jobs during the Great Recession of 2007–2009. It funded infrastructure, education, health care, and other programs.
	Option "The corporation's purpose was . . . to provide for reforestation and the proper use of marginal lands in the Tennessee Valley." is incorrect	This excerpt describes the effect of the Tennessee Valley Administration Act.
	Option "It expands the government's ability to search private property without notice to the owner." is incorrect	This excerpt describes the effect of the USA Patriot Act.
	Option "The law offered farmers subsidies in exchange for limiting their production of certain crops." is incorrect	This excerpt describes the efforts of the Agricultural Adjustment Act.
	Option "It calls for quantitative increases in forces, weapons, and equipment, and for more effective procedures and plans for multinational coordination and mutual support." is incorrect	This excerpt describes the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Item Position	Rationale	
45	Option "Any man who is not reactionary in his views is open to the charge of alliance with the Red [evil]" is correct	During the 1950s, many people were accused of being communists for disagreeing with the ideas of McCarthyism. Oftentimes, these allegations were unwarranted and lacked evidence.
	Option "There is certain proof that spies of each side are at work undermining the other" is correct	During the 1950s, many people were fearful of communist spies living in the United States. This selection reflects the tactics employed by McCarthy to target people thought to be associated with communism.
	Option "The American continent stretched endlessly west, and it was full of mystery for them" is incorrect	This selection references westward expansion, not the fear of communism which was reflected during the period of McCarthyism.
	Option "But the people of Salem in 1692 were not quite the dedicated folk that arrived on the <i>Mayflower</i> " is incorrect	Although this selection refers to the tension between the community, it does not represent the fear of communism during the period of McCarthyism.
	Option "A vast [difference] had taken place, and in their own time a revolution had unseated the royal government" is incorrect	Although this selection describes the increase of tensions, it does not represent the fear of communism during the period of McCarthyism.
	Option "Normally the actions and deeds of a man were all that society felt comfortable in judging" is incorrect	This selection explains that people should be judged by how they treat others. This was not a characteristic of McCarthyism.

Item Position	Rationale	
46	Option C is correct	The memorandum discusses the U.S. policy of Vietnamization, under which U.S. forces gradually withdrew from Vietnam while peace talks continued between the communist north and democratic south. The policy was intended to prepare South Vietnam to fight North Vietnam on its own, but communist forces overran the south and eliminated the democratic government. The country was then united under communist control.
	Option A is incorrect	North Vietnam did not create a military alliance to spread communism.
	Option B is incorrect	South Vietnam did not end a civil war and become a democratic country, although a goal of South Vietnam was to become a democratic country.
	Option D is incorrect	North and South Vietnam were separated at the seventeenth parallel in 1954 when the two countries were created at the conclusion of the war with France. This did not happen in 1975.

Item Position	Rationale	
47	Option “a greater number of African-American elected officials” is correct	One goal of the Civil Rights Movement was to increase the participation of minorities in the political process. The election of African American elected officials is a long-term achievement of the Civil Rights Movement.
	Option “march from Selma to the state capital in Montgomery was . . . broken up by police” is incorrect	This selection describes one event during the Civil Rights Movement. It does not represent a long-term achievement.
	Option “federal marshals and additional volunteers arrived to complete the initially [ended] march” is incorrect	Although participants in this civil rights march achieved their goal of completing the march, this selection describes one event during the Civil Rights Movement. It does not represent a long-term achievement.
	Option “an enormous array of tactics utilized” is incorrect	This selection explains that different strategies were used during the Civil Rights Movement. It does not describe a long-term achievement of the movement.
	Option “music played an important role in the struggle” is incorrect	This selection explains that different strategies were used during the Civil Rights Movement. It does not describe a long-term achievement of the movement.

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Item Position	Rationale	
48	Option D is correct	The Great Depression was an economic depression in the United States. The stock market crash in 1929, along with other factors, pushed the country into the Great Depression.
	Option A is incorrect	The Teapot Dome scandal happened between 1921 and 1923, before the stock market crashed.
	Option B is incorrect	The passage of protective tariffs during the Harding administration in the early 1920s contributed to the worsening of the Great Depression on a global scale.
	Option C is incorrect	Laissez-faire policies contributed to the stock market crash and the Great Depression.

Item Position	Rationale	
49	Option C is correct	This list includes conservative beliefs that are associated with an American political organization and movement called the Moral Majority, which was founded in 1979 by Baptist minister Jerry Falwell Sr., and with conservative organizations like the Heritage Foundation.
	Option A is incorrect	The American Civil Liberties Union is an organization that works to defend the rights and liberties protected by the Constitution and Bill of Rights.
	Option B is incorrect	This list includes conservative beliefs that are associated with the Moral Majority and conservative organizations like the Heritage Foundation, not the platform of the Democratic Party.
	Option D is incorrect	The National Rifle Association is a gun rights lobbying organization.

STAAR Spring 2026 U.S. History Rationales

Item Position	Rationale	
50	Drop-Down 1: Option "September 11th attacks" is correct	The situation described in the excerpt led to events such as the September 11th attacks.
	Drop-Down 1: Option "Gulf of Tonkin incident" is incorrect	The excerpt does not describe the attack on U.S. destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin.
	Drop-Down 1: Option "Fall of the Berlin Wall" is incorrect	The excerpt does not describe the fall of the Berlin Wall.
	Drop-Down 2: Option "homeland security" is correct	The events of September 11th contributed to efforts to improve homeland security.
	Drop-Down 2: Option "trade agreements" is incorrect	The events of September 11th have not contributed to efforts to improve trade agreements.
	Drop-Down 2: Option "educational policy" is incorrect	The events of September 11th have not contributed to efforts to improve educational policy.

STAAR Spring 2026 U.S. History Rationales

Item Position	Rationale	
51	Option B is correct	Many people believed that President Roosevelt was attempting to increase his power to enforce and uphold New Deal programs.
	Option A is incorrect	The bill did not increase the power of the legislative branch.
	Option C is incorrect	There was never any concern that this bill restricted the rights of the states.
	Option D is incorrect	There was never any concern that this bill restricted the rights of the people.

Item Position	Rationale	
52	Option D is correct	Prior to the Pendleton Civil Service Act, many jobs in the government were awarded based on political connections rather than merit. The purpose of the Pendleton Civil Service Act was to create an efficient bureaucracy filled with capable workers.
	Option A is incorrect	The Pendleton Civil Service Act sought to address the spoils system; it is not associated with restricting the number of government positions available for international applicants.
	Option B is incorrect	The Pendleton Civil Service Act is not associated with the repeal of rules requiring a college degree to hold a government job.
	Option C is incorrect	The Pendleton Civil Service Act just noted that people should be awarded jobs based on their merit; however, it did not explicitly forbid discriminating against women.

STAAR Spring 2026 U.S. History Rationales

Item Position	Rationale
53	For SCR items, please refer to the scoring guide.

Item Position	Rationale	
54	Option A is correct	The excerpt is describing the "Battle of the Sexes," which was seen on television by millions of people worldwide, allowing for the diffusion of American culture.
	Option B is incorrect	The excerpt is discussing the "Battle of the Sexes" worldwide media event, not the increase of tourism to Houston.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the excerpt is about tennis, it discusses the players' impact and not the coaches' rates.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the excerpt is discussing a coed tennis match, it is not discussing an increase in the number of coed tennis matches.

Item Position	Rationale	
55	Option C is correct	NOW organized across the country to get the Equal Rights Amendment ratified.
	Option A is incorrect	NOW worked to achieve women's equality through nonviolent means, but petition drives were not a focus of NOW activities.
	Option B is incorrect	NOW did organize across the country, but women already had voting rights by NOW's founding.
	Option D is incorrect	NOW did organize one boycott of a company that refused to promote women to higher-paying jobs, but this incident wasn't a regular practice, nor was it about a refusal to hire women workers at all.

Item Position	Rationale	
56	Option "None of the Above sign" is correct	Ross Perot ran against Bush and Clinton as a third-party candidate. He appealed to many Americans who did not support either major party candidate within the two-party system.
	Option "Bush sign" is incorrect	George Bush was the incumbent running for the Republican nominee for President and drew votes away from Perot.
	Option "Clinton sign" is incorrect	Bill Clinton was the Democratic nominee for President. Clinton, a charismatic politician, drew votes away from Perot.
	Option "Speech bubble" is incorrect	This selection alludes to Perot's withdrawal from the presidential campaign in July 1992 and his re-entry into the campaign in October 1992. Some voters were confused about whether or not he was still running for president.
	Option "U.S. flag" is incorrect	While Perot appealed to the average American, the representation of the American flag did not directly help him get votes.

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Item Position	Rationale	
57	Option D is correct	The adoption of this amendment was in response to the continued use of state-level policies in various Southern states following the end of Reconstruction that limited the participation of African Americans in elections.
	Option A is incorrect	This amendment was not designed to address state governments experiencing a decline in authority.
	Option B is incorrect	This amendment was not designed to address inflated government budgets.
	Option C is incorrect	This amendment was not designed to expand the voting opportunities for the majority of citizens.

STAAR Spring 2026 U.S. History Rationales

Item Position	Rationale	
58	"Cuban independence" Option "Spanish-American War" is correct	The Spanish-American War resulted in Spain relinquishing colonial control over Cuba, resulting in Cuba gaining independence.
	"The acquisition of U.S. territories in the Pacific" Option "Spanish-American War" is correct	The Spanish-American War led to the acquisition of U.S. territories in the Pacific. This included the Philippines and Guam.
	"The establishment of the United Nations" Option "World War II" is correct	World War II contributed to the establishment of the United Nations. The UN was formed in October 1945.
	"A period of economic prosperity and increased U.S. consumerism" Option "World War II" is correct	World War II was followed by a period of economic prosperity and increased consumerism. A combination of factors contributed to this, including an end to the Great Depression, a shift from wartime production to consumer production, and benefits from the GI Bill of Rights.

Item Position	Rationale	
59	Option B is correct	The dot-com crash was a rapid and unanticipated drop in stock prices associated with internet start-up companies.
	Option A is incorrect	The dot-com crash was a rapid and unanticipated drop in stock prices associated with internet start-up companies, not the elimination of international markets.
	Option C is incorrect	The dot-com crash was a rapid and unanticipated drop in stock prices associated with internet start-up companies, not market growth.
	Option D is incorrect	The dot-com crash was a rapid and unanticipated drop in stock prices associated with internet start-up companies; it was not the introduction of more laws regulating the market.

Item Position	Rationale	
60	Drop-Down 1: Option "racial oppression" is correct	The Highlander Folk School was founded in 1932 to address problems of poverty, before shifting its focus to civil rights and problems of racial oppression in the 1950s.
	Drop-Down 1: Option "government regulation" is incorrect	The Highlander Folk School did not address issues related to government regulation.
	Drop-Down 1: Option "environmental protection" is incorrect	The Highlander Folk School did not address issues related to environmental protection.
	Drop-Down 2: Option "civil rights" is correct	The Highlander Folk School's voter education workshops influenced civil rights campaigns throughout the South in the 1960s, including Freedom Summer in Mississippi, the 1960 Greensboro sit-ins, and the Montgomery Bus Boycott.
	Drop-Down 2: Option "student rights" is incorrect	Although students were active participants in the Highlander Folk School, the voter education workshops did not focus on student rights issues.
	Drop-Down 2: Option "immigrant rights" is incorrect	The Highlander Folk School's voter education workshops did not focus on immigrant rights.
	Drop-Down 2: Option "prisoner rights" is incorrect	The Highlander Folk School's voter education workshops did not focus on prisoner rights.

Item Position	Rationale	
61	Option A is correct	The African American community is credited with establishing the musical genre of jazz.
	Option B is incorrect	Jazz emerged before the passage of civil rights legislation and was used by African American music artists to record their experiences. The musical genre of jazz is not associated with being responsible for the passage of civil rights laws.
	Option C is incorrect	The excerpt was taken from a jazz album review, in which Marsalis is the music artist; this excerpt does not suggest Marsalis's occupation is documenting the history of jazz.
	Option D is incorrect	The popularity of jazz did not prevent other musical genres from developing. Many different genres of jazz have developed, and jazz continues to influence other musical genres.

Item Position	Rationale	
62	Option "militarism" is correct	Militarism was an influential ideology in both Germany and Japan at the beginning of World War II. The justification behind the idea was the necessity of military invasion to ensure the security and prosperity of a country.
	Option "regain lost territory" is correct	Germany had lost a portion of its land to Poland in the aftermath of World War I. Part of Hitler's rallying cry and justification for invading Poland was that such land rightfully deserved to be under German control.
	Option "control much needed resources" is correct	Japan's rapid expansion after World War I badly strained its resource supply chain. The invasion of China was seen, in part, as a way to access resources needed for their continued expansion efforts.
	Option "imperialism" is correct	Imperialism was an ideal that promoted the importance of expansion and conquest by nations. Both Germany and Japan were imperial powers prior to World War II, but their expansion efforts into Poland and China reflected imperial beliefs taken to their extremes.

Item Position	Rationale	
63	Option D is correct	Tenement housing involved families, extended families, and groups of immigrants and poor in unhealthy and unsafe living conditions.
	Option A is incorrect	Although families made items inside of the tenements, they were not profitable for the families.
	Option B is incorrect	Tenements were a cheap solution to housing that could pack four apartments on each floor of four-to-six-story, cheaply made buildings on lots of 25 x 100 feet.
	Option C is incorrect	Deteriorating, cheap tenement housing was usually the only housing available to newly arrived immigrants and poor people.

Item Position	Rationale	
64	Option A is correct	Business growth in the 1950s was fueled by consumer spending.
	Option B is incorrect	Union membership reached its peak in the 1950s, with one-third of the U.S. workforce in a union. Moreover, by fighting for higher wages, unions ensured that their members had disposable income to spend on consumer products, which in turn, further contributed to the decade's economic prosperity.
	Option C is incorrect	Unemployment remained low throughout the 1950s. Moreover, an increase in unemployment would not have contributed to business growth.
	Option D is incorrect	Health care did not decline. Moreover, declining health care would not have contributed to business growth.