

## Grade 8: Sample Social Studies Extended Response Questions

*The following is a sample of a social studies extended response question with a range of student answers. These answers were written by Tennessee students during the field test from the 2014-15 school year and are accompanied by a numeric score and reasoning for the score. The rubric was scored on a 4-point scale.*

*Please note that during the 2015-16 school year, answers will be scored on a 12-point scale (8 points for content, and 4 points for literacy). This sample from the 2014-15 school year can still be used for reference because it reflects the same expectations for student writing that will be assessed during the 2015-16 school year.*

### The following extended response aligns to standard 8.83.

The excerpts and the chart below relate to Reconstruction after the Civil War.

Write an essay about Reconstruction under President Andrew Johnson.

- Was Andrew Johnson a good choice for President Lincoln's vice president?
- What was the goal of President Johnson's Reconstruction plan and why did the Radical Republicans pass a different plan?
- How did President Johnson's relationship with the Radical Republicans contribute to his impeachment?
- Use evidence from the excerpts and chart and your knowledge of Reconstruction to support your answer.

**With malice toward none; with charity for all; . . . let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds . . . to do all which may achieve . . . a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.**

**—President Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address**

| Presidential Reconstruction Plan   | Congressional Reconstruction Plan  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• required former Confederates to take an oath of allegiance to the Constitution</li> <li>• required new state governments to repeal the secession ordinance, ratify the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment, and refuse to pay debts owed by Confederate states</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• required that new state governments repeal black codes</li> <li>• required that new state governments ratify the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments</li> <li>• sent federal troops to enforce Reconstruction</li> </ul> |

**Source: Public Domain/ Library of Congress and The National Endowment for the Humanities**

**For nearly two years after President Johnson came into power, the policy of reconstruction on the white vote only was fully tested. Its fruits were the black codes of South Carolina, Mississippi, Georgia, and other States. .**

**. .**

**Laws were passed by the Legislatures and municipal governments elected by the white vote only, disarming the colored soldiers who had fought for the Union, taxing severely all occupations followed by colored men, limiting their right to testify as witnesses in courts, and to meet in public assemblies. Not a single law providing for the education of freedmen was passed. . . . Nowhere did they give equal, or any civil rights to the blacks. . . . The blacks saw that their . . . liberty, proclaimed by Lincoln, was vanishing under Johnson's system of reconstruction.**

**—*Daily Evening Telegraph*, Philadelphia, PA,  
October 18, 1867**

**Sample A:**

Andrew Johnson was the 17th President of the United States. He became President after Lincoln's assassination. He was Abraham Lincoln's Vice President and was from Tennessee. He was a good choice for Vice President because he was from the South and wanted to preserve the Union. He was against slavery, just as Lincoln was. Johnson was not well liked by either sides of the Union, simply because he was southern and opposed slavery. The south opposed him because of his views on slavery. The north opposed him because he was southern.

Johnson's goal of Reconstruction was to have former Confederates take an oath of allegiance to the Constitution. He also required new state governments to repeal the secession ordinance, ratify the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, and refuse to pay debts owed by Confederate states. The Radical Republicans wanted the south to suffer. They opposed Johnson's plan and passed their own. The Radical Republicans felt that Johnson was going too easy on the south. Their plan forced new state governments to repeal black codes, and ratify the 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution. They also sent federal troops to enforce Reconstruction.

Andrew Johnson opposed the Radical Republicans and fired his Secretary of War. The Radical Republicans had passed a law before Johnson fired his Secretary of War. The law stated that the President could not fire members of his Cabinet. After Johnson fired his Secretart of War, he was impeached by the House of Representatives for breaking the law. The Senate acquitted Johnson by one single vote. Johnson did not run for a second term as President.

**Score Point: Content 4, Literacy 4**

**Content:** The response demonstrates historical awareness and a comprehensive, focused understanding of the task through extensive explanation and analysis by describing cause-and-effect relationships (*He was a good choice for Vice President because he was from the South and wanted to preserve the Union; The Radical Republicans wanted the south to suffer. They opposed Johnson's plan and passed their own; After Johnson fired his Secretart of War, he was impeached by the House of Representatives for breaking the law*). The response addresses all aspects of the task (Was Johnson a good choice for vice president, Johnson's and the republican's reconstruction plans, and how their relationship contributed to impeachment) and correctly explains each using specific evidence from the sources and the student's own knowledge (*Johnson was not liked by either sides of the Union, simply because he was southern and opposed slavery; The Radical Republicans had passed a law before Johnson fired his Secretary of War. The law stated that the President could not fire members of his Cabinet...The Senate acquitted Johnson by one single vote. Johnson did not run for a second term as President*).

**Literacy:** The response contains a well presented introduction. The response is focused on clear ideas directly related to the question and establishes some cohesion and clarity of ideas through stated links (*from the South and wanted to preserve the Union. He was against slavery, just as Lincoln was. Johnson was not well liked by either sides of the Union, simply because he was southern and opposed slavery. The south opposed him because of his view on slavery. The north opposed him because he was southern*), although the connections between paragraphs is not totally clear. The response provides concrete details, quotations, and other examples (*He also required state governments to repeal the secession ordinance, ratify the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution...ratify the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the Constitution*) to help support the

ideas presented in the essay. The focus, cohesion, and clarity of ideas, along with the lack of errors in grammar and mechanics make the response a score point 4.

**Sample B:**

After President Lincoln was assassinated in 1865, Andrew Johnson, his Vice President, took office as the 17th President of the United States. Lincoln's job of reconstructing the United States after the Civil War was passed onto Johnson.

Johnson was chosen as Lincoln's Vice President because, despite being a Southern Congressman, when the South seceded all the other Southern Congressmen left, except Johnson. When Lincoln was first elected, his goal was only to not let slavery spread to the new territories, but throughout the Civil War he changed his views and realized that slavery is morally wrong. Johnson didn't think this way. And because of this, after Lincoln's assassination, despite the slaves being freed, they were still confined. Confined by the unequal treatment they faced.

President Lincoln's plan for reconstruction involved 10% of the Southern voters having to pledge allegiance to the Union and all states rejoining the Union had to write a new constitution banning slavery. Only then could they rejoin the Union and send representatives to Congress. Many people believed that Lincoln's plan was too lenient. Andrew Johnson's plan, however, was a bit harsher. Johnson wanted to embarrass Southern leaders by making them apologize directly to him. Johnson also didn't want to help the newly freed slaves, because he didn't believe they were equal.

A political group called the Radical Republicans wanted to pass laws to help the newly freed slaves. The newly freed slaves needed help, they were poor with little to no money, they had no where to go, and they were mistreated by people who didn't think of them as anything more than just slaves. This group, the Radical Republicans, worked to get Johnson impeached, and worked to get food and supplies to these newly freed people.

Maybe Andrew Johnson wasn't the best choice for Vice President. Johnson did not follow through with Lincoln's plan for reconstruction. And if it hadn't been for the work of John Wilkes Booth, maybe reconstruction would have been easier and there would not have been problems with unequal rights for freed African Americans.

**Score Point: Content 3, Literacy 3**

**Content:** The response demonstrates a general understanding of the content and historical awareness. The response addresses all aspects of the task (Was Johnson a good choice for vice president, Johnson's and the republican's reconstruction plans, and how their relationship contributed to impeachment). The response contains some explanation (*Johnson was chosen as Lincoln's Vice President because, despite being a Southern Congressman, when the South seceded all the other Southern Congressmen left, except Johnson; Radical Republicans, worked to get Johnson impeached, and worked to get food and supplies to these newly freed people*), but not enough for a score point 4. Overall, the lack of clearly stated evidence from the sources in support of the student's ideas, and the lack of more and clearer explanation, keeps the response from being a score point 4.

**Literacy:** The response contains an introduction and offers some support for the information presented, (*Lincoln's job of reconstructing the United States after the Civil War was passed onto Johnson*) and a conclusion. The response introduces some unsupported conjectures (*Confined by the unequal treatment they faced; This group, the Radical Republicans, worked to get Johnson impeached, and worked to get food and supplies to these newly freed people; And if it hadn't been for the work of John Wilkes Booth, maybe reconstruction would have been easier and there would not have been problems with unequal rights for free African Americans*), which detracts from the cohesion and focus of the response. The response contains few errors in mechanics and they detract little from the overall comprehensibility.

**Sample C:**

Andrew Johnson was a bad choice President Lincoln's vice president. His goals after becoming president were different from congress and the Radical Republicans and later led to his impeachment.

The goal of Andrew Johnson was to have Confederates take an reallegiance to the constitution. Also, he wanted to repeal the secession ordinance, ratify the 13th Amendment and to not pay off debts owed by Confederate states. The results can justify that Andrew Johnson was a bad choice for Vice President because he failed to accomplish things mentioned in Lincoln's second inaugural address which said to have lasting peace with the states and the world. The Radical Republicans decided to pass different plans to have state governments repeal black codes, pass the 14th and 15th amendments, and send troops to the South and enforce reconstruction. The Radical Republicans established these plans after Andrew Johnson's system had led to colored men lossing many of their rights even though slavery was abolished. The events led to a bad relationship between President Andrew Johnson and the Radical Republicans. This led to the Radical Republicans having a vote on President Andrew Johnson. Andrew Johnson was later impeached from office. The Radical Republicans' plans were later carried out in success. However, they would later remove their troops which then caused more laws to be put in place against African-Americans.

In conclusion, Andrew Johnson failed at completing the goals of Abraham Lincoln and was later impeached for it. He wasted a lot of time and money that led to the Radical Republicans conducting their own plan of reconstruction.

**Score Point: Content 2, Literacy 2**

**Content:** The response demonstrates some historical awareness, but the response relies heavily on Source 3, which is biased against Johnson, and contains historical inaccuracies (*Johnson's reconstruction was destroying any sense of liberty or equality for African Ameriscans that had been a goal for President Abraham Lincoln*). Paragraph 2 contains the plans for both President Johnson and the Radical Republicans in Congress, but the paragraph lacks clear explanation of the differences or reasons behind the plans (*As stated, these plans have opposing views on which ratification were more important and also how to reinforce their plans. Therefore, Congress's ideas were very different from the President's...This is what they believed was a better plan for our country, which is why they past their plan rather than the President's.*) The error in the response (*Andrew Johnson was later impeached from office*) shows a lack of understanding because Johnson was never forced to give up the presidency. The response covers all aspects of the question, but the response is largely a general overview of the situation with little in depth analysis/explanation, which is necessary in order to receive higher than a score point 2.

**Literacy:** The response lacks focus as shown by the jumps from idea to idea throughout the essay. There is some identification of the relationships between ideas (*he failed to accomplish things mentioned in Lincoln's second inaugural address which said to have lasting peace with the states and the world*), but the relationships cannot be considered more than an identification. Overall, the response produces little information beyond an unclear overview of the situation, with an unclear introduction and conclusion.

**Sample D:**

Andrew Johnson was not a good choice because the southern states did not have to ratify the 14 and 15 admendment. Johnsons plan was to get the south back into the union an easier way and the radical republicans had a diifrent plan because they bleived that the south caused the war so they should get punished. Johnsons relationship to the radical republicans was bad.Johnson didnt want the south to get punish and they woudnt have to ratify the 14 and 15 admenment.Johnson also bleived that the south wouldnt need to pay the debt but the radical republicans did.

**Score Point: Content 1, Literacy 1**

**Content:** The response demonstrates little historical awareness due to the lack of information provided in the response, especially information from sources in support of ideas. The student provides some correct information (*Johnsons plan was to get the south back into the union an easier way and the radical republicans had a diifrent plan because they bleived that the south caused the war so they should get punished*), but the rest of the response is largely unclear (*Andrew Johnson was not a good choice because the southern states did not have to ratify the 14 and 15 admendment; Johnson also bleived that the south wouldnt need to pay the debt but the radical republicans did*) and repetitive statements without explanation (*did not have to ratify the 14 and 15 admendment...wouldnt have to ratify the 14 and 15 admenment*)

**Literacy:** The response fails to identify clear links between ideas (*Andrew Johnson was not a good choice because the southern states did not have to ratify the 14 and 15 admendment*) and lacks focus on any clear ideas (*Johnson also bleived that the south wouldnt need to pay the debt but the radical republicans did*). The response lacks commas, and the mechanics errors detract from the overall comprehensibility of the essay.