



Grade 8 Social Studies

Short Constructed-Response Scoring Guide

Spring 2024

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

The Eighth Amendment focuses on bail and punishments in the judicial system.

What does the Eighth Amendment say about bail **AND** punishments?

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

Item-Specific Rubric

Score: 2

Score 2 points for correct answers that include reference to both bail and punishments:

Bail:

- Bail must be relevant to the severity of the crime committed.
- Bail has to be relevant to the history of the accused.

Punishments:

- Mistreatment or torture, including excessive physical or mental punishments of individuals in jail, is prohibited.
- Punishment for crimes must be equivalent to the severity of the crimes.
- Fines must be fair and cannot lead to the loss of personal property without due process.

Score: 1

The response only summarizes language on either bail or punishments, but not both.

Score: 0

The response is incorrect or irrelevant.

Sample Student Responses

Score Point 0

Response 1

WELL it says that bail can only come from someone that your related to.

This response does not correctly reference language regarding bail or punishment that is contained in the Eighth Amendment.

Response 2

The eaight admadment talk about people rights you may not look or search or punish people relegion.

While the response is generally correct that the Eighth Amendment deals with rights, the rights cited (“you may not look or search or punish people relegion”) are contained in the First and Fourth Amendments, not the Eighth.

Response 3

It has to be done by a trial by judy

The response attempts to identify “trial by jury.” That right is covered by the Sixth and Seventh Amendments, not the Eighth.

Response 4

it alks about how peple should get punished and how you can bail them out with a surrtent amout of money

The response is too generalized and lacks specific detail as to what the amendment says about bail and punishments. This is a type of response that could be given just by reading the prompt.

Score Point 1

Response 1

The eight amendment states that no matter the crime no cruel or unusual punishment is allowed

The response earns partial credit. The student response accurately describes the Eighth Amendment’s view on punishment (“no matter the crime no cruel or unusual punishment is allowed”) but omits any discussion of what the amendment says about bail.

Response 2

Its about no bailing or no cruel punishments

The response receives partial credit for accurately describing the Eighth Amendment’s treatment of punishment (“no cruel punishments”). The description for bail (“no bailing”) is inaccurate.

Response 3

that the punishment be not so cruel as before and that accused of a crime they did not commit can be bailed out

The response receives partial credit for accurately describing the punishment clause of the Eighth Amendment (“that the punishment be not so cruel as before”), but the discussion of the bail clause (“that accused of a crime they did not commit can be bailed out”) is too vague and inaccurate to be creditable.

Response 4

The Eighth Amendment prohibits cruel or unjust punishments given to criminals, and guarantees some the write to purchase bail instead of getting jailed while their case is in court.

The response receives partial credit for accurately describing the punishment clause of the Eighth Amendment (“The Eighth Amendment prohibits cruel or unjust punishments given to criminals”). The explanation of the bail clause is not creditable, because the key issue that bail must be relevant to the severity of the crime or history of the accused is not mentioned.

Score Point 2

Response 1

It says that the bail can not be crazy high for whatever they did, and punishments cant be over the top.

The response receives full credit by accurately describing both the bail and punishment clauses of the Eighth Amendment. Note that appropriate synonyms for “excessive” and “cruel and unusual,” in this case “crazy high” and “over the top,” can be creditable.

Response 2

You can't put out an exesive bail and you can't have harsh punishments.

This response accurately describes both the bail clause and the punishment clause of the Eighth Amendment for full credit. The use of the word “harsh” is an acceptable substitute for “cruel and unusual.”

Response 3

No cruel and unusual pnishments. No excessive bail.

This response directly quotes the wording of the Eighth Amendment clauses dealing with bail and punishment for full credit.

Response 4

It says that it cannot be excessive bail, suggesting that it cannot be 1 million dollars for a speeding ticket. And there are no cruel and unusual punishments, which means they cannot beat you for robbing a house.

This response not only accurately describes both the bail and punishment clauses of the Eighth Amendment but goes further by providing a hypothetical example of each clause in practice (“suggesting that it cannot be 1 million dollars for a speeding ticket . . . which means they cannot beat you for robbing a house”).

Grade 8 Social Studies Short Constructed Response

Prompt

What were **TWO** ways that the invention of the steamboat affected the development of the United States?

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

Item-Specific Rubric

Score: 2

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

- It became faster and easier to move goods and people.
- The use of the steamboat encouraged westward expansion and fulfilling the belief in Manifest Destiny.
- The steamboat network on rivers connected with the canal system to allow goods to move quickly by water.
- Travel by steamboat reduced the price of goods because of the ease of movement.
- Steam power allowed boats to move easily either with or against the current of river systems.
- The use of the steamboat allowed for the growth of cities and towns along rivers and canals.
- The use of the steamboat spurred the growth of the agriculture industry (also included with westward expansion) and the distribution of harvests.

Score: 1

The response describes only one effect of the steamboat.

Score: 0

The response is incorrect or irrelevant.

Sample Student Responses

Score Point 0

Response 1

Two ways the steamboat affected the united states was pollution, as well as it couldve killed fish which could have made people starve in the area of the steam boat.

The response is irrelevant in that the effects cited (“pollution . . . couldve killed fish which could have made people starve”) do not correspond with acceptable answers contained in the rubric.

Response 2

it affected it by, the lack of transporting goods

The response is not creditable in that the effect cited (“the lack of transporting goods”) is incorrect. Although we might speculate that the student meant to state something to the effect that steamboats transport goods, that is not what the student wrote. We are obliged to provide a score based on what the student provided, not on what we believe the student meant to provide.

Response 3

the first reason would because of the economy and the second reason because it took power

The first effect cited (“because of the economy”) is too vague to earn credit, while the second impact (“because it took power”) is also not creditable in that it is irrelevant to the question posed by the prompt.

Response 4

Its a good invention for the United Sates because it made people to go out in the world and explore. Also more inventions in the United States are being created everywhere. It makes the United States to be so creative.

The response is not creditable in that it fails to cite any of the acceptable effects of the steamboat on U.S. history. The reference to exploration (“because it made people to go out in the world and explore”) may be an attempt to relate to the impact of encouraging westward expansion, but the connection is too broad and vague to receive credit. Steamboats were used primarily on known and previously charted waterways, not as vehicles of exploration.

Score Point 1

Response 1

The steamboat one of the best inventions made in the 1900s it would help get crops, cotten, paper, and many more to take from place to place. The steamboat used coal to run off of and they would use a lot because at the same time they made the steam locomotive.

The response receives partial credit for citing the way steamboats made the transportation of goods easier (“it would help get crops, cotten, paper, and many more to take from place to place”). The remainder of the response (“The steamboat used coal to run off of”) is irrelevant to the prompt. The prompt asks what the impact of the steamboat was, not how it worked.

Response 2

The steam boats can transport goods and it was faster transpotation

The response receives partial credit for accurately addressing the effect outlined in the first bullet point of the rubric concerning the transportation of goods and people being faster and easier (“The steam boats can transport goods and it was faster transpotation”).

Response 3

It helped settlers travel faster and it required less work.

The response receives partial credit for accurately addressing the effect outlined in the first bullet point of the rubric concerning the transportation of goods and people being faster and easier (“It helped settlers travel faster”).

Response 4

Two ways the invention of the steamboat affected the development of the United States are by allowing goods to be transferred quicker and allowing explorers to discover new colonies and lands faster.

The response receives partial credit for accurately addressing the effect outlined in the first bullet point of the rubric concerning the transportation of goods and people being faster and easier (“by allowing goods to be transferred quicker”). The attempt to describe a second effect (“allowing explorers to discover new colonies and lands faster”) is not creditable. Steamboats did not play a significant role in exploration.

Score Point 2

Response 1

Faster diliver time and the prise os wheat whent down

The response briefly but accurately addresses the first and fourth bullet points contained in the rubric dealing with speed of transportation (“faster diliver time”) and reduction in price of goods (“the prise os wheat whent down”).

Response 2

- Allowed for faster trade and travel
- Allowed boats to travel up rivers without using wind

The response accurately addresses the first and fifth bullet points contained in the rubric dealing with speed of transportation (“Allowed for faster trade and travel”) and navigation of rivers (“Allowed boats to travel up rivers without using wind”).

Response 3

It made boats able to go against strong water and move faster to deliver goods. Also with the invention of the steamboat, it spread industrialization to many parts of the U.S.

The response receives full credit by accurately addressing the first and fifth bullet points contained in the rubric dealing with navigation of rivers (“It made boats able to go against strong water”) and speed of transportation (“move faster to deliver goods”). Additionally, the mention of industrialization (“it spread industrialization to many parts of the U.S.”) can be credited as addressing bullet point six concerning the growth of towns and cities. The growth of cities was inextricably linked to industrialization.

Response 4

The steam boat made transportation of goods and people faster and more efficient because of the improved speed of the boat, and its carrying capacity. The steam boat also played a key role in the creation of canals across America, making it possible for steamboats to float along man-made bodies of water as shortcuts, rather than following a river several miles off course.

This thorough response accurately addresses the first and third bullet points contained in the rubric dealing with speed of transportation (“The steam boat made the transportation of goods and people faster and more efficient because of the improved speed of the boat, and its carrying capacity”) and connection of canals (“The steam boat also played a key role in the creation of canals across America, making it possible for steamboats to float along man-made bodies of water as shortcuts, rather than following a river several miles off course”).