

Battle of New Orleans

This sample task contains a set of primary and authentic sources about the significance of the Battle of New Orleans.

Alignment

The questions in this task align to the following social studies grade-level expectations.

- 8.2.2 Explain the importance of the Mississippi River as it relates to historical events throughout Louisiana’s history
- 8.2.5 Analyze causes and effects of major events and evaluate their impact on the growth and development of Louisiana
- 8.3.2 Use maps, charts, and diagrams to ask and answer questions about Louisiana’s geographic features
- 8.7.1 Explain how the United States and world foreign policy have affected Louisiana

Contents

This sample task contains the following sections:

- [Primary and Authentic Sources](#)
- [Assessment Items](#)
- [Extended-Response Task](#)
- [Scoring Rubric](#)
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- [Printable Student Version](#)

Task Directions

- Teachers may choose to use or modify this sample as part of an instructional lesson or as a formative or summative assessment.
- Teachers should provide students access to the printable student version of the task items, which excludes GLE alignment, answer keys, and scoring information.
- Students should then read or review the sources and answer the questions.
- For additional specifications about the task, please see the [Assessment Guidance](#) for grade 8.

Primary and Authentic Sources

Read and study Sources 1 through 4 about the Battle of New Orleans. As you read, you may take notes in the space next to the sources or on page 4 in this answer document. Then use the sources to answer questions 1 through 5.

Source 1: [Map of the United States in 1812](#)

Source 2: [The War of 1812: The Battle of New Orleans](#)

Source 3: [Map of the Mississippi River and its Tributaries](#)

Source 4: “Background Info” and Visuals on the [Battle of New Orleans](#)

Item 1: Multiple Choice

Which of these characteristics made the Battle of New Orleans unique?

- A. The Battle of New Orleans was fought exclusively on the water.
- B. The Battle of New Orleans was fought after the war had officially ended.
- C. The Battle of New Orleans was not an actual battle.
- D. The Battle of New Orleans was fought by untrained militia.

Item 2: Multiple Select

Why did the British seek to control Louisiana, specifically New Orleans? Select the **two** correct answers.

- A. The Mississippi River provided a way to irrigate the land.
- B. New Orleans was founded by the British.
- C. The Mississippi River gave access to a large portion of North America.
- D. New Orleans' financial district was superior to others in North America.
- E. New Orleans was an important port.

Item 3: Multiple Select

Which of these was an advantage of the U.S. military in the Battle of New Orleans? Select the **two** correct answers.

- A. The U.S. troops were familiar with the land.
- B. The U.S. troops were better equipped than the British.
- C. The U.S. military had a stronger navy.
- D. The U.S. troops were better acclimated to the climate of Louisiana.
- E. The U.S. military was larger than that of the British.

Item 4: Multiple Choice

Why was the U.S. willing to use the services of Lafitte and his men?

- A. Jean Lafitte and his men were familiar with the area.
- B. The U.S. military wanted the pirates to attack the British at sea.
- C. The U.S. military was desperate for more men.
- D. Jean Lafitte and his men were pirates who could smuggle supplies.

Item 5: Extended Response

Write a well-organized response on the lines provided on pages 5 and 6 in this answer document.

The Battle of New Orleans is considered by many to be the greatest land victory of the War of 1812. Even though the Treaty of Ghent ended the War of 1812, why was the Battle of New Orleans fought? What did the British hope to gain and what could the Americans have lost?

As you write, follow the directions below.

- Address all parts of the prompt.
- Include information and examples from your own knowledge of social studies.
- Use evidence from the sources to support your response.
- Follow the steps on the Checklist as you write your response.

Use page 4 in this answer document for notes and planning. Write your **final response** on pages 5 and 6 in this answer document.

Remember: The prewriting activities on page 4 will not be scored. Only your response on pages 5 and 6 will be scored.

Scoring Rubric

The response should be scored **holistically** on its adherence to two dimensions: Content and Claims. Each response should be given the score that corresponds to the set of bulleted descriptors that **best** describes the response.

Dimension: Content	
Score	Description
4	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects thorough knowledge of the significance of the Battle of New Orleans by incorporating ample, focused factual information from prior knowledge and the sources; • Contains accurate understandings with no errors significant enough to detract from the overall content of the response; • Fully addresses all parts of the prompt.
3	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects general knowledge of the significance of the Battle of New Orleans by incorporating adequate factual information from prior knowledge and the sources; • Contains mostly accurate understandings with minimal errors that do not substantially detract from the overall content of the response; • Addresses all parts of the prompt.
2	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects limited knowledge of the significance of the Battle of New Orleans by incorporating some factual information from prior knowledge and the sources; • Contains some accurate understandings with a few errors that detract from the overall content of the response; • Addresses part of the prompt.
1	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects minimal knowledge of the significance of the Battle of New Orleans by incorporating little or no factual information from prior knowledge and the sources; • Contains few accurate understandings with several errors that detract from the overall content of the response; • Minimally addresses part of the prompt.
0	<p>The student's response is blank, incorrect, or does not address the prompt.</p>

Dimension: Claims

Score	Description
4	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops a valid claim that effectively expresses a solid understanding of the topic; • Thoroughly supports the claim with well-chosen evidence from the sources; • Provides a logically organized, cohesive, and in-depth explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.
3	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops a relevant claim that expresses a general understanding of the topic; • Supports the claim with sufficient evidence from the sources; • Provides an organized explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.
2	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents an inadequate claim which expresses a limited understanding of the topic. • Includes insufficient support for the claim but does use some evidence from the sources; • Provides a weak explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.
1	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not develop a claim but provides evidence that relates to the topic; OR develops a substantially flawed claim with little or no evidence from the sources; • Provides a vague, unclear, or illogical explanation of the connections among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.
0	<p>The student's response is blank, incorrect, or does not address the prompt.</p>

Scoring Notes for Claims Rubric

A response that develops a **valid** claim expresses a **solid** understanding of the social studies topic. The response is supported by **ample and well-chosen** evidence from the sources. The explanation is logical, organized, and cohesive, as demonstrated by connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place. A **valid** claim shows a deep understanding of the complexity of social studies themes that is supported by convincing evidence. The analysis may include the ability to discuss cause-and-effect relationships; analyze the importance of and connection between source documents; classify patterns of continuity and change; evaluate differing perspectives; provide in-depth interpretations of historical events, etc.

A response that develops a **relevant** claim expresses a **general** understanding of the social studies topic. The response is supported by **sufficient** evidence from the sources. The explanation is organized and includes connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place but fails to reach the valid level. A **relevant** claim shows an accurate understanding of social studies themes but is less complex and includes more generalized evidence. The explanation may identify cause-and-effect relationships; describe patterns of continuity or change; recognize perspectives on a single topic or theme; identify the importance of or connection between source documents; provide general interpretations of historical events, etc.

A response that includes an **inadequate** claim expresses a **limited** understanding of the social studies topic and uses insufficient evidence from the sources to develop the claim. The explanation includes weak connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place. An **inadequate** claim shows some understanding of social studies themes but is limited in its analysis and evidence. The explanation may include insufficient understanding of cause and effect relationships; little recognition of patterns of continuity or change; limited knowledge of perspectives on a single topic or theme; misconceptions regarding the importance of or connections between source documents; limited interpretation of historical events, etc.

A response that develops a **substantially flawed** claim expresses **little** understanding of the social studies topic. The explanation, if present, may include vague or illogical connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place. It fails to reach the inadequate level for a variety of reasons. For example, the response may provide some evidence that relates to the topic, but is ineffective in supporting a claim, if one is made.

Characteristics of a Strong Response

A strong response is logically organized into several paragraphs. Any errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or capitalization do not interfere with the ability of the reader to understand the ideas presented.

A strong response may develop one or more lines of reasoning to support the claim. Here are some examples.

- Both Louisiana and New Orleans were important to the United States because of the Mississippi River. The Mississippi River flows into tributaries that flow throughout the Louisiana Territory. These tributaries serve as a means of transportation to access and settle lands throughout the territory which would further solidify the U.S. claim of the territory. To lose control of this would provide Britain with the ability to claim the lands. The British defeat in the Battle of New Orleans protected the lands from falling under British control.
- Louisiana played a critical role in the War of 1812. New Orleans was a port city with stores of supplies that could be seized. Control of the Mississippi River would have given the British the upper hand in the war. They would have controlled waterways throughout the Louisiana Territory as well as the Port of New Orleans and access to the Gulf of Mexico. In order to protect New Orleans, and the U.S. interests connected to New Orleans, Jackson

was willing to include Lafitte and his privateers in his efforts to protect the port of New Orleans from falling under the control of the British.

A strong response shows understanding of the topic by analyzing the required sources and including well-chosen evidence from the sources, such as:

- Louisiana and New Orleans were important to the United States because of the Mississippi River. New Orleans was a port city with stores of supplies that could be seized. (Source 2)
- The areas of the United States that would be impacted by British control of the Mississippi River were vast. Through a series of tributaries connected to it, control of the Mississippi River would grant access to the entire Louisiana Territory. (Source 1 and Source 3)
- Control of the Mississippi River would have given the British the upper hand in the war. They would have controlled waterways throughout the Louisiana Territory as well as the Port of New Orleans and access to the Gulf of Mexico. (Source 4)

A strong response also includes important information beyond what is presented in the sources, such as:

- Describing the events of the Battle of New Orleans. The British made several advances to gain control of the Mississippi River. The U.S. troops were no match for the British navy. British Commander Pakenham planned to split his forces and attack the Americans from two different directions, but he was unsuccessful. The British lost significantly more soldiers in the Battle of New Orleans than the Americans. The war gave Americans a feeling of unity, and the people of Louisiana had played an important role in that victory. This was an important step to becoming a true part of the United States.
- Describing the role of Lafitte and his privateers. The British offered Pirate Jean Lafitte a position in the British army, gold, and the release of his brother Pierre in return for his assistance in taking control of New Orleans. Lafitte sent the papers to the U.S. legislature declaring his loyalty to the U.S. and offering his help to the American war effort, but they refused. Pierre Lafitte mysteriously escaped from jail. General Andrew Jackson came to prepare the city's defenses. The Lafitte brothers offered their services to him directly, and he accepted. The Lafitte brothers played a significant role in the victory providing men and because they had an extensive knowledge of the area.

**Printable
Student Version**

***Note: Some sources are available only in digital format. A link is provided and will require the use of a computer to view the source.**

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(This page will not be scored.)

