



# Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure<sup>®</sup>

# TEST INFORMATION BOOKLET

**06 History**

MA-SG-FLD006-04

*Massachusetts Department of Education*

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## **Test Information Booklet Order Form**

*History*  
*(Field 06)*

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**Test Overview Chart**

**Test Objectives**

**Sample Test Items**

**Answer Key and Sample Response**



***Test Overview Chart:  
History (06)***

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Subareas	Approximate Number of Multiple-Choice Items	Number of Open-Response Items
I. U.S. History	37–39	
II. World History	30–32	
III. Geography, Government, and Economics	30–32	
IV. Integration of Knowledge and Understanding		2

The History test is designed to assess the candidate's knowledge of the subject matter required for the Massachusetts History license. This subject matter knowledge is delineated in the Massachusetts Department of Education's *Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval* (7/2001), 603 CMR 7.06 "Subject Matter Knowledge Requirements for Teachers."

The History test assesses the candidate's proficiency and depth of understanding of the subject at the level required for a baccalaureate major, according to Massachusetts standards. Candidates are typically nearing completion of or have completed their undergraduate work when they take the test.

The multiple-choice items on the test cover the subareas as indicated in the chart above. The open-response items may relate to topics covered in any of the subareas and will typically require breadth of understanding of the history field and the ability to relate concepts from different aspects of the field. Responses to the open-response items are expected to be appropriate and accurate in the application of subject matter knowledge, to provide high-quality and relevant supporting evidence, and to demonstrate a soundness of argument and understanding of the history field.

***Test Objectives:***  
***History (06)***

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**Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure™**

**FIELD 06: HISTORY  
TEST OBJECTIVES**

**Subarea**

	<b>Multiple-Choice</b>	<b>Range of Objectives</b>	<b>Approximate Test Weighting</b>
I.	U.S. History	01–06	30%
II.	World History	07–13	25%
III.	Geography, Government, and Economics	14–17	<u>25%</u>
			<b>80%</b>
	<b>Open-Response</b>		
IV.	Integration of Knowledge and Understanding	18	<b>20%</b>

**SUBAREAS:**

U.S. HISTORY

WORLD HISTORY

GEOGRAPHY, GOVERNMENT, AND ECONOMICS

INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

**U.S. HISTORY [30%]**

**0001 Understand the characteristics of indigenous societies of North America, the causes and course of European exploration, and the development of colonial societies to 1760.**

For example: political, economic, and cultural features of Native American societies; European exploration, immigration, and settlement of North America, including Spanish, English, and French colonization; coexistence and conflict between Native Americans and Europeans (e.g., exchange of foods and technology, religious conversions, alliances and wars); characteristics of and regional divisions among England's North American colonies (e.g., Mayflower Compact, Massachusetts town government, plantation agriculture, emergence of slavery); political and economic relations between the colonies and Europe; ethnic and religious diversity of American colonists; intellectual heritage of Anglo-American colonials (e.g., Protestantism, principle of community responsibility, importance of education); and growing social and political divergence of the colonies from England (e.g., relations between colonial assemblies and royal governors, social mobility, resistance to trade and navigation laws).

**0002 Understand the causes and key events of the Revolutionary War and major political, economic, social, and cultural developments that shaped the course of U.S. history through the Jacksonian era.**

For example: events, interests, and issues behind the American Revolution (e.g., Seven Years' War, new British imperial policy, "no taxation without representation," westward movement, Stamp Act, Boston Massacre); conflicts between British and American concepts of sovereignty; significant leaders, events, and turning points of the Revolutionary War; strengths and weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation; the debate over the ratification of the U.S. Constitution; major political and economic developments of the early Republic (e.g., conflicting views of Hamilton and Jefferson, emergence of political parties, evolution of the Supreme Court, War of 1812, early industrialization in New England, Monroe Doctrine); rise of popular politics during the Jacksonian era; and the origins and accomplishments of antebellum reform movements (e.g., Horace Mann, Dorothea Dix, Seneca Falls Convention).

**0003 Understand the significance of historical events related to westward expansion, the Civil War, and Reconstruction.**

For example: key events and issues related to westward expansion (e.g., the impact of geography on westward migration, the Louisiana Purchase, the concept of Manifest Destiny, major territorial acquisitions, Indian removal, the Mexican War); differences between the northern and southern economic systems and ways of life (e.g., slavery, patterns of frontier life, urbanization and industrialization); sources of sectional conflict (e.g., Missouri Compromise, rise of abolitionism); issues and events leading to the secession crisis (e.g., Compromise of 1850, Kansas-Nebraska Act, Dred Scott decision, John Brown, election of Abraham Lincoln); significant leaders, strategies, battles, and turning points of the Civil War; presidential and congressional Reconstruction, its accomplishments and failures; and the Compromise of 1877.

**0004 Understand the major political, economic, social, and cultural developments that shaped the course of U.S. history from 1877 to 1920.**

For example: continued westward expansion; causes and consequences of industrialization (e.g., important scientific discoveries and technological innovations, mechanization of agriculture, spread of the railroad network, rise of the oil, steel, and electrical industries); business and labor in an era of industrial expansion (e.g., vertical and horizontal combinations, industrial entrepreneurs, Gospel of Wealth, rise of the labor movement); immigration, internal migration, and urbanization (e.g., growth of urban ethnic communities, resurgence of nativist hostility, the phenomenon of assimilation, northward migration of southern African Americans, movement from rural to urban areas, urban politics and social problems); contributions of immigrant groups; Populism and the crises of American agriculture; the Progressive movement (e.g., state and local reforms, reform initiatives of the Roosevelt and Wilson administrations, campaign for women's rights and suffrage); the movement for African American civil rights (e.g., W. E. B. Du Bois, the NAACP, Booker T. Washington); and major developments in the arts and literature.

**0005 Understand the significant historical events and developments related to the emergence of the United States as a world power and the effects of major conflicts on the United States from 1898 to the present.**

For example: key events and issues related to U.S. expansionism (e.g., Spanish-American War, U.S. imperialism, construction of the Panama Canal, the Open Door policy); causes and consequences of U.S. intervention in World War I (e.g., German submarine warfare, isolationist and internationalist sentiment, the debate over the League of Nations); causes, key events, and consequences of U.S. participation in World War II (e.g., totalitarianism, attack on Pearl Harbor, internment policies, mobilization of American society, U.S. victory at Midway, D-Day, decision to use the atomic bomb, Yalta and Potsdam conferences, effect of World War II on U.S. society); U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War and the impact of the Cold War on U.S. politics (e.g., containment policy, NATO, domestic anti-communism, U.S. intervention in Korea and Vietnam, the Cuban missile crisis); and the end of the Cold War and the emergence of new foreign policy challenges (e.g., the Middle East, the Balkans, international terrorism).

**0006 Understand the major political, economic, social, and cultural developments that have shaped the course of U.S. history from 1920 to the present.**

For example: major cultural, social, and economic developments of the 1920s (e.g., the Jazz Age, the Harlem Renaissance, motion pictures, sports, economic prosperity, technological innovation and the spread of consumerism, resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan, immigration restriction, Marcus Garvey and black separatism); Prohibition; causes and consequences of the Great Depression; Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal (e.g., Securities and Exchange Commission, Social Security Act, Wagner Act, Works Progress Administration); the growth and decline of organized labor; major postwar developments (e.g., economic growth, suburbanization, liberal anticommunism and McCarthyism); the struggle for African American civil rights; John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and the revival of political liberalism; the Vietnam War and American society; the conservative movement and the Reagan Revolution; the growth of Latino influence in American society; and major developments in science, medicine, and mass culture.

**WORLD HISTORY [25%]**

**0007 Understand human beginnings, the characteristics of early human societies, and the roots of Western civilization (prehistory to A.D. 500).**

For example: human origins and early societies (e.g., African origins, the Neolithic agricultural revolution, the first urban societies, the domestication of animals, river valley civilizations); political, economic, and cultural characteristics of the early civilizations of Africa, the Middle East, India, and China; slavery in the ancient world; principal teachings and influence of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Judaism, and Christianity; institutions, culture, and legacies of ancient Israel (e.g., monotheism, Ten Commandments, ethic of individual and social responsibility); institutions, culture, and legacies of ancient Greece (e.g., literary, artistic, and philosophical achievements, principles of Athenian democracy, influence of Alexander the Great); and institutions, culture, and legacies of the Roman Republic and Empire (e.g., republican government; expansion of imperial Rome; Roman law, architecture, and engineering).

**0008 Understand the major political, economic, social, and cultural developments that shaped the course of world history during the growth of agricultural and commercial civilizations (500 to 1500).**

For example: institutions, religion, and culture of the Byzantine Empire; origins and principles of Islam and political, economic, and cultural consequences of Islamic expansion; beginning of international slave trade; the political, economic, and social structure of European feudalism and manorialism (e.g., social estates, feudal contracts); the Catholic Church, monasteries, and universities in European civilization during the Middle Ages; causes and consequences of the Crusades; the rise of medieval towns, guilds, and commerce; European government in the High Middle Ages (e.g., Magna Carta, rivalries between church and state); and important developments within and among the major civilizations of Asia (e.g., India, China, Japan), Africa (e.g., Ghana, Mali, Songhai, city-states of East Africa), and the Americas (e.g., Maya, Aztec, Inca).

**0009 Understand the major political, economic, social, and cultural developments that shaped the course of world history during the Global Age (1450 to 1750).**

For example: origins, principal figures, and influence of the Renaissance (e.g., artistic, literary, and scientific legacies, the political theories of Machiavelli, humanism and the works of Erasmus and Thomas More); significant ideas, leaders, and events of the Reformation (e.g., the teachings of Martin Luther and John Calvin, the English Reformation, the Counter Reformation); causes, important discoveries, and consequences of the Age of Exploration (e.g., factors encouraging European expansion, discovery of the New World, circumnavigation of the globe, establishment of colonial empires, mercantilism, the development of the international slave trade); the rise of absolute monarchies and constitutional governments in Europe (e.g., Louis XIV, Peter the Great, the English civil wars of the 1640s, the Glorious Revolution of 1688–89); the growth and decline of the Ottoman Empire; and major developments in African, Asian, and American civilizations (e.g., the empire of Genghis Khan, unification of Japan, spread of Islam into West Africa, the Spanish Empire in the Americas).

**0010 Understand the major political, economic, social, and cultural developments that shaped the course of world history during the Age of Revolutionary Change (1700 to 1914).**

For example: the scientific revolution (e.g., Newton, Descartes); the influence of Enlightenment thinkers on political and economic development (e.g., Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau); origins and consequences of the American and French revolutions; the spread of democratic ideas beyond Europe and the United States (e.g., the Latin American wars for independence); causes and consequences of the agricultural and industrial revolutions (e.g., European preconditions, transformation of daily life and work conditions, growth of cities, class changes); major developments in the arts and literatures of the period (e.g., Romanticism, the symphony, the novel, national histories, Impressionism); democratic and social reform in Europe (e.g., Chartism, revolutions of 1848, expansion of the suffrage, socialism, emancipation of serfs in Russia); European nationalism (e.g., Cavour, Bismarck, and the unification of Italy and Germany); and the causes, key events, and consequences of the new imperialism (e.g., the colonization of Africa, racial theories and justifications for European expansion, Chinese resistance to Western domination, the modernization of Japan).

**0011 Understand the major political, economic, social, and cultural developments that shaped the course of world history during the Era of the Great Wars (1900 to 1945).**

For example: causes, course, and consequences of World War I (e.g., Balkan nationalism, imperialist rivalry, the alliance system, modern weapons and trench warfare, the Treaty of Versailles); Lenin, the Russian Revolution of 1917, and the emergence of Communist totalitarianism; the political, social, and economic consequences of the Great Depression; Mussolini and the emergence of Fascism, the collapse of the Weimar Republic, and Hitler and the rise of Nazi Germany; the origins of World War II in Europe and Asia (e.g., the failure of the League of Nations; programs of conquest in Tokyo, Rome, and Berlin; policy of appeasement); events, leaders, and deciding factors in the outcome of World War II; the Holocaust; reconstruction and reform in postwar Europe and Japan; and major political, military, economic, and social effects of the world wars (e.g., the human toll, regional and global organizations, the division of Europe, the creation of modern Israel).

**0012 Understand the major political, economic, social, and cultural developments that shaped the course of world history from 1945 to the present.**

For example: causes, key events, and consequences of the Cold War (e.g., Stalin and Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, the Marshall Plan, ideological differences, the Berlin blockade, the formation of NATO, the Warsaw Pact, the nuclear arms race); decolonization and national independence movements; Mao Zedong and the Chinese Revolution; the origins, course, and consequences of the Korean and Vietnam wars; revolution, reaction, modernization, and democratic movements in Latin America; major developments in the arts, music, literature, religion, and philosophy; causes of the collapse of the Soviet Empire (e.g., Soviet policies from Brezhnev to Gorbachev, failure of the planned economy, growing assertiveness of Eastern European nations, U.S. arms build-up); the persistence of nationalism and conflict in the post-Cold War world (e.g., ethnic rivalries, religious enmities, disparities between industrial and developing societies); and global economic developments since 1945 (e.g., postwar reconstruction in Europe and Asia, communications revolution, growing interdependence of the global economy).

**0013 Understand the impact of science and technology on the development of civilization.**

For example: important scientific and technological advances that have influenced the development of civilization (e.g., tools of the Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages, the clock, the compass, the astrolabe, the printing press, the laws of motion, the microscope, electric power, the theory of relativity, penicillin, the microchip); social, cultural, political, and economic factors that have encouraged or discouraged scientific discovery and technological innovation; the scientific revolutions of the seventeenth and twentieth centuries; causes and consequences of the agricultural, industrial, and information revolutions; contributions of major scientific thinkers (e.g., Copernicus, Galileo, Francis Bacon, William Harvey, Descartes, Sir Isaac Newton, Marie Curie, Albert Einstein); the scientific method and the evolution of a philosophy of science; contemporary issues in scientific and technological advances (e.g., the use of nuclear energy and biotechnology); and how science and technology are addressing ecological issues and problems.

**GEOGRAPHY, GOVERNMENT, AND ECONOMICS [25%]**

**0014 Understand the major physical features of the world and the effects of geographic factors on the development of human societies.**

For example: shape, location, and relationships among major land masses; location of significant landforms and bodies of water; application of basic geographic terms and concepts (e.g., habitat, acculturation, ecosystem); characteristics and uses of basic geographic sources (e.g., atlases, almanacs); the use of maps to obtain data for solving locational problems and to answer questions, infer relationships, and analyze spatial change; and the influence of geographic factors on patterns of human settlement, major historical events, and political, economic, social, and cultural developments (e.g., effect of geography on military conflicts, reasons for the location of cities, distribution of economic activities).

**0015 Understand basic political science terms, concepts, and theories and the characteristics, organization, and development of various political systems.**

For example: definition and application of basic terms and concepts of political science (e.g., power and authority, justice, natural law, natural rights, citizenship); purposes of government and forms of governmental authority (e.g., to control territory, to maintain social order, to manage conflict); relationship between the evolution of political thought and the historical development of government (e.g., Enlightenment thought and political liberalism, Romanticism and nationalism); the influence of historical developments on political thought (e.g., wars of the twentieth century and the emergence of totalitarianism); characteristics of various forms of government (e.g., monarchial, oligarchic, democratic); and comparison of historical and contemporary forms of government (e.g., functions of legislatures, roles of political parties, relationship between the individual and the state).

**0016 Understand the principles contained in the Founding Documents of U.S. government and the structure and operation of the U.S. political system.**

For example: origins and development of constitutional and democratic government (e.g., Athenian democracy, separation of church and state, the Germanic witan, the Magna Carta, the Petition of Right, the English Bill of Rights, English common law, the Mayflower Compact); central concepts and purposes of the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and *The Federalist* papers (e.g., representative government, separation of powers, individual freedom, ordered liberty); the structure and functions of government at the local, state, and national levels (e.g., checks and balances, judicial review, federalism, relationships between federal, state, and local governments); the U.S. electoral system; the role of political parties and interest groups; and the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship.

**0017 Understand fundamental economic concepts and theories, characteristics of major economic systems, and the organization and operation of the U.S. economic system.**

For example: basic economic concepts (e.g., scarcity, choice, production, distribution, exchange, consumption, competition, entrepreneurship, supply and demand); major economic theorists and theories (e.g., Adam Smith, Thomas Malthus, Karl Marx, John Maynard Keynes, Milton Friedman); characteristics of historical and contemporary economic systems (e.g., feudalism, capitalism, socialism, communism); components of the U.S. economic system (e.g., consumers, households, business, organized labor, banks); the role of government in the U.S. economy (e.g., fiscal and monetary policy, regulatory activities); and factors influencing the activities of American producers and consumers in the global economy (e.g., exchange rates, trade pacts, tariff barriers).

**INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING [20%]**

In addition to answering multiple-choice items, candidates will prepare written responses to questions addressing content from the preceding objectives, which are summarized in the objective and descriptive statement below.

**0018 Prepare an organized, developed analysis on a topic related to one or more of the following: U.S. history; world history; geography, government, and economics.**

For example: the influence of Greek and Roman ideas on the development of Western political thought; similarities and differences between medieval and Renaissance culture and society; the origins, goals, and consequences of the American and French revolutions; the influence of geographic factors on the development of colonial societies in North America; the influence of westward expansion on political, cultural, and economic developments in the United States during the nineteenth century; the rise of nationalism in Asia and Africa and the struggle against European colonialism; the role of Franklin D. Roosevelt in the evolution of U.S. economic and political life; and the accomplishments and limitations of the Civil Rights movement.

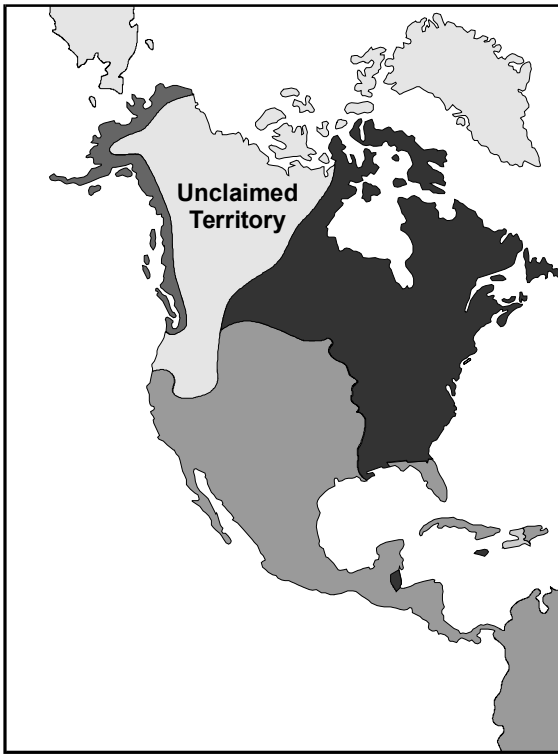
***Sample Test Items:***  
***History (06)***

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1. The first English colonists in Massachusetts were most reliant on Native Americans for assistance in:
  - A. learning how to cope with an unfamiliar environment.
  - B. establishing commercial ties with settlers in New York.
  - C. creating effective governmental institutions.
  - D. defending the colony against French invaders from Canada.

2. Use the map below to answer the question that follows.

**European Claims in North America**



The map above best illustrates the distribution of European territorial claims in North America in the immediate aftermath of which of the following events?

- A. the restoration of the Stuart monarchy in England (1660)
- B. King William's War (1689–1697)
- C. the death of King Louis XIV of France (1715)
- D. the French and Indian War (1754–1763)

3. **Read the excerpt below from an 1845 article in the *Democratic Review* by John O'Sullivan; then answer the question that follows.**

California will probably be the next area to break away from Mexico. . . . Americans are already beginning to settle there. A population will soon occupy the region which Mexico cannot dream of dominating. These people will necessarily become independent. All this without the action of our government, without the responsibility of our people, is a natural course of events.

The excerpt above best represents an application of which of the following?

- A. the Monroe Doctrine
- B. the concept of popular sovereignty
- C. the American System
- D. the concept of Manifest Destiny

4. Under the leadership of Martin Luther King Jr., the major aim of the civil rights movement between 1955 and 1964 was to:

- A. achieve racial equality through legal action against discriminatory laws.
- B. abolish racial segregation through the use of nonviolent civil disobedience.
- C. bolster group pride through the promotion of black nationalism.
- D. eliminate economic disparities through the encouragement of black enterprise.

5. Which of the following excerpts from the Old Testament best illustrates a major difference between the religion created by the ancient Hebrews and the religions of other early Near Eastern civilizations?

- A. You shall not oppress a stranger; . . . for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.
- B. Whoever curses his father or his mother shall be put to death.
- C. Whoever steals a man, whether he sells him or is found in possession of him, shall be put to death.
- D. I am the Lord your God. . . . You shall have no other gods before me.

6. Which of the following was the most important result of the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century?
- A. Questions about terrestrial phenomena largely displaced investigation of the heavens as the main focus of scientific study.
  - B. Science became universally accepted as the main force in the advancement of civilization and the primary engine of human progress.
  - C. Science was subdivided into discrete areas of investigation, each with its own theories and methods of inquiry.
  - D. Science supplanted religion as the principal means of understanding the structure and operation of the universe.
7. Which of the following best describes a major geopolitical consequence of the two world wars of the twentieth century?
- A. The defeat of Germany and Japan created a political vacuum in Europe and Asia that was filled by Great Britain and China.
  - B. Decolonization resulted in the creation of a new global balance of power based on the competing interests of industrial and developing nations.
  - C. The emergence of two global superpowers ended the age of European dominance over international affairs.
  - D. The creation of new international organizations significantly restrained national governments from acting unilaterally on foreign policy matters.

8. Which line on the chart below best connects a type of map with a particularly appropriate use of that type of map?

<b>Line</b>	<b>Type of Map</b>	<b>Use</b>
A	consistent-scale map	to plot great-circle routes for aircraft
B	conformal map	to measure distances between two points
C	straight-line direction map	to set the course of a naval vessel
D	equal-area map	to compare the shape of two land areas

- A. Line A
- B. Line B
- C. Line C
- D. Line D

9. Which of the following concepts can best be used to illustrate the difference between a parliamentary democracy and the presidential democracy of the United States?
- A. popular sovereignty
  - B. constitutional supremacy
  - C. due process of law
  - D. separation of powers
10. When the U.S. economy enters the contraction phase of the business cycle, a government that bases its actions on the Keynesian model of economic policy would most likely take steps to:
- A. increase the purchasing power of consumers.
  - B. ensure that government spending does not exceed current revenue.
  - C. increase the rate of taxation on large firms.
  - D. limit the importation of products that compete with U.S. goods.

11. **Read the information below; then complete the exercise that follows.**

Between 800 B.C.E. and 300 B.C.E., the Aegean peninsula witnessed one of the great flowerings of human civilization. In art, architecture, science, literature, government, and philosophy, ancient Greece produced masterpieces of human thought and creativity.

Using your knowledge of world history, write a response in which you:

- describe three important factors that contributed to the emergence of Greek civilization during this period; and
- evaluate the influence of Greek civilization on the ancient Mediterranean world.

## ***Answer Key and Sample Response: History (06)***

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<b>Question Number</b>	<b>Correct Response</b>	<b>Test Objective</b>
1.	<b>A</b>	Understand the characteristics of indigenous societies of North America, the causes and course of European exploration, and the development of colonial societies to 1760.
2.	<b>D</b>	Understand the causes and key events of the Revolutionary War and major political, economic, social, and cultural developments that shaped the course of U.S. history through the Jacksonian era.
3.	<b>D</b>	Understand the significance of historical events related to westward expansion, the Civil War, and Reconstruction.
4.	<b>B</b>	Understand the major political, economic, social, and cultural developments that have shaped the course of U.S. history from 1920 to the present.
5.	<b>D</b>	Understand human beginnings, the characteristics of early human societies, and the roots of Western civilization (prehistory to A.D. 500).
6.	<b>D</b>	Understand the major political, economic, social, and cultural developments that shaped the course of world history during the Age of Revolutionary Change (1700 to 1914).
7.	<b>C</b>	Understand the major political, economic, social, and cultural developments that shaped the course of world history from 1945 to the present.
8.	<b>C</b>	Understand the major physical features of the world and the effects of geographic factors on the development of human societies.
9.	<b>D</b>	Understand basic political science terms, concepts, and theories and the characteristics, organization, and development of various political systems.
10.	<b>A</b>	Understand fundamental economic concepts and theories, characteristics of major economic systems, and the organization and operation of the U.S. economic system.

### **Acknowledgments**

#### **Question Number**

- [Public Domain] John L. O'Sullivan, "Annexation," *Democratic Review* (July–Aug. 1845) [adapted], in Lewis Paul Todd and Merle Curti, *Rise of the American Nation: Volume I: The Beginnings to 1865*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977. p. 470.
- [Public Domain] *The Bible*. New York: American Bible Society, 1980. pp. 63–64, 66.

The sample response below reflects a strong knowledge and understanding of the subject matter.

A number of factors influenced the emergence of ancient Greek civilization. One was geography. The Greek peninsula has numerous mountain ranges, limited natural resources, and a shortage of fertile soil. This prompted the Greeks to look beyond their homeland and engage in seagoing trade, a form of enterprise that seemed particularly appropriate for a peninsular nation comprised of many islands. This tendency to look outward also encouraged the establishment of foreign colonies.

The independent status of the Greek polis was a second factor. These small city-states acted as laboratories for social, economic, and political experimentation. It was here that Greek government developed and achieved a variety of forms, including monarchy, oligarchy, tyranny, and democracy, the most notable political achievement of the ancient Greeks.

A third factor that influenced the development of ancient Greek civilization was warfare. The most important of these conflicts were the Persian Wars and the Peloponnesian War. It was during the decades following the defeat of the Persians that Athenian democracy reached its greatest heights under the leadership of Pericles. The Peloponnesian War, which pitted Athens against Sparta, ended in the Spartan defeat of Athens and the beginning of a period of political instability that ultimately resulted in the unification of Greece under Philip of Macedonia and his son, Alexander the Great.

Alexander's conquests carried Greek art, architecture, literature, and philosophy into Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, launching the Hellenistic Age. When Rome began to dominate the eastern Mediterranean during the first century B.C., the Romans appropriated much of Greek culture and spread it throughout their expanding empire. It is not too much to say that the civilization that developed in Greece became the cultural and intellectual foundation of the ancient Mediterranean world.