

Social Studies: Interpretation of Materials (0083)

Test at a Glance

Test Name	Social Studies: Interpretation of Materials		
Test Code	0083		
Time	1 hour		
Number of Questions	5 two-part essay questions		
Format	Each essay question involves identification/comprehension and interpretation/application in a short essay format		
	Content Categories	Number of Questions	Percentage of Total Score
	I. United States History	1	20%
	II. World History	1	20%
	III. Government/Civics	1	20%
	IV. Geography	1	20%
	V. Economics	1	20%
Pacing and Special Tips	Each of the five questions is worth the same number of points; do not jeopardize your score on some of the questions by spending too much time on the others. Allocate approximately 10–12 minutes per question. Since the second part of each question is worth twice as many points as the first part of each question, spend more time answering part 2 of a question than answering part 1 of a question.		

About This Test

The Social Studies: Interpretation of Materials test is designed to determine whether an examinee has the knowledge and skills necessary for a beginning teacher of social studies in a secondary school.

The test is composed of five two-part short-answer essay questions that require reading and interpreting social studies materials, drawing inferences from such materials, and relating these materials to knowledge of the individual fields in social studies. Material presented for interpretation can take the form of a map, chart, graph, table, cartoon, diagram, quotation, or an excerpt from a document. The test contains one question from each of the following five fields: United States history, world history, government/civics/political science, geography, and economics. (For descriptions of these content categories see Social Studies: Content Knowledge (0081).) At least one of the five questions contains content reflecting the diverse experiences of people in the United States as related to gender, culture, and/or race, and/or content relating to Latin America, Africa, Asia, or Oceania.

Each two-part question requires the ability to identify or demonstrate comprehension of the social studies material presented, interpret or explain the material, draw inferences about it, and/or relate it to outside knowledge. Required responses are relatively brief. Each of the five questions represents 20 percent of the total test score. Within each question, the first part counts for one-third and the second part counts for two-thirds of the question's score.

Sample Test Questions

This section presents sample questions and responses along with the standards used in scoring the essays. When you read these sample responses, keep in mind that they will be less polished than if they had been developed at home, edited, and carefully presented. The examinee does not know what questions will be asked and must decide, on the spot, how to respond. Readers take these circumstances into account when scoring the responses. Parts 1 and 2 of each question will be scored on a scale ranging from 0 to 3, but the scores for part 2 will be weighted twice as much as the scores for part 1.

Readers will assign scores based on the following scoring guide.

SCORING GUIDE

Part 1 of the Question

3 Accurate and complete

- Shows a clear understanding of the stimulus
- Provides an accurate and complete response

2 Mostly accurate and complete

- Shows an adequate understanding of the stimulus
- Provides a generally accurate and complete response

1 Inaccurate and incomplete

- Shows little understanding of the stimulus
- Provides a basically inaccurate and incomplete response

0

- Completely inaccurate or inappropriate, blank, off topic, or only a restatement of the prompt

Part 2 of the Question

3 Accurate and complete

- Provides the analysis required by the question
- Applies appropriate subject-matter knowledge
- Is accurate and complete

2 Mostly accurate and complete

- Provides most of the analysis required by the question
- Applies mostly appropriate subject-matter knowledge
- Is mostly accurate and complete

1 Inaccurate and incomplete

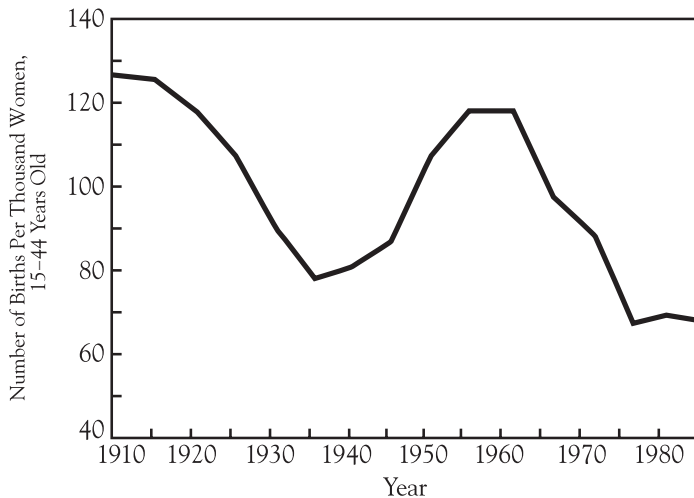
- Provides little of the analysis required by the question
- Applies mostly inappropriate subject-matter knowledge
- Is basically inaccurate and incomplete

0

- Completely inaccurate or inappropriate, blank, off topic, or only a restatement of the prompt

Sample Question 1

BIRTHRATES OF THE UNITED STATES
POPULATION, 1910-1985
(Births Per Thousand Women, 15-44 Years Old)



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

1. Describe what the graph above indicates about trends in the United States birthrate between 1910 and 1985.
2. Based on your knowledge of United States history, identify and briefly describe a few of the major factors that affected the United States birthrate during this period.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 3 for Each Part:

1. The graph reveals a fairly steady decrease in the birthrate interrupted by a sharp rise during the two post-World War II decades. Once this “baby boom” was over, the decrease continued—the pre-boom level was reached in the 1970’s.
2. The general decline in the birthrate occurred because of economic and social factors that are associated with the process of modernization in the United States. Some of these factors are: the movement from rural to urban areas, which accompanied the shift from an agricultural

to an industrial economy and which made children more likely to be an economic liability than an economic asset; improvements in the effectiveness and availability of birth control; and changes in attitudes about the role of women. Throughout the century, career and other opportunities for women have expanded. The expansion has been most rapid since the 1970’s flowering of the women’s movement and increasing numbers of women have been deciding to defer child-bearing.

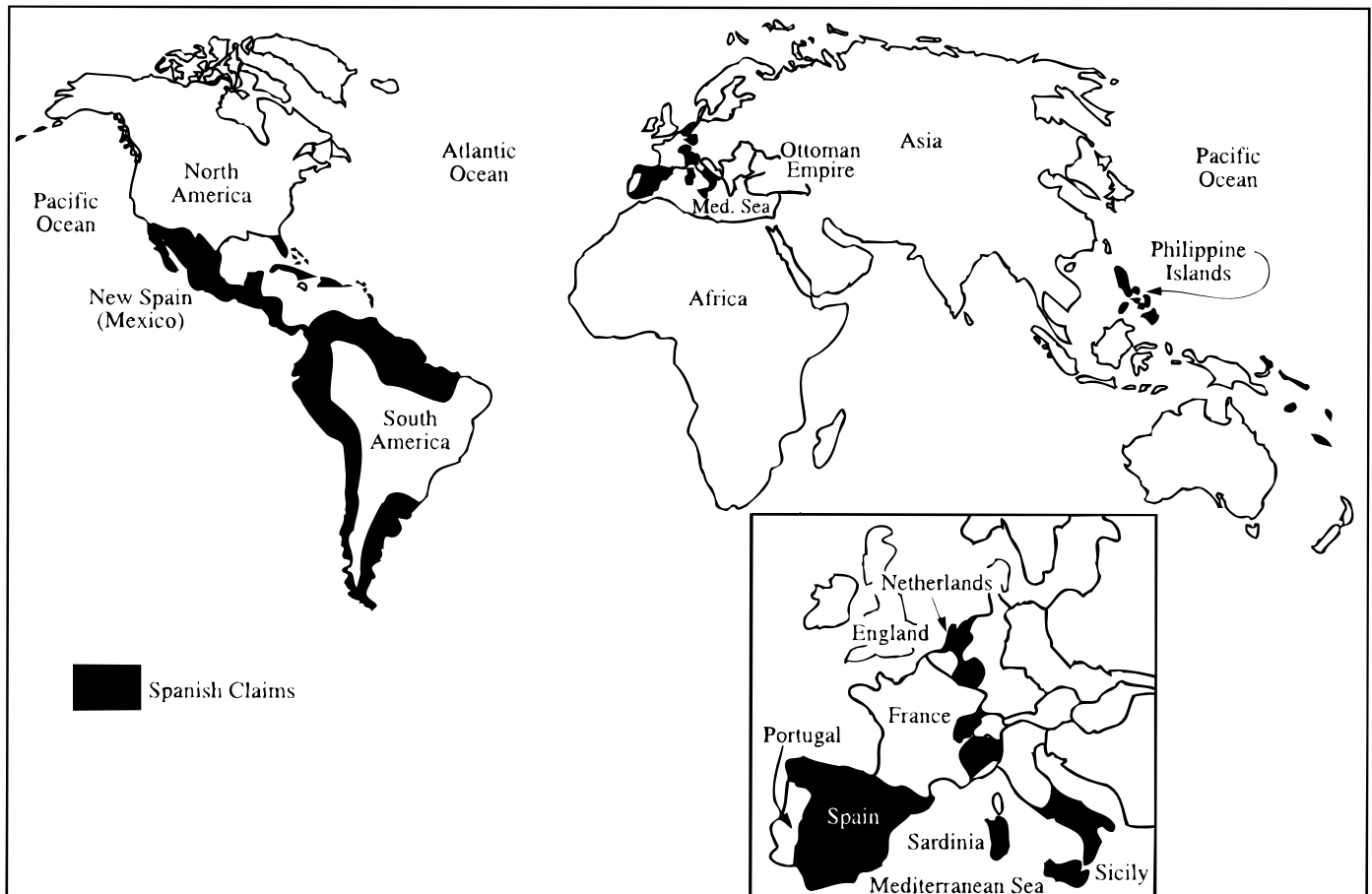
The post-World War II baby-boom is an exception to the general decline in the American birthrate in the period shown. It reflects partly the eagerness of young couples to start families once the war ended. It also reflects the fact that veterans returned home to a strong economy—which encouraged them to have more children. The post-war period was also a period in which many women were influenced by the prevailing ideology that women’s proper role was as homemakers and mothers. The job discrimination associated with this ideology encouraged women to stay at home and have children rather than work outside the home.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 1 for Each Part:

1. The graph shows that the United States birthrate changes over time.
2. The birthrate changes over time depending on how much money people have. For example, during the Great Depression of 1929, the birthrate was very low but during the 1950’s when everyone had money and the economy was good, the birthrate was high. Now people in the United States are not doing very well and because of this the birthrate is very low. But if the people in the United States were to become wealthy again, then the birthrate would go up.

Sample Question 2

THE EMPIRE OF PHILIP II–1560



1. Based on the map above, briefly describe the extent of Spain's possessions in 1560.
2. Using your knowledge of world history, explain the main difficulties encountered by Spain in governing its empire.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 3 for Each Part:

Spain's far-flung empire stretched from Europe (Netherlands, parts of France, Italy, Sardinia, Sicily won during the war of the Spanish Succession and of course Spain on Iberia) to North, Central, South America (including

present day Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Peru, Equador, Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, the Guianas, Venezuela), the Caribbean (Cuba, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, Outer Antilles), the Philippines, and various Polynesian Islands. This was a far-flung, sometimes wealthy, empire.

In Europe, Spanish territories were constantly under military and diplomatic attack. There was no easy way to defend far-flung territory, separated by powers such as France and Austria, with Great Britain constantly looking for advantage. Geographically, the homeland was separated by water and the Pyrenees from the rest of Europe.

In the American colonies, gold was discovered. This led to Spain's great wealth while laying the seeds of decline. So much wealth, so soon was not good for Spain. She spent it wildly and carelessly, filling the coffers of those who sold much to Spain. The British Empire was growing and hungry. The privateers raided the Spanish Caribbean colonies and intercepted the gold ships for plunder, at the secret behest of Elizabeth I. Spain was a rich man with muggers waiting around the corner.

Surprisingly, Spain held the colonies yet never truly colonized them with her culture, except for the Church's missionary zeal, and the occupiers of her colonies were basically in search of treasure, not a well-ordered hometown experience. Many wanted to get rich and return to Spain in glory. Only the missionaries truly wanted to stay and convert.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 2 for Each Part:

1. Spain's possessions in 1560 were far reaching. Not only did they control most of modern-day Spain, they also controlled big sections of modern-day Europe. Spain's possessions were not contiguous. Possessions could be found on several continents, including North and South America, Europe and Asia. Spain controlled a vast amount of land in 1560.
2. Difficulties that Spain encountered governing its colonies may have been varied. Firstly, it is very difficult to oversee such a vast amount of territory. If the ruler of Spain in 1560, Philip II, was in the area of modern-day Spain it would be difficult for him to keep abreast of the situation in his colonies in South America. Secondly, travel most likely posed a problem for Philip and Spain in 1560. Travel was by foot, horse or boat, all of which were slow and difficult. The seas were rough, the crafts were primitive and navigational equipment was lacking. Communication may have posed an additional problem for Spain. Modern communication did not exist. By the time word or orders were sent to a colony, the message may have been obsolete. Lastly, protecting Philip's and Spain's borders would have been almost impossible. Spain was vulnerable

to attack from many sides and by many aggressors. Governing this vast amount of land was difficult, at best, for Spain. It would be difficult to enforce the same rules and punishment for all people who lived under Spanish rule in 1560.

Sample Question 3

It is, emphatically, the province and duty of the judicial department, to say what the law is. . . . If then, the courts are to regard the Constitution, and the Constitution is superior to an ordinary act of the legislature, the Constitution, and not such ordinary act, must govern the case to which both apply.

Thus . . . a law repugnant to the Constitution is void.

— *Marbury v. Madison*, (1803)

1. Briefly explain the principle of government stated by the Supreme Court in the excerpt above from the decision in *Marbury v. Madison*.
2. Based on the excerpt above and your knowledge of United States government, briefly explain one reason why the principle stated in the excerpt might be criticized. Then briefly explain one reason why the principle stated in the excerpt might be supported.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 3 for Each Part:

1. In *Marbury v. Madison*, the Supreme Court, for the first time, declared a law unconstitutional. This was not an enunciated power given to the court in the Constitution, it was implied. The court thereby granted itself the power of judicial review. They declared that it was the court's duty to interpret the laws made by Congress and state legislatures. If a law was found to be inconsistent with the spirit and letter of the Constitution, it was the court's responsibility to declare the law void. The Constitution, as supreme law of the land, must take precedence over all other laws, and it is the court's duty to see to it.

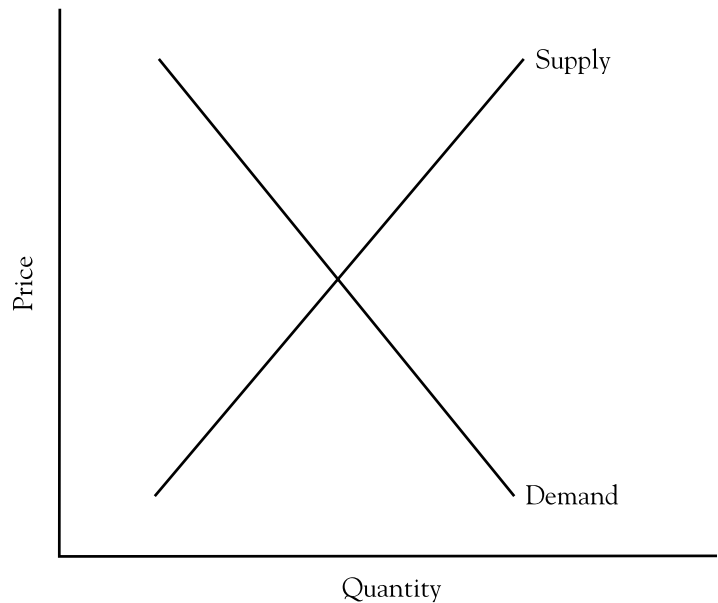
- This ruling could be criticized by strict constructionists, those that give a very literal interpretation to the Constitution. They may claim that the court is overstepping its bounds by granting itself powers not explicitly stated in the Constitution. Critics may also claim that this gives the judicial branch unrestrained power over the other two branches of the federal government, destroying the government's delicate balance of power. But proponents of the ruling see the ruling not as a threat to the balance of power, but a part of it. With the power of judicial review, the court places a check on Congress and the executive branch, assuming that the Constitution will not be violated. This interpretation of the ruling has been the dominant one since it was handed down in 1803.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 1 for Each Part:

- The principle stated deals with the concept of material law. That is, law that was created and written down at the time of the constitution and should govern all laws thereafter. It is the job of the judicial department to only make judgements based on what is already written and not to create news while interpreting the constitution.
- Some probably criticized the ruling as being weak, that is that the Supreme Court should pick out areas where the judges feel strongly about a matter and give guidance to the people. An example might be that the court could have an opinion on whether the United States needed to expand its territory in the Louisiana Purchase or was spending too much on armaments, and because the court was made up of distinguished judges with good backgrounds, they could offer an opinion on it. They could be an activist court in this way.

The excerpt might be supported by people who are believers in the judicial part of the government being the superior part to the executive or legislative branches. These citizens believe that the court, because it is composed of intelligent, educated judges, should have more of a say on what the laws of the country should be. They would prefer this way to depending on Congress, which is subject to politics and whims.

Sample Question 4



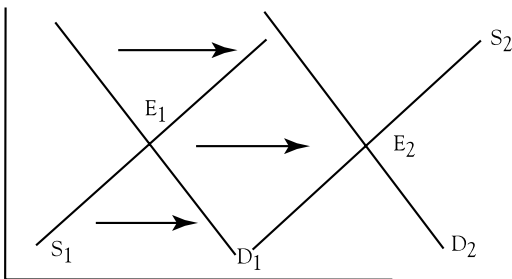
The graph above shows the supply and demand curves for product A. Assume the market is perfectly competitive and in equilibrium.

- What will happen in this market if the government sets a price for product A below the equilibrium price?
- Now, assume that the government no longer sets the price for product A. Explain what will happen to the equilibrium price and quantity when there is an increase in demand for *and* an increase in the supply of product A. Draw a graph that shows these changes.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 3 for Each Part:

If a price is fixed below the price at which supply = demand, than the excess of demand over supply will produce a shortage of the product. That shortage will be met by a black market, in which this product will be sold at a higher price than that set by the government.

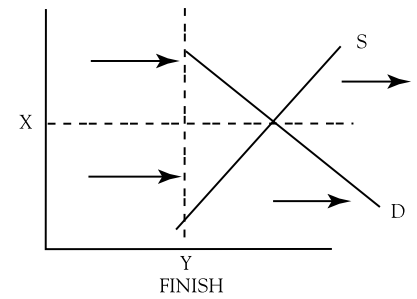
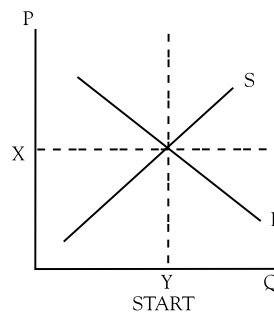
If, assuming no government regulation and free competition, both supply and demand increase, then both curves will shift to the right reflecting higher quantities demanded and supplied for any given price



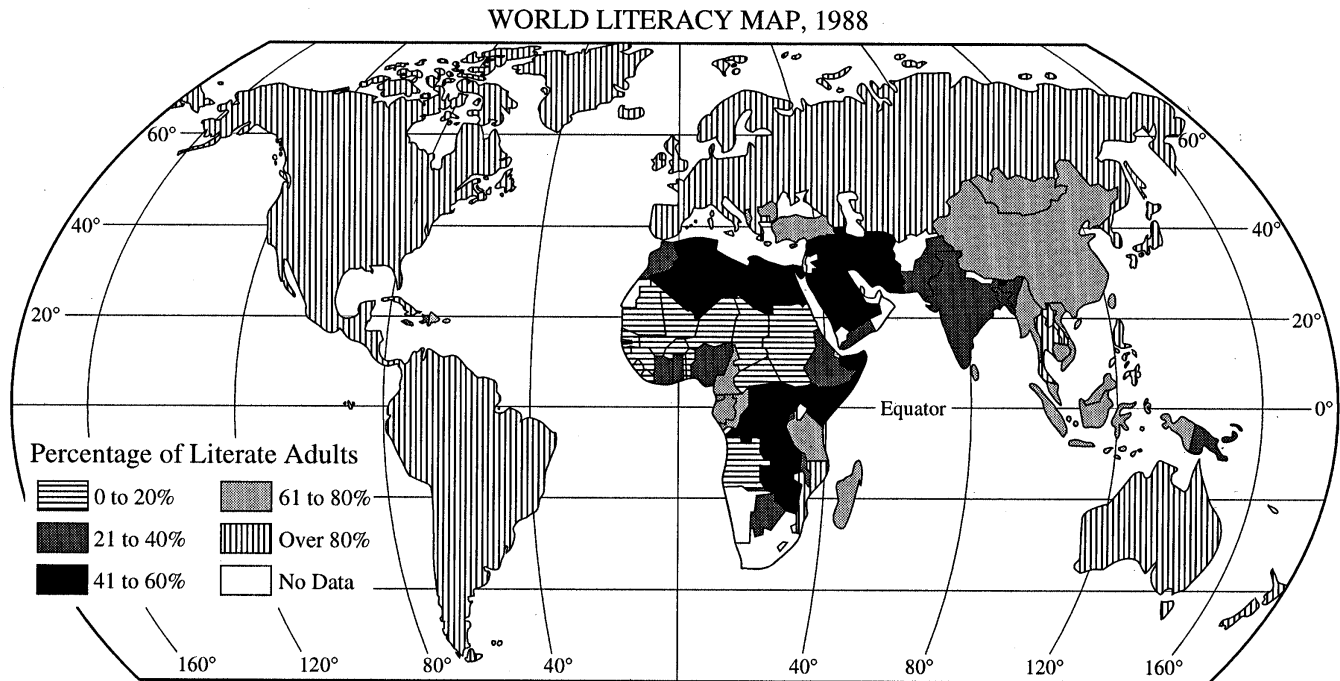
The new equilibrium will certainly be at a higher quantity than the old one; the new equilibrium price may be higher or lower, depending on whether the demand has increased more than supply (higher price) or vice versa (lower price).

Sample Response That Received a Score of 2 for Each Part:

1. If the government sets a price for a product below the equilibrium price, there will not be enough supply of that product to meet the demand for that product.
2. If there is an increase in both supply and demand for a product, they will tend to cancel out any change in the equilibrium price, although the equilibrium quantity will increase.



Sample Question 5



1. According to the map above, which regions of the world have the highest literacy rates?
2. Identify two socioeconomic indicators with geographical distribution patterns that are similar to the pattern for literacy. Explain why the patterns are similar.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 2 for Part One and a Score of 3 for Part Two:

The highest literacy rates clearly occur in the countries furthest north of the equator; North America and most of Eurasia.

This parallels geographical distribution patterns of wealth worldwide, relating again to the degree of economic development. This includes both post-colonial capitalist powers like the U.S. & Europe and the Soviet Union (in '88, anyway) which had a highly centralized government instituting both economic and educational (infrastructural or institutional) policies and programs.

Thus, GNP must be one socioeconomic indicator, and another must be rate of infant mortality, reflecting health care. GNP is related because it dictates how much wealth a country can put into education. IMR is similar because health care is an infrastructural consideration like education and reflects the social programs in various countries and their effectiveness.

Sample Response That Received a Score of 2 for Each Part:

Northern hemisphere, Australia, Argentina, and Venezuela.

Northern hemisphere because of the development of nation-states, industrialization, and education through government spending.

Brazil, Peru and Madagascar are similar because of colonization and economic lending of money to develop the countries. However, many remain illiterate because of poor working conditions and a lack of a strong commercial middle class. These poor conditions do not allow people the time or materials to educate themselves and the government fails to help.



Listening. Learning. Leading.®

www.ets.org