

In developing your answer to Part III, be sure to keep this general definition in mind:

discuss means “to make observations about something using facts, reasoning, and argument; to present in some detail”

PART III

DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION

This question is based on the accompanying documents. The question is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. Some of the documents have been edited for the purposes of the question. As you analyze the documents, take into account the source of each document and any point of view that may be presented in the document.

Historical Context:

During the 19th and 20th centuries, geography influenced many of the actions taken by the United States to expand its territory or to protect its national interests.

Task: Using information from the documents and your knowledge of United States history, answer the questions that follow each document in Part A. Your answers to the questions will help you write the Part B essay, in which you will be asked to

- Discuss the influence of geography on actions that supported the territorial expansion *and/or* the protection of United States national interests during the 19th and 20th centuries

Part A

Short-Answer Questions

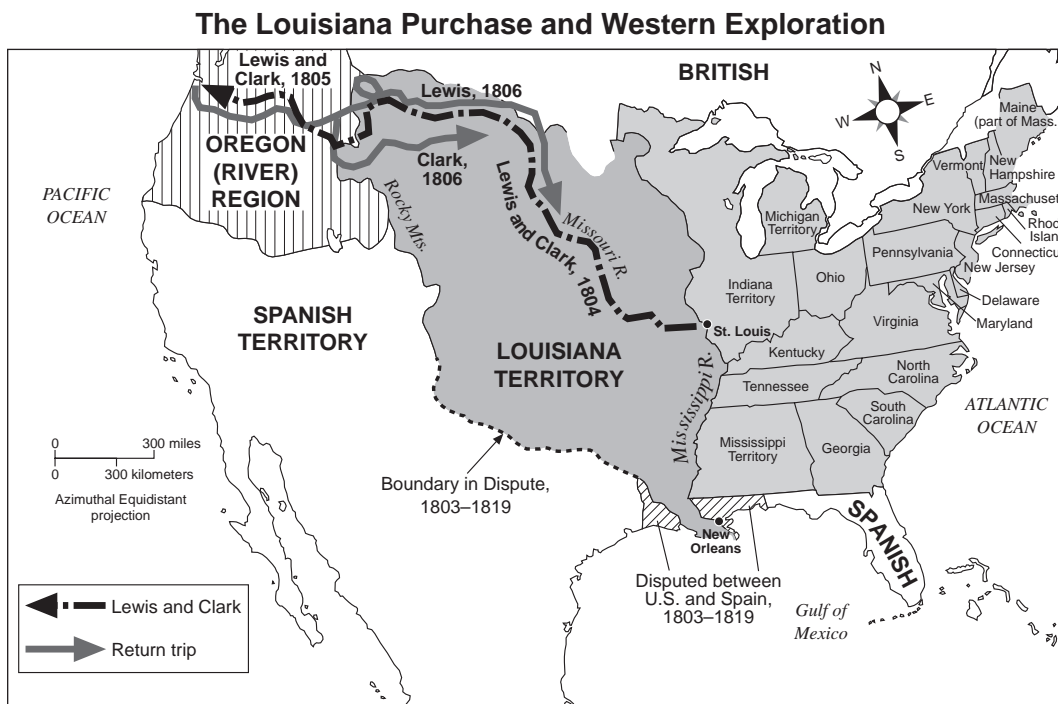
Directions: Analyze the documents and answer the questions that follow each document in the space provided.

Document 1a

. . . The object of your mission is to explore the Missouri river; & such principal stream of it, as by its course & communication with the waters of the Pacific ocean, may offer the most direct & practicable water communication across this continent, for the purpose of commerce. . . .

— President Thomas Jefferson, Instructions to Meriwether Lewis, June 20, 1803;
Library of Congress Exhibition on Thomas Jefferson

Document 1b



1 Based on these documents, what was **one** goal of President Thomas Jefferson when he instructed Meriwether Lewis to explore the Missouri River? [1]

Score

Document 2

. . . Besides the recovery of the country lost, or jeoparded [jeopardized] by our diplomacy of 1818, the settlers in Oregon will also recover and open for us *the North American road to India!* This road lies through the South Pass, and the mouth of the Oregon [River]; and as soon as the settlements are made, our portion of the North American continent will immediately commence its Asiatic trade on this new and national route. This great question I explored some years ago, and only refer to it now to give a glimpse of the brilliant destiny which awaits the population of the Oregon valley.

Twenty-two years ago, President Monroe, in a message to the two Houses of Congress, proclaimed the principle as fundamental in American policy, that no part of North America was open to European colonization, domination, interference, or influence of any kind [Monroe Doctrine]. That declaration had its reference to Great Britain and the Oregon [region], and it found its response in the hearts of all Americans. Time has not weakened that response, but confirmed it; and if any European power develops a design upon Texas, the response will apply to it also. . . .

Source: Senator Thomas Hart Benton, Speech to the Senate on the Oregon Territory, June 3, 1844, *Congressional Globe*, 28th Congress, 1st Session

2a According to this document, how would the United States benefit from control of Oregon? [1]

Score

b According to Senator Benton, what feature of the Monroe Doctrine can be used to protect the United States national interest in the Oregon region? [1]

Score

Document 3a

“On Our Way to Rio Grande”

The Mexicans are on our soil
In war they wish us to embroil
They’ve tried their best and worst to vex [worry] us
By murdering our brave men in Texas
We’re on our way to Rio Grande
On our way to Rio Grande
On our way to Rio Grande
And with arms [guns] they’ll find us handy. . . .

Source: George Washington Dixon, 1846 song about the Mexican War; Erik Bruun and Jay Crosby, eds. *Our Nation’s Archive*, Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, 1999

Document 3b

Prior to the Mexican War, President Polk sent John Slidell, a United States negotiator, to Mexico to offer to settle the disputes between the two nations.

. . . And yet again, in his [President Polk’s] message of December 7, 1847, that “the Mexican Government refused even to hear the terms of adjustment which he (our minister of peace) was authorized to propose, and finally, under wholly unjustifiable pretexts [reasons], involved the two countries in war, by invading the territory of the State of Texas, striking the first blow, and shedding the blood of our citizens on *our own soil*.”

And whereas this House [of Representatives] is desirous to obtain a full knowledge of all the facts which go to establish whether the particular spot on which the blood of our citizens was so shed was or was not at that time *our own soil*:

Source: Abraham Lincoln, “Spot” Resolutions in the House of Representatives, December 22, 1847; *Congressional Globe*, 30th Congress, 1st Session

3 According to these documents, what role did the Rio Grande play in the Mexican War? [1]

Score

Document 4

I propose in this letter to present such considerations as seem to me pertinent [relevant] and feasible, in favor of the speedy construction of a railroad, connecting at some point our eastern network of railways with the waters of the Pacific ocean. . . .

6. We have already expended some scores of millions of dollars on fortifications, and are urgently required to expend as many more. Especially on the Pacific is their construction pressingly demanded. I do not decide how fast nor how far this demand may or should be responded to; but I do say that a Pacific railroad, whereby the riflemen of the mountains could be brought to the Pacific within three days, and those of the Missouri within ten, would afford more security to San Francisco than ever so many gigantic and costly fortifications. . . .

But enough on this head [topic].

The social, moral, and intellectual blessings of a Pacific railroad can hardly be glanced at within the limits of an article. Suffice it for the present that I merely suggest them.

1. Our mails are now carried to and from California by steamships, via Panama, in twenty to thirty days, starting once a fortnight. The average time of transit from writers throughout the Atlantic states to their correspondents on the Pacific exceeds thirty days. With a Pacific railroad, this would be reduced to ten; for the letters written in Illinois or Michigan would reach their destinations in the mining counties of California quicker than letters sent from New York or Philadelphia would reach San Francisco. With a daily mail by railroad from each of our Atlantic cities to and from California, it is hardly possible that the amount of both letters and printed matter transmitted, and consequently of postage, should not be speedily quadrupled. . . .

Source: Horace Greeley, *An Overland Journey from New York to San Francisco, in The Summer of 1859*, C. M. Saxton, Barker & Co., 1860

4 Based on this document, state **two** ways a railroad to the Pacific would help overcome the geographic obstacle of distance. [2]

(1) _____

Score

(2) _____

Score

Document 5

. . . It has come to be understood also by Senators and others that the great territory [Alaska] which Secretary Seward proposes to acquire has a far higher value, relative and intrinsic, than was at first represented by the opponents of the acquisition. We do not place very much importance upon the argument of a distinguished officer, that our national “virtue” would be strengthened by acquiring Russian-America; and we cannot give any weight to many other points that have been urged. But when it is made to appear that *coal* seams “strike the rugged fields of Sitka,” and when Commodore Rodgers refers to the growth of *timber* which is particularly valuable on a coast so bare as that of the Pacific, and when we are told by high authority about the *fisheries*, whose wealth can scarcely be over-estimated, and which will probably become as important to us in the next generation as those of Newfoundland now are; and when further we are reminded by a Boston paper of the great *whale* fishery of the Northern Pacific and of Behrings Straits, in which Massachusetts is so deeply interested, we have things brought to our notice which are as easily appreciated here as upon the Pacific coast. And when in addition to all these considerations, we are reminded that in the opening trade with China and Japan—which we expect to see developed into such imposing proportions within a quarter of a century—the Aleutian islands which, being included in the proposed cession, stand almost as a half-way station—the route between the two Continents being carried far to the North by following the great circle and by currents; and that moreover these islands are likely to furnish the most commanding naval station in that part of the ocean—it must be admitted by all parties that the question is at any rate one of continental relations. We cannot doubt that points like these have been duly weighed by Senators during the past week, and will not be without power over their votes when they make their decision upon the treaty. . . .

Source: “The Russian Treaty Before the Senate”, *The New York Times*, April 8, 1867 (adapted)

5 Based on this document, state **two** geographic benefits of acquiring Alaska. [2]

(1) _____

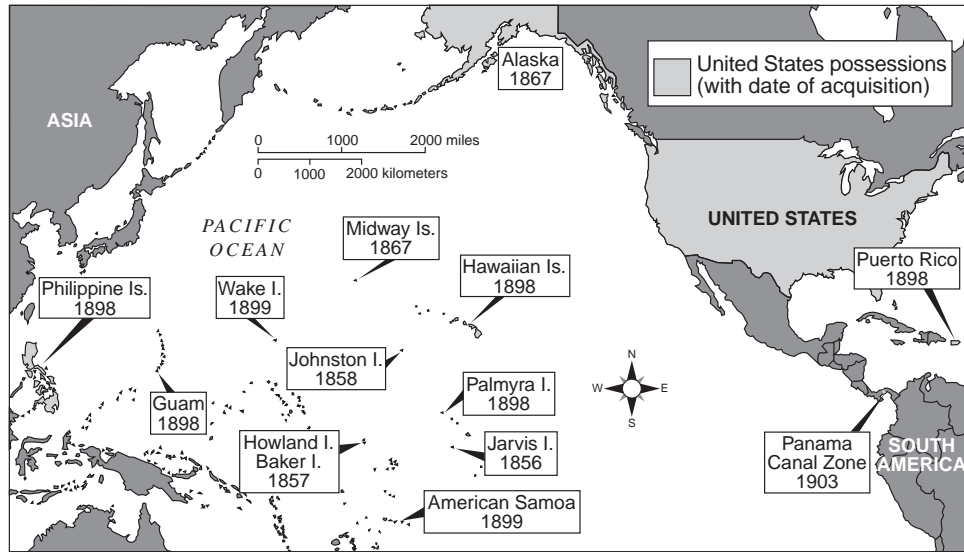
Score

(2) _____

Score

Document 6

United States Expansion, 1857–1903



Source: Briggs and Fish-Petersen, *Brief Review in United States History and Government*, Prentice Hall, 2001 (adapted)

6 According to this map, how did the location of these possessions promote or protect United States interests? [1]

Score

Document 7

... There are many among us who in the past closed their eyes to events abroad—because they believed in utter good faith what some of their fellow Americans told them—that what was taking place in Europe was none of our business; that no matter what happened over there, the United States could always pursue its peaceful and unique course in the world.

There are many among us who closed their eyes, from lack of interest or lack of knowledge; honestly and sincerely thinking that the many hundreds of miles of salt water made the American Hemisphere so remote that the people of North and Central and South America could go on living in the midst of their vast resources without reference to, or danger from, other Continents of the world.

There are some among us who were persuaded by minority groups that we could maintain our physical safety by retiring within our continental boundaries—the Atlantic on the east, the Pacific on the west, Canada on the north and Mexico on the south. I illustrated the futility—the impossibility—of that idea in my Message to the Congress last week. Obviously, a defense policy based on that is merely to invite future attack. . . .

— President Franklin D. Roosevelt,
Radio Address “On National Defense”, May 26, 1940; FDR Library.

7 According to this document, why did some people believe that the United States was safe from foreign threats? [1]

Score

Document 8



Source: James H. Hansen, "Soviet Deception in the Cuban Missile Crisis," *Studies in Intelligence: Journal of the American Intelligence Professional*, 2002 (adapted)

8 According to this map, what was the role of geography in the Cuban missile crisis? [1]

Score

Document 9

U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf are vital to the national security. These interests include access to oil and the security and stability of key friendly states in the region. The United States will defend its vital interests in the area, through the use of U.S. military force if necessary and appropriate, against any power with interests inimical [unfriendly] to our own. The United States also will support the individual and collective self-defense of friendly countries in the area to enable them to play a more active role in their own defense. The United States will encourage the effective expressions of support and the participation of our allies and other friendly states to promote our mutual interests in the Persian Gulf region. . . .

Source: National Security Directive 45, "U.S. Policy in Response to the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait," 08/20/1990, George H. W. Bush Library

9 Based on this document, state **one** way that United States national interests in the Persian Gulf were affected by geography. [1]

Score

Part B

Essay

Directions: Write a well-organized essay that includes an introduction, several paragraphs, and a conclusion. Use evidence from *at least five* documents in the body of the essay. Support your response with relevant facts, examples, and details. Include additional outside information.

Historical Context:

During the 19th and 20th centuries, geography influenced many of the actions taken by the United States to expand its territory or to protect its national interests.

Task: Using information from the documents and your knowledge of United States history, write an essay in which you

- Discuss the influence of geography on actions that supported the territorial expansion *and/or* the protection of United States national interests during the 19th and 20th centuries

Guidelines:

In your essay, be sure to

- Develop all aspects of the task
- Incorporate information from *at least five* documents
- Incorporate relevant outside information
- Support the theme with relevant facts, examples, and details
- Use a logical and clear plan of organization, including an introduction and a conclusion that are beyond a restatement of the theme