



2019 STAAR Grade 8 Social Studies Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
2	Option G is correct	Different types of climate and soil led to the development of different economies in the British colonies. A warm, humid climate and fertile soil led the southern colonies to develop an economy based on plantation agriculture. A cold climate and rocky soil made farming difficult and influenced the New England colonies to develop an economy based on fishing and trade. For this item the student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and interpret information from a table.
	Option F is incorrect	Different types of climates and soil led primarily to the development of different economies in the British colonies, not to the founding of trade and vocational schools in some colonies.
	Option H is incorrect	Different types of climates and soil led primarily to the development of different economies in the British colonies, not to the establishment of import taxes in some colonies.
	Option J is incorrect	Different types of climates and soil led primarily to the development of different economies in the British colonies, not to the pattern of religious differences in the two regions.

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Item#	Rationale	
3	Option C is correct	The Fifteenth Amendment granted African American men the right to vote. However, southern states used tactics such as literacy tests and poll taxes to prevent African American men from voting.
	Option A is incorrect	The Fifteenth Amendment granted African American men the right to vote. Southern states opposed the amendment and limited voting by using tactics such as literacy tests and poll taxes. The Fifteenth Amendment was not focused on public education.
	Option B is incorrect	The Fifteenth Amendment granted African American men the right to vote. Southern states opposed the amendment and limited voting by using tactics such as literacy tests and poll taxes. The Fifteenth Amendment was not focused on the Freedmen's Bureau.
	Option D is incorrect	The Fifteenth Amendment granted African American men the right to vote. Southern states opposed the amendment and limited voting by using tactics such as literacy tests and poll taxes. The Fifteenth Amendment was not focused on tenant farming or sharecropping.

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Item#	Rationale	
4	Option J is correct	

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Item#	Rationale	
5	Option D is correct	The Declaration of Rights and Sentiments demanded the right to vote for women. This claim was very controversial and would not be achieved nationally until the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified in 1920. For this item the student applies critical-thinking skills to draw inferences and conclusions.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the Declaration of Rights and Sentiments noted that those job opportunities that were available to women did not pay a lot of money, the issue of paying women the same amount as men for the same type of work was not raised.
	Option B is incorrect	The Declaration of Rights and Sentiments noted that some women did not have full property rights, but this was not a controversial claim. Women y .6 (4649.2 (Rights) 649.2 (and) 649.2

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Item#	Rationale	
6	Option H is correct	Federalists argued in favor of ratifying the U.S. Constitution because the proposed document increased the power of the national government. Anti-Federalists argued against ratification because the proposed constitution lacked a bill of rights. For this item the student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and interpret information from charts.
	Option F is incorrect	The proposed constitution strengthened national, not state, authority. The central bank would not become a political issue until after the constitution was ratified.
	Option G is incorrect	The proposed constitution gave the president the power to negotiate treaties and the Senate the power to approve or reject treaties. It did not prevent becoming involved with the issues of foreign countries. The proposed constitution expanded rather than restricted the power of the legislative branch.
	Option J is incorrect	The proposed constitution did not expand the power of local governments. The proposed document expanded rather than limited the authority of the executive branch.

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Item#	Rationale	
7	Option D is correct	The primary reason the French colonized North America was to profit from fur trading in the Great Lakes region. For this item the student applies critical-thinking skills to identify cause-and-effect relationships.
	Option A is incorrect	The French did not have a significant presence in the Southwest during the seventeenth century. The Spanish colonized this region and were interested in converting American Indians to Catholicism.
	Option B is incorrect	The French did not have a significant presence in the Chesapeake Bay Area during the seventeenth century. The British colonized this region to grow cash crops.
	Option C is incorrect	The French did not have a significant presence in the area of present-day Mexico during the seventeenth century. The Spanish colonized this region to mine for silver and gold.

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Item#	Rationale	
8	Option J is correct	The letter mentions employing girls to tend machines in the weaving and dressing rooms and in the carding and spinning rooms. These factory jobs were the result of new production methods of industrialization. For this item the student applies critical-thinking skills to draw inferences and conclusions.
	Option F is incorrect	Congress did not pass strict federal labor laws until the early 1900s.
	Option G is incorrect	This letter was written in 1847 to try to recruit girls to work in factories. The abolition of the slave trade was not related to girls working in textile factories.
	Option H is incorrect	The cottage industry system refers to people making goods in their homes. The economic growth described in this letter was due to production moving into factories. This caused the cottage industry system to decline, not expand.



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10	Option F is correct	The principle of republicanism refers to a government with representatives elected to carry out the will of the people. Voters elect members of Congress to represent them.
	Option G is incorrect	The establishment of courts to interpret laws and government actions applies to the judicial branch and refers to the principles of separation of powers and checks and balances, not republicanism.
	Option H is incorrect	The division of power between federal and state governments is the principle of federalism, not republicanism.
	Option J is incorrect	The power of a court to declare a law unconstitutional is the principle of judicial review, not republicanism.

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Item#	Rationale	
11	Option D is correct	The author refers to Article V, which describes how to amend or change the Constitution. The student applies critical-thinking skills to find the main idea and summarize.
	Option A is incorrect	The author is expressing her opinion about amending the Constitution, not recalling or removing members of Congress from office.
	Option B is incorrect	The author is expressing her opinion about amending the Constitution, not impeaching the president.
	Option C is incorrect	The author is expressing her opinion about amending the Constitution, not disobeying the Supreme Court.

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Item#	Rationale	
12	Option H is correct	One of the problems faced by leaders of the United States in the late 1700s and early 1800s was building a military. The United States built up its military to protect settlers on the frontier and to help defend merchant ships against Barbary pirates. The United States also needed to protect sailors from being forced to serve in the British Navy, a practice known as impressment. For this item the student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and interpret information from a diagram.
	Option F is incorrect	The United States did not build up the military to fulfill the requirements of an alliance with France.
	Option G is incorrect	The United States did not build up the military in order to conquer territories in South America.
	Option J is incorrect	The United States did not build up the national military because state militias had been abolished.

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Item#	Rationale	
13	Option D is correct	Jefferson disagreed with the Supreme Court’s power of judicial review. He was concerned that if judges had the right to decide the constitutionality of actions by Congress and the president, this power would make the judicial branch despotic or tyrannical. Jefferson did not think the judicial branch should have that much power. For this item the student applies critical-thinking skills to draw inferences and conclusions.
	Option A is incorrect	Jefferson was not writing about the congressional power of impeachment.
	Option B is incorrect	Jefferson was not writing about the presidential power to veto bills.
	Option C is incorrect	Jefferson was not writing about the states’ power to amend the Constitution.

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Item#	Rationale	
15	Option C is correct	Naturalization is a legal process through which a person can become a U.S. citizen. One part of this official path to U.S. citizenship is passing a U.S. civics exam.
	Option A is incorrect	Attending college in the United States is not part of the official path to U.S. citizenship through naturalization.
	Option B is incorrect	Being employed in the United States is not part of the official path to U.S. citizenship through naturalization.
	Option D is incorrect	Working for the U.S. government is not part of the official path to U.S. citizenship through naturalization.

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Item#	Rationale	
16	Option F is correct	The excerpt supports the inference that Know-Nothing Party members blamed Irish immigrants for taking away jobs from American citizens. The Know-Nothing Party was a political party during the late 1840s and early 1850s. To join the Know-Nothing Party, a person had to agree to elect only “native born citizens of America” to public office. This question for admittance shows the party’s opposition to immigrants. For this item the student applies critical-thinking skills to draw inferences.
	Option G is incorrect	The excerpt refers to electing native born citizens. It does not support an inference about the Know-Nothing Party encouraging western migration.
	Option H is incorrect	The excerpt refers to electing native born citizens. It does not support an inference about the Know-Nothing Party opposing the Fugitive Slave Act in the Northeast.
	Option J is incorrect	The excerpt refers to electing native born citizens. It does not support an inference about the Know-Nothing Party favoring universal suffrage.

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Item#	Rationale	
17	Option B is correct	The diagram shows that the poem was originally written to commemorate the U.S. victory at Fort McHenry during the War of 1812. The poem was set to music and eventually adopted as the national anthem in 1931. Singing “The Star-Spangled Banner” serves as a patriotic reminder of America’s past. For this item the student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and interpret information from a diagram.
	Option A is incorrect	The song was not inspired by religious revivals. The song celebrates an American victory in the War of 1812.
	Option C is incorrect	The song is not about protecting the rights of people. The song celebrates an American victory in the War of 1812.
	Option D is incorrect	The song was not a theme for civil rights activism. The song celebrates an American victory in the War of 1812.

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Item#	Rationale	
19	Option B is correct	The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Cherokee Nation and against the state of Georgia. Chief Justice John Marshall stated that the Cherokee Nation remained a separate, sovereign nation with title to its national territory. Only the federal government had the power to regulate or deal with American Indian nations. The state ignored the ruling and gave Cherokee lands to white settlers.
	Option A is incorrect	The Supreme Court ruled that the Cherokee Indians were considered a nation. It did not give Georgia authority over relations with American Indians. The court instead ruled that the federal government

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Item#	Rationale	
21	Option A is correct	The excerpt describes the Second Great Awakening, a Protestant religious revival during the early 1800s in the United States. The period was characterized by people finding new ways to express their devotion to God. Some Protestants turned to social reform and became active in the temperance and abolitionist movements. Other Protestants started new churches. Protestant ministers spread their message through camp meetings and religious gatherings. For this item the student applies critical-thinking skills to categorize and draw a conclusion.
	Option B is incorrect	The excerpt is describing the Second Great Awakening, not the temperance movement to restrict alcohol.
	Option C is incorrect	The excerpt is describing the Second Great Awakening, not the Era of Good Feelings after the War of 1812.
	Option D is incorrect	The excerpt is describing the Second Great Awakening, not the abolitionist movement to end slavery.

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Item#	Rationale	
22	Option G is correct	In the early 1800s the demand for cotton from textile mills and the widespread use of the cotton gin led to expanded cotton production. Expanded cotton production increased the need for agricultural labor. Planters chose to fulfill that need with slave labor.
	Option F is incorrect	Indentured servitude was a labor practice that was common in the colonial period. Men and women agreed to work for a certain number of years in exchange for transportation to the colonies, as well as food, clothing, and shelter once they arrived. Indentured servitude in the United States was not banned until the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865.
	Option H is incorrect	Slavery did not become a widespread practice because improved transportation systems made it easier for workers to migrate.
	Option J is incorrect	Slavery did not become a widespread practice to meet the need for skilled workers due to advancements in technology.

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Item#	Rationale	
23	Option B is correct	President Lincoln gave this address in March of 1865, near the end of the Civil War. Lincoln’s statement demonstrated compassion because he was asking the citizens of the United States to show kindness and concern for those who had suffered during the war. Lincoln’s goal was to bring the nation together again and begin the healing process. For this item the student applies critical-thinking skills to draw inferences and conclusions.
	Option A is incorrect	President Lincoln asked citizens to show kindness and concern for those who had suffered during the Civil War. He wanted to bring the nation together again and begin the healing process. Although he mentions all nations, this address is about the United States recovering from war, not inspiring the United States to be a model of democracy.
	Option C is incorrect	President Lincoln asked citizens to show kindness and concern for those who had suffered during the Civil War. He wanted to bring the nation together again and begin the healing process. Lincoln gave this address in March of 1865, near the end of the Civil War. The Union had basically won the war at this point and there was no need for Lincoln to think that the Union should surrender.
	Option D is incorrect	President Lincoln asked citizens to show kindness and concern for those who had suffered during the Civil War. He wanted to bring the nation together again and begin the healing process. His focus was on healing the Union, not being confident about how history would judge his actions.

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Item#	Rationale	
24	Option H is correct	Colonists believed that as Englishmen they had the right to political representation in Parliament. However, colonists could not elect representatives to serve in Parliament. They adopted the Virginia Stamp Act Resolutions to express their opposition to a policy of taxation without representation. For this item the student applies critical-thinking skills to identify cause-and-effect relationships and draw conclusions.
	Option F is incorrect	This resolution was adopted years before the Boston Tea Party occurred in 1773.
	Option G is incorrect	This resolution was adopted years before the Boston Massacre occurred in 1770.
	Option J is incorrect	This resolution was adopted to oppose the policy of taxation without representation. It was not adopted because colonists wanted to expand the powers of royal governors.

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Item#	Rationale	
25	Option A is correct	The Northwest Ordinance established the procedure for admitting new states to the Union. A territory could apply for statehood after the population reached sixty thousand free settlers.
	Option B is incorrect	The Northwest Ordinance forbade slavery in the Northwest Territory. It did not establish a popular vote on slavery as a requirement for statehood.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the Northwest Ordinance encouraged education, it did not specify the establishment of one public school per district as a requirement for statehood.
	Option D is incorrect	The Northwest Ordinance specified the appointment of a territorial governor by Congress, not the president, when a territory was formed.

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Item#	Rationale	
26	Option G is correct	One principle of free enterprise is that the government should play a limited role in the economy. The second person who says, "The government should do very little to control trade," is supporting this principle. For this item the student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and interpret information from a visual illustration.
	Option F is incorrect	Tariffs are taxes placed on imported goods. The idea that the government should enforce tariffs goes against the free enterprise principle of limited government involvement in the economy.
	Option H is incorrect	The idea that the government should tax wealthy businesses goes against the free enterprise principle of limited government involvement in the economy.
	Option J is incorrect	The idea that the government is responsible for helping all businesses goes against the free enterprise principle of limited government involvement in the economy.

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Item#	Rationale	
27	Option A is correct	The religious freedoms guaranteed in the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights contributed to the founding of new religious groups in the United States.
	Option B is incorrect	The expansion of individual voting rights did not contribute to the founding of new religious groups in the United States.
	Option C is incorrect	The growth of abolitionist movements did not contribute to the founding of new religious groups in the United States.
	Option D is incorrect	Transcendentalists did not support organized religion. Their beliefs did not contribute to the founding of new religious groups in the United States.

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Item#	Rationale	
28	Option J is correct	The Nullification Crisis of 1832 involved a confrontation between South Carolina and the federal government. South Carolina attempted to declare federal tariffs null and void within the state of South Carolina.
	Option F is incorrect	The issue that led to the Nullification Crisis was whether states could declare a federal law unconstitutional, not whether whether courts have the power to rule on the constitutionality of state laws.
	Option G is incorrect	The issue that led to the Nullification Crisis was whether states could declare a federal law unconstitutional, not whether the president has the authority to use the military to enforce the law.
	Option H is incorrect	The issue that led to the Nullification Crisis was whether states could declare a federal law unconstitutional, not whether the federal government could enact laws regarding slavery.

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Item#	Rationale	
29	Option D is correct	Brook Farm, the Amana Colonies, and Shaker communities were all devoted to creating utopian or ideal societies in the late 1700s and 1800s. For this item the student applies critical-thinking skills to compare and make generalizations.
	Option A is incorrect	Brook Farm, the Amana Colonies, and Shaker communities centered around agriculture and living together cooperatively. Improving conditions in factories was not what these three communities had in common.
	Option B is incorrect	The Shakers have records of fugitive slaves visiting the communities, but the purpose of the community was not to be a refuge for fugitive slaves. Being a refuge for escaped slaves was not what these three communities had in common.
	Option C is incorrect	While the Shaker community practiced gender equality within the community, the community did not actively work together to expand suffrage. Working to expand suffrage was not what these three communities had in common.

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Item#	Rationale	
30	Option G is correct	The Sixth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution addressed the denial of trial by jury. It guarantees the accused "the right to a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury."
	Option F is incorrect	The Sixth Amendment addressed the rights of the accused in criminal prosecutions, not the disbanding of legislatures.
	Option H is incorrect	The Sixth Amendment addressed the rights of the accused in criminal prosecutions, not the blocking of judiciary powers.
	Option J is incorrect	The Sixth Amendment addressed the rights of the accused in criminal prosecutions, not the quartering of troops.

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Item#	Rationale	
32	Option J is correct	This statement, which became part of the Monroe Doctrine, declared the Western Hemisphere part of the United States' sphere of influence. The statement was intended to prevent European intervention in countries in North and South America. For this item the student applies critical-thinking skills to identify cause-and-effect relationships and summarize.
	Option F is incorrect	President Monroe was ordering European nations to stay out of the Americas. This statement would most likely make alliances with European powers weaker rather than stronger.
	Option G is incorrect	President Monroe was ordering European nations to stay out of the Americas. He was not commenting on European competition for natural resources.
	Option H is incorrect	President Monroe was ordering European nations to stay out of the Americas. He was not talking about expanding the U.S. military or supporting war to deal with European expansionism.

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Item#	Rationale	
33	Option D is correct	Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton disagreed about several key issues. Those disagreements led to the formation of the first political parties in the United States. Thomas Jefferson led the Democratic-Republicans, while Alexander Hamilton led the Federalists. For this item the student applies

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34	Option F is correct	The illustration shows three people with different opinions about a candidate running for governor. This type of interaction between people of different opinions is important in U.S. society. The right to free speech allows for different opinions and new ideas to be shared. This exchange of opinions and ideas helps shape our government. For this item students apply critical-thinking skills to organize and interpret information from a visual illustration.
	Option G is incorrect	The Fifth Amendment guarantees due process in a court of law but is not shown in this illustration.
	Option H is incorrect	The Fourteenth Amendment guarantee of equal protection before the law does not explain why interaction between people with different opinions is important in U.S. society.
	Option J is incorrect	The illustration demonstrates how people with different opinions can improve government by expressing their views. The illustration does not show the importance of a free press or government responding to public opinion.

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Item#	Rationale	
35	Option C is correct	The British defeat at the Battle of Yorktown in 1781 led to peace talks. Great Britain and the United States signed the Treaty of Paris, ending the American Revolutionary War in 1783.
	Option A is incorrect	France recognized American independence and declared war against Great Britain after the Battle of Saratoga in 1777, not the Battle of Yorktown.
	Option B is incorrect	The Articles of Confederation was the first constitution of the United States. The Second Continental Congress agreed to the Articles of Confederation in 1777, years before the Battle of Yorktown.
	Option D is incorrect	

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Item#	Rationale	
36	Option G is correct	Money available to invest in industry, new means of transport such as steamboats, and a large labor force that included immigrants contributed most to the rapid industrialization and urbanization of the United States. For this item the student applies critical thinking skills to identify cause-and-effect relationships.
	Option F is incorrect	Fertile soil, mild climate, and unskilled labor were not the three factors that contributed most to the industrialization and urbanization of the United States.
		Money and unskilled labor were not the three factors that contributed most to the industrialization and urbanization of the United States.

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Item#	Rationale	
37	Option A is correct	Thomas Hooker and Roger Williams left Massachusetts and established new colonies. Thomas Hooker established Connecticut, and Roger Williams established Rhode Island.
	Option B is incorrect	Thomas Hooker and Roger Williams did not found new political parties in the Massachusetts Bay area as a result of their disagreements with the religious leaders of the colony. Instead they left Massachusetts and established new colonies.
	Option C is incorrect	Thomas Hooker and Roger Williams did not petition Parliament to revise the Massachusetts Bay charter as a result of their disagreements with the religious leaders of the colony. Instead they left Massachusetts and established new colonies.
	Option D is incorrect	Thomas Hooker and Roger Williams did not explore the Mississippi Valley as a result of their disagreements with the religious leaders of the colony. Instead they left Massachusetts and established new colonies.

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Item#	Rationale	
38	Option J is correct	The 1828 presidential campaign featured both the Democratic and the National Republican parties appealing directly to the voters for support. Both parties organized rallies, parades, and other public events to convince voters to support their candidate. This direct appeal to voters resulted in increased levels of voter participation in the 1828 election and in the elections that followed.
	Option F is incorrect	President Andrew Jackson opposed the Bank of the United States and vetoed the charter in 1832.
	Option G is incorrect	President Andrew Jackson used the spoils system to reward his political supporters with jobs in the government. He did not eliminate the spoils system.
	Option H is incorrect	Ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution occurred during Reconstruction, decades after Andrew Jackson's presidency.

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Item#	Rationale	
39	Option C is correct	The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 required citizens to help southern slave owners reclaim slaves who ran away to free states. This law angered abolitionists and moderates in the North and led to increased tensions between northern and southern states over the issue of slavery.
	Option A is incorrect	The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 contributed to the formation of the Republican Party in 1854. It did not contribute to a loss of influence for the party.
	Option B is incorrect	The Missouri Compromise of 1820 was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court case <i>Dred Scott v. Sandford</i> , not by the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.
	Option D is incorrect	The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 applied to slaves and did not result in the forceful relocation of immigrants.



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Item#	Rationale	
42	Option H is correct	In the early 1800s Great Britain and France were at war with one another. The United States tried to remain neutral, but Great Britain and France violated American neutrality. In response the U.S. government imposed an embargo in 1807 that prohibited U.S. ships from trading in all foreign ports. This embargo led to a decline in foreign trade that damaged New England's commercial shipping industry. For this item the student applies critical-thinking skills to categorize and identify cause-and-effect relationships.
	Option F is incorrect	The embargo of 1807 caused the prices for manufactured goods in New England to increase, not decrease, as manufactured goods that were imported became scarce.
	Option G is incorrect	The embargo of 1807 led consumers to buy local goods instead of exports. U.S. manufacturing increased as people and factories began to produce more goods. Factories in New England expanded rather than closed.
	Option J is incorrect	The embargo of 1807 affected the commercial shipping industry but it did not reduce consumer demand for fish.

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Item#	Rationale	
43	Option A is correct	John Adams was the second president of the United States. He defended British soldiers at the Boston

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Item#	Rationale	
44	Option H is correct	The 1873 image illustrates Manifest Destiny, the idea that the United States and its institutions should expand westward to the Pacific. Figures are shown moving from East to West. The central figure holding a book in one hand and stringing telegraph wire in the other represents progress. Expansion and progress are also indicated by the changes in transportation from foot travel, to covered wagon, then stage coach, and finally railroad. For this item the student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and interpret information from an image.
	Option F is incorrect	The image illustrates Manifest Destiny as indicated by westward migration, the changes in transportation, and the caption "American Progress." The image is not about early Spanish exploration.
	Option G is incorrect	The image illustrates Manifest Destiny as indicated by westward migration, the changes in transportation, and the caption "American Progress." The image is not about the Civil War.
	Option J is incorrect	The image illustrates Manifest Destiny as indicated by westward migration, the changes in transportation, and the caption "American Progress." The image is not about European immigration.