



State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

U.S. History

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 U.S. History 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.

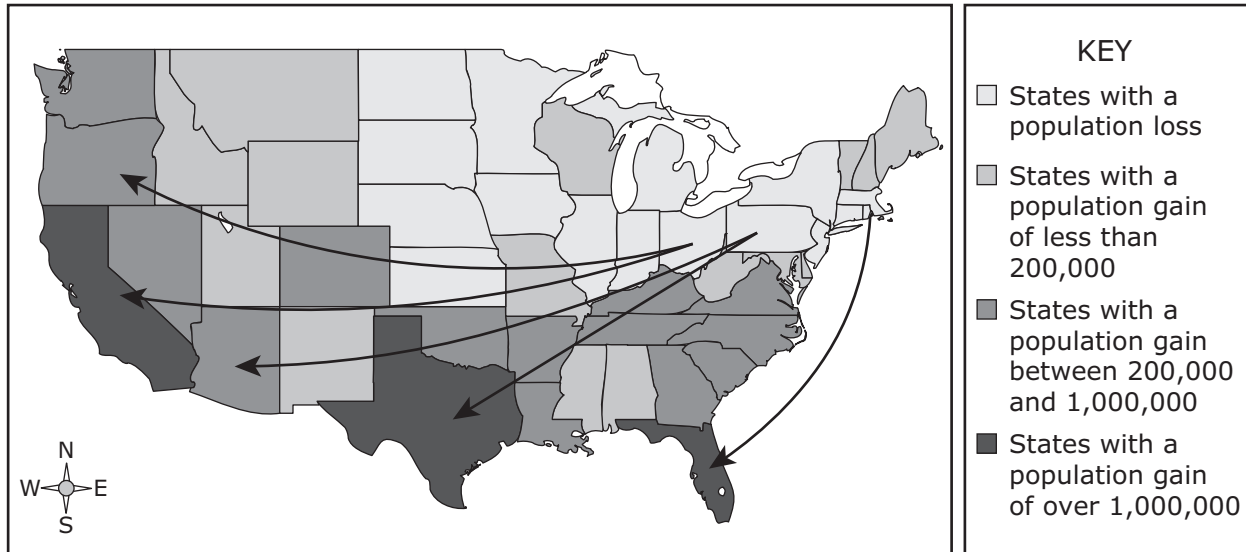
The responses in this guide are actual student responses submitted online during the testing window. To protect the privacy of individual students, all names and other references of a personal nature have been altered or removed. Otherwise, the responses appear as the students wrote them and have not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

U.S. History Short Constructed Response

Prompt

This map depicts a period of migration within the United States.

Rust Belt to Sun Belt Migration, 1970–1980



Explain **ONE** cause and **ONE** effect of migration from the Rust Belt to the Sun Belt in the United States.

Think about the information carefully. Then enter your response in the box provided.

Item-Specific Rubric

Score: 2

The student scores two points for responses that include one cause and one effect:

Causes

- Harsher climate with bitterly cold winters
- Declining industry
- Businesses moving operations to other places to save money caused job loss
- Advances such as air conditioning made living in the Southwest manageable
- Less labor unions in Sun Belt states because these states were “right-to-work” states
- Lower cost of living in Sun Belt states

Effects

- Population growth in the Southwest
- Growth of suburbs in the Southwest
- Strain on the Southwest region’s freshwater supplies
- Further economic strain in the Rust Belt region
- Industrial cities in the Rust Belt experienced increased economic and social decline
- Rust Belt lost political power
- Sun Belt gained political power

Score: 1

The student response contains only one cause or one effect.

Score: 0

The student response is irrelevant or incomplete.

Sample Student Responses

Score Point 0

Response 1

States loss populatin then gain

The student response does not provide a correct cause nor a correct effect of the migration. The information provided ("States loss populatin then gain") is too vague to receive credit. The states or regions that the student is referring to in the answer cannot be determined and must be identified.

Response 2

One cause of western migration was the Homestead Act which promised citizens land if they moved out west. This greatly increased the U.S. economy because many resources were discovered.

The student response does not provide a correct cause nor a correct effect of the migration. The information provided ("Homestead Act") is incorrect. The Homestead Act passed in 1862. The effect provided ("increased the U.S. economy") is also incorrect.

Response 3

One cause from the migration from the Rust Belt to the Sun Belt is states on the west and middle of the U.S gain over 1,000,000. One effect of this happening is that the east coast states now have a population of 200,000 or less.

The student response does not provide a correct cause nor a correct effect of the migration. The information provided is copied from the stimulus and does not answer the questions.

Response 4

Crops and farms were more widely availble and sustainable.

The student response does not provide a correct cause nor a correct effect of the migration. The information provided ("Crops and farms were more widely availble and sustainable") is irrelevant.

Score Point 1

Response 1

cause - people wanted to move to find new jobs or work
effect - they went to the other side of north america to fins farming jobs and a litle bit of industrial jobs

The student response provides a correct cause ("people wanted to move to find new jobs or work"), which falls under factories closing. The effect provided ("they went to the other side of north america to fins farming jobs") is incorrect.

Response 2

Air Conditioning allow people to live in hot people like cali., Texas, etc. Keeping houses, schools, stores cool down.

The student response provides a correct cause ("Air Conditioning allow people to live in hot people like cali., Texas, etc."), which falls under advances such as air conditioning, making living in the Southwest manageable. No effect is provided.

Response 3

One cause of the migration from the Rust Belt to the Sun Belt was the transcontinental railroad that allowed for people from the east to move to the west. One effect of Rust Belt to the Sun Belt migration was increased population in the Sun Belt as shown in the picture.

The student response does not identify a correct cause of the migration. The information provided ("transcontinental railroad") is incorrect. The railroad was completed in 1869 and was not a cause of the migration. The effect ("increased population in the Sun Belt") is correct.

Response 4

One cause of the migration of the rust belt to the sun belt in the U.S was the population boom in Northern states, one effect of the migration from the Rust belt to the Sun Belt was an increase in elected officials for the house of representatives in those states that have gained a population.

The student response does not identify a correct cause of the migration. The information provided (“the population boom in Northern states”) is incorrect. The effect (“an increase in elected officials . . . in those states that have gained a population”) falls under the Sun Belt gaining political power because they had an increase in population.

Score Point 2

Response 1

One cause of the migration from the Rust Belt to the Sun Belt is job opportunities. One effect of the migration from the Rust Belt to the Sun Belt is rise in population.

The student response identifies a correct cause of the migration ("job opportunities") and a correct effect ("rise in population").

Response 2

One cause of migration to the Sun Belt region was the movement of defense companies in the area, like NASA. One effect of migration was the development of large, suburban cities to house the rising middle class in the area.

The student response identifies a correct cause of the migration ("movement of defense companies in the area, like NASA"), which falls under businesses moving to other places to save money. The response also identifies a correct effect ("development of large, suburban cities").

Response 3

People participated in the migration seeking more favorable climate and job opportunities in the Southwest. This resulted in these states having more representation in Congressional decisions and improved economies due to more people entering the workforce.

The student response identifies a correct cause of the migration ("seeking more favorable climate and job opportunities") and a correct effect ("more representation in Congressional decisions"), which falls under the Sun Belt gaining political power.

Response 4

One cause of migration from the rust belt to the sun belt would be the new job oppurtunities. After a decline in the manufacturing industry, many people moved south where there was other new job oppurtunities. One effect of the migration from rust belt to sun belt would be the increase in population in southern states like Texas, California, and Florida. The states had the most population gain after the migration

The student response identifies a correct cause of the migration (“After a decline in the manufacturing industry, many people moved south where there was other new job oppurtunities”). The response also identifies a correct effect (“the increase in population in southern states like Texas, California, and Florida”).

U.S. History Short Constructed Response

Prompt

By the early 1900s, the United States was a major producer of steel. Identify **TWO** ways this production affected the economic development of the United States.

Enter your response in the box provided.

Item-Specific Rubric

Score: 2

Score 2 points for correct answers that include two of the following:

- Expansion of cities
- Emergence of urban infrastructure (railroads, bridges, skyscrapers, etc.)
- Creation of jobs
- Growth of labor unions
- Increase in immigration
- More unionization
- Labor conflicts and riots
- Expansion of industrialization
- Growth of industrial towns
- Emergence of robber barons and captains of industry
- Rise of powerful businessmen, such as Carnegie and Rockefeller
- Rise of the “Gospel of Wealth”
- Contribution to the mass production of automobiles
- Emergence of new products
- Improved transportation (i.e., railroads)
- Development of new technologies (such as elevators)
- Growth of monopolies
- Rise of socialism
- Increased growth of political machines
- Increased appeal of Progressive reforms
- Increased settlement in the West
- Acceleration of assimilation
- Spread of culture
- Spread of philanthropy
- Emergence of ethnic communities
- Further displacement of American Indians

Score: 1

The response only provides half of the correct details.

Score: 0

The response is incorrect or irrelevant.

Sample Student Responses

Score Point 0

Response 1

This affected the economic development of United States by increasing the numbers and bringing the population up.

The response is irrelevant to the question posed by the prompt (“increasing the numbers and bringing the population up”).

Response 2

too much usage of steel and the lack of workers.

The response is incorrect (“lack of workers”).

Response 3

The early 1900s, the United States was a major producer of steel because it was a common resource in the U.S. This would change the economic development of the United States as steel became a very popular resource in the market.

The response is too vague to receive credit (“steel became a very popular resource”).

Response 4

This production improvement led to creating products that held more sustainability, making profits skyrocket, as well as became a cheaper alternative to what had been previously used. This offered an economic boost to the US by collecting purchase payments from other countries.

The response refers to relevant concepts but is too vague to receive credit (“products that held more sustainability, making profits skyrocket . . . collecting purchase payments from other countries”).

Score Point 1

Response 1

Two ways that mass producing steel affected the development of the economy is we were able to build huge skyscrapers that we wouldnt be able to build with wood and we were able to structurally engineer building in a much safer and better manner.

The response provides one economic effect of steel production in the early 1900s (“we were able to build huge skyscrapers”). The additional information enriches the response, but it doesn’t provide an additional effect.

Response 2

The production of steel caused demand of steel to go up and it also made more jobs which meant more money could be spent

The response provides one economic effect of steel production in the early 1900s (“it also made more jobs”).

Response 3

Two ways steel production in the United States affected the economic development were, the innovation of new vehicles, such as cars, tractors, and planes. Another way was new machinery in factories which also revelotionized farming in the United States.

The response provides one economic effect of steel production by describing the development of new technologies (“the innovation of new vehicles . . . new machinery in factories which also revelotionized farming”).

Response 4

It increased production other products and provuded more job opportunities.

The response earns partial credit for providing one way the production of steel affected U.S. economic development (“provuded more job opportunities”). The rest of the response is too vague to earn credit (“It increased production”).

Score Point 2

Response 1

it resulted in more jobs, making taller and bigger buildings, but also affected the air from the smoke when making the steel.

The response identifies two effects on the economic development of the U.S. (“more jobs, making taller and bigger buildings”).

Response 2

allowed for more building to be made such as urban ares which saw a rise in population
allowed for railroads to be built so we could transfer stuff across the country with relative ease

The response describes two economic effects caused by steel production: expansion of cities (“more building to be made such as urban ares which saw a rise in population”) and improved transportation (“allowed for railroads to be built so we could transfer stuff across the country with relative ease”).

Response 3

the major production of steel led to the mass industrilization of america creating factories and railroad and many other things. it also led for technological innovation like new inventions and creations to make american life more efficient.

The response provides two economic effects (“led to the mass industrilization of america . . . technological innovation like new inventions”).

Response 4

By the early 1900s, the United States was a major producer of steel. The production of steel in the US furthered industrialization in the country. This led to economic development as the US became a global producer of steel. However, this industry, like the oil industry at the time, was monopolized. A small group controlled the entire industry. Because there was only a single major company producing this product, there was no competition in the industry. Eventually, this forces the government to intervene, splitting up the monopoly.

This thorough response describes two economic effects of steel production in the early 1900s (“furthered industrialization in the country . . . this industry . . . was monopolized”).