



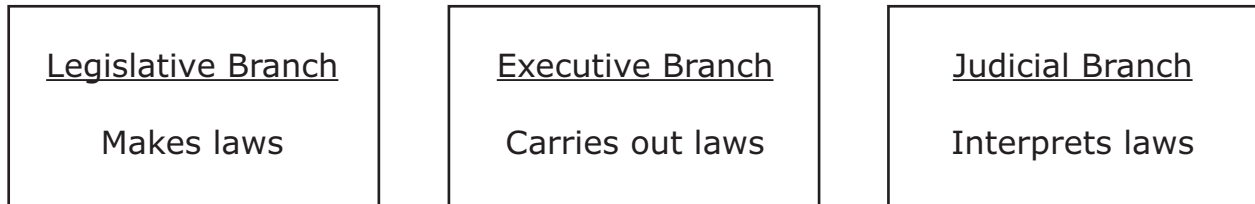
State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

GRADE 8
Social Studies

Paper Item Sampler

- 1 This diagram identifies the governmental structure described in the U.S. Constitution.

Three Branches of Government



Select **ONE** correct answer to complete each sentence.

The constitutional organization shown in the diagram was directly

influenced by the ideas of

- (A) Charles de Montesquieu
- (B) John Locke
- (C) Thomas Paine

. He argued that

the three branches were important because they prevented

- (A) opposing views
- (B) unlimited power
- (C) cooperation

in the government.

2 This excerpt describes George Washington’s farewell address.

On September 19, 1796, newspapers around the country published President George Washington’s Farewell Address. In his address, Washington summarized his presidential tenure, cautioned against political divisions, and advised future American leaders to minimize connections with foreign powers.

President Washington, after nearly eight years as the nation’s first President, determined that he would not accept a third term in office. . . . Upon deciding to retire, he offered his Farewell Address both as a defense of his presidency and a plea for the future of the federal government.

—“George Washington—Key Events,” Miller Center,
University of Virginia

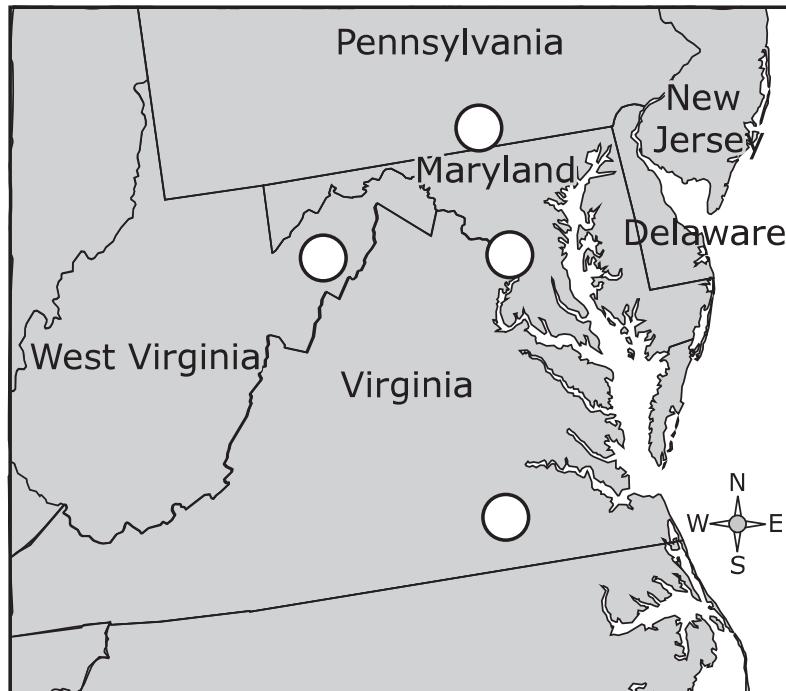
Based on the excerpt and your knowledge of history, select **ONE** correct answer to complete each sentence.

George Washington’s foreign policy emphasized (A) alliances (B) intervention. He attempted to (A) expand (B) limit (C) maintain U.S. involvement in the military affairs of other nations.

3 This map shows a part of the eastern United States.

Which location on the map was the site of a turning point in the Civil War?

Shade the **ONE** correct circle that represents the location.



- 4 This graphic organizer shows physical characteristics that affected the development of the early United States.

Which physical characteristics contributed **MOST** to the development of the shipbuilding industry in the northeastern states?

Select **THREE** correct answers.

Physical Characteristics of the Early United States

<input type="radio"/> Thick forests	<input type="radio"/> Long growing season	<input type="radio"/> Broad coastal plains
<input type="radio"/> Deep harbors	<input type="radio"/> Abundant sea life	<input type="radio"/> Large desert regions

5 This excerpt is from the U.S. Constitution.

In all Cases affecting Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, and those in which a State shall be Party, the supreme Court shall have original Jurisdiction. In all the other Cases before mentioned, the supreme Court shall have appellate Jurisdiction.

—*U.S. Constitution, Article III, Section 2*

Select the grievance against the king of England from the Declaration of Independence that this section of the Constitution addressed.

Select the correct answer from the options below.

He has (A) obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers. He has made (B) Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices and the amount and payment of their salaries. He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and (C) sent . . . swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance. . . .

For (D) protecting [armed troops] . . . from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States: . . .

For (E) transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences.

—*Declaration of Independence, 1776*

- 6 This excerpt describes the writing of the U.S. Constitution in 1787.

Determine which parts of the excerpt explain why this event in 1787 was significant in U.S. history.

Select **TWO** correct answers.

Ⓐ The delegates appointed a Committee of Detail to put its decisions in writing. Near the end of the convention, Ⓑ a Committee of Style and Arrangement kneaded it into its final form, condensing 23 articles into seven in less than four days.

On September 17, 1787, Ⓒ 38 delegates signed the Constitution. . . . It was an extraordinary achievement. Ⓓ Tasked with revising the existing government, the delegates came up with a completely new one. Wary about centralized power and loyal to their states, they created a powerful central government. Representing wildly different interests and views, they crafted compromises.

Ⓔ It stands today as one of the longest-lived and most [imitated] constitutions in the world.

—“*The Constitution: How Did It Happen?*,” National Archives

7 Determine which contribution explains each individual's significance to the American Revolution.

Select the correct answer for each box.

A Summarized the reasons for breaking away from Britain in the Declaration of Independence

B Became the first casualty of the American Revolution when he was killed at the Boston Massacre

C Led the Continental Army in key victories against the British

D Wrote ideas in the pamphlet *Common Sense* that inspired colonists to support the revolution

Thomas Jefferson	George Washington	Thomas Paine	Crispus Attucks
(A) (B) (C) (D)	(A) (B) (C) (D)	(A) (B) (C) (D)	(A) (B) (C) (D)

- 8** Determine which federal powers were included under the Articles of Confederation and which federal powers were absent.

Select **TWO** correct answers for each box.

- A** The federal government could sign peace treaties.
- B** The federal government could impose tariffs and collect taxes.
- C** The federal government could organize a national war effort.
- D** The federal government could regulate interstate commerce.

Powers Included in the Articles of Confederation	Powers Absent from the Articles of Confederation
(A) (B) (C) (D)	(A) (B) (C) (D)
(A) (B) (C) (D)	(A) (B) (C) (D)

- 9 This question has two parts. First answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

This excerpt describes the experiences of pioneers on the Oregon Trail in the mid-nineteenth century.

The Oregon Trail was a wagon road stretching 2,170 miles from Missouri to Oregon's Willamette Valley. It was not a road in any modern sense, only parallel ruts leading across endless prairie, sagebrush desert, and mountains. . . .

. . . The promise of free land inspired many to take on and complete the difficult journey.

. . . In summer, water sources dried up, oxen perished and families endured thirst. Others experienced starvation when they brought insufficient food supplies and found it impossible to live off the land.

— *"Basic Facts about the Oregon Trail," National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center*

Part A

Based on the excerpt, which effect did physical geography have on westward expansion?

- Ⓐ Diverse landforms made it easy to transport farming tools during the journey.
- Ⓑ Harsh climate conditions made it difficult to collect needed supplies along the journey.
- Ⓒ Rich soil encouraged settlers to establish cattle ranches before continuing the journey.
- Ⓓ Plentiful rivers discouraged settlers from bringing their families on the journey.

Part B

Which statement provides evidence for the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ "The Oregon Trail was a wagon road stretching 2,170 miles from Missouri to Oregon's Willamette Valley."
- Ⓑ "It was not a road in any modern sense, only parallel ruts. . . ."
- Ⓒ "The promise of free land inspired many. . . ."
- Ⓓ "In summer, water sources dried up, oxen perished and families endured thirst."

10 This question has two parts. First answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

This excerpt describes the transatlantic slave trade.

New England has a more complex history of slavery and slave trading than many realize. . . .

. . . Almost all of colonial America's slave ships originated in New England. Confronted with a landscape and climate unsuitable for large-scale commercial farming, New Englanders looked to the sea for their livelihood.

As a result, in the eighteenth century, New Englanders developed what came to be known as the Triangular Trade. Ships carried sugar and molasses from the plantation colonies of the Caribbean to New England where colonists distilled it into rum. Merchants then shipped this rum to Africa where it was exchanged for slaves, who were carried back to the Caribbean to produce more sugar.

—"New England and the African Slave Trade," A Forgotten History:
The Slave Trade and Slavery in New England, Choices Program,
Brown University

Part A

Based on the excerpt, what was a **MAIN** reason that the colonists of New England engaged in the transatlantic slave trade?

- Ⓐ The New England economy produced several cash crops used in the slave trade.
- Ⓑ Geographic factors contributed to people in New England using the slave trade to make profits.
- Ⓒ Conflict with other colonies caused New England merchants to use the slave trade to obtain laborers.
- Ⓓ The slave trade improved New England's political relationships with other areas of the world.

Part B

Which statement provides evidence for the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ "New England has a more complex history of slavery and slave trading than many realize."
- Ⓑ "With a landscape and climate unsuitable for large-scale commercial farming, New Englanders looked to the sea. . . ."
- Ⓒ "Ships carried sugar and molasses from the plantation colonies of the Caribbean. . . ."
- Ⓓ "Merchants then shipped this rum to Africa where it was exchanged for slaves, who were carried back to the Caribbean. . . ."

- 11** Determine whether the reasons for immigration applied **MOST** to Irish or Chinese immigrants or to both groups.

Select **ONE** correct answer in each row.

Reason for Immigration	Irish	Chinese	Both
To avoid famine caused by potato crop failure	(A)	(B)	(C)
To escape harsh economic conditions	(A)	(B)	(C)
To find work building the railroad in the western United States	(A)	(B)	(C)

- 12** In which region of the United States did each event in the table take place?

Select **ONE** correct answer in each row.

Event	North	South	West
Gold discovered in 1848	(A)	(B)	(C)
First English settlement founded in 1607	(A)	(B)	(C)
Mayflower Compact signed in 1620	(A)	(B)	(C)
Battle of Gettysburg fought in 1863	(A)	(B)	(C)

13 How did the expansion of slavery in the mid-nineteenth century lead to the Civil War?

Select **TWO** correct answers.

- By increasing sectional tensions over the idea of states' rights
 - By increasing foreign influence over the politics of slave states
 - By inspiring the creation of the Republican Party that opposed the spread of slavery
 - By decreasing migration to territories west of the Mississippi River
 - By limiting the ability of people in free states to learn about the horrors of slavery
-

14 This excerpt is from an amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

No person shall be . . . subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

—*Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution*

Based on the excerpt and your knowledge of U.S. history, which examples demonstrate individual rights guaranteed by the Fifth Amendment?

Select **TWO** correct answers.

- Selling property to the government for inclusion in a national park
- Preventing judges from imposing life sentences in murder cases
- Voting for a political candidate who has served time in prison
- Refusing to testify at a trial for fear of getting into legal trouble
- Claiming protection from being charged multiple times for the same crime

15 What were **TWO** significant ways in which the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 affected the future development of the United States?

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

16 Explain **TWO** effects that the cotton gin had on the economic development of the United States.

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

**STAAR
GRADE 8
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