LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Assessments, Accountability, and Analytics

LEAP Assessment Guide for U.S. History

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Purpose

This document is designed to assist Louisiana educators in understanding the LEAP U.S. History assessment

Introduction

Students in U.S. History will take the LEAP U.S. History assessment, which provides

- questions that have been reviewed by Louisiana educators to ensure their alignment to the Louisiana Student Standards for U.S. History and appropriateness for Louisiana students;
- ability to measure the full range of student performance; and
- information for educators and parents about student readiness in social studies and whether students are “on track” for college and careers.

Vision for Social Studies Standards and Assessment

To be ready for success, students must build knowledge of the world; thoughtfully examine the information they read, hear, and observe; and develop and express their ideas through speaking and writing. Through regular analysis and evaluation of information from an array of high-quality primary and secondary sources and engaging learning experiences, students will develop the required knowledge, skills, and abilities to demonstrate understanding of important content and concepts. A leading goal in social studies is to prepare students for civic life by helping them to become knowledgeable about the world, reason through complex questions, and effectively express their ideas. To accomplish this goal, students must consistently do the following in their social studies class:

- build content knowledge and skills through meaningful learning opportunities and the exploration of high-quality, complex sources;
- engage in the majority of the thinking, speaking, and writing; and
- practice using accurate and relevant information from their social studies knowledge and well-chosen evidence from sources to support claims about social studies concepts.

Simply stated, students must develop a broad and deep knowledge of the content so that they are able to express and support claims about social studies concepts.

LEAP Civics and U.S. History Assessments – Course Requirements and Accountability

There are two reasons why students must take the LEAP assessment for a course.

1. Bulletin 741 requires that all students must take the LEAP for all assessment-eligible courses (English I, English II, Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, Civics, U.S. History.) Please note that U.S. History will not be a course eligible for assessment in 2027-2028 and thereafter, when it becomes a district-administered assessment. School systems must select the weight for the final course as 15-30%. Entry date into high school and graduation requirements have **no relevance** to this requirement.
2. Bulletin 741 requires that all students take and pass one assessment in each of three subject pairs.
   a. For students entering high school before 2024-2025, students must pass English I or English II; Algebra I or Geometry; and Biology or U.S. History.
   b. For students entering high school during or after 2024-2025, students must pass English I or English II; Algebra I or Geometry; and Biology or Civics.

   All initial tests, regardless of reason for assessment, are included in the School Performance Score (SPS) with one exception for Civics. Initial scores for Civics will only be included in the SPS for students who require Civics instead of U.S. History to meet graduation requirements.

Assessment Design

Supporting Social Studies Instruction

The LEAP U.S. History assessment design reflects the vision and instructional priorities for social studies by providing students with opportunities to answer meaningful questions that allow them to demonstrate and apply their understanding of social studies content and concepts; and express and develop claims supported by social studies knowledge and evidence from sources in a way that is logical and cohesive.

Set Based Design, Content Knowledge, and Sources

The LEAP U.S. History assessment has a set-based design. This design includes:

- two to six related source documents that provide the context from which students answer sets of questions;
- questions that ask students to use content knowledge and the source documents to show an understanding of content and concepts;
- item sets that include selected-response questions (multiple choice, multiple select), one or two technology-enhanced items, and some sets culminate with a constructed-response item; and
- a task set that contains selected-response questions and an extended-response item worth up to eight points and scored using a two-dimensional rubric that measures content and claims.

Standalone selected-response items, which are not part of task or item sets, are also part of the test to provide for greater coverage of assessable content.

Sets and standalone items include a variety of source documents. Source documents may include: excerpts from text-based primary and/or secondary sources; authentic and/or reproductions of historical maps; charts, tables, and/or graphs; timelines and/or series of events; graphic organizers and/or diagrams; illustrations, paintings, and/or photographs; and historical posters and/or political cartoons.

Assessable Content

All Louisiana Student Standards for U.S. History from Western Expansion to Progressivism, Isolationism through the Great War, Becoming a World Power through World War II, Cold War Era, and The Modern Age (Standards 2–6) are eligible for assessment. The Historical Thinking Skills (Standard 1) contain important social studies skills and practices that are necessary to master in order to answer the items successfully.

Item sets that assess content from the final unit of the Social Studies Sample Scope and Sequence for U.S. History include carefully chosen source documents that allow students to respond using their social studies skills and content knowledge from previous units. The task set, which contains the extended-response question, may address key themes covered throughout the course, but it will not assess specific content from the final unit.

Item Types

The LEAP U.S. History assessment includes the following item types.

- **Selected Response (SR):** This item type includes traditional multiple-choice (MC) questions with four answer options and only one correct answer, as well as multiple-select (MS) questions with more than four answer options and two or more correct answers. MS questions for U.S. History have five to seven answer options; the question stem identifies the number of correct answers required. All SR items are worth one point each and students cannot earn partial credit.
- **Constructed Response (CR)**: This item type appears at the end of some item sets and asks students to write a brief response to a question that is scored using an item-specific rubric with a 0–2 point scale. Some CR items may include two parts in order to support the assignment of two score points.
- **Technology Enhanced (TE)**: This item type appears at or near the end of item sets and uses interactive technology to capture students' understanding in ways that cannot be accomplished by SR items. TE items are worth up to two points and may include interactive features such as, but not limited to, drag and drop, drop-down menus, and text highlight. For more information about the different kinds of TE items and where to find examples of each type, refer to LEAP Technology-Enhanced Item Types.
- **Extended Response (ER)**: This item type appears at the end of the task set and asks students to write an in-depth response that expresses and develops a claim, incorporating their knowledge of the content and concepts along with evidence from the source documents. The ER item is worth up to eight points and is scored using a two-dimensional rubric that measures content and claims. Each dimension is scored using a rubric with a scale of 0–4 points. A sample U.S. History ER rubric is available here.

Test Design

The table below outlines the design of the LEAP U.S. History assessment.

Test Session	Components	Number of Points	Time Allowed
Session 1	Item Sets and Standalone Items	32–33	80 minutes
Session 2	Item Set	5–6	65 minutes
	Task Set	12	
Session 3	Item Sets and Standalone Items*	19	80 minutes
Total Operational Form	7 Item Sets, 1 Task Set, and Standalone Items	69	225 minutes

*Additional items used for research purposes may appear anywhere within the test session and do not count toward a student's final score on the test.

Reporting Categories

The LEAP Social Studies report for U.S. History provides an overall score and achievement level as well as performance information for the categories related to historical topics or time periods associated with Standards 2–6 so that teachers can better understand overall strengths and weaknesses. While scores are only reported for these categories, it is important for students to demonstrate their competency with respect to Historical Thinking Skills in order to perform well on the assessment.

The approximate percentage of score points by reporting category is shown in the table below. As the standards assessed by constructed-response items and the task set varies by year, the percentages by reporting categories **do not** take constructed-response items and the task set into account.

Reporting Category	Approximate Percentage of Score Points
Western Expansion to Progressivism	25
Isolationism through the Great War	17
Becoming a World Power through World War II	28
Cold War Era and the Modern Age*	30
Total	100

*The Cold War Era and the Modern Age are a combined reporting category, which reflects the instructional approach to content coverage exemplified in instructional materials and allows the assessment to better support instruction by providing the opportunity for item sets that include items aligned to GLEs across Standards 5 and 6. Items aligned to GLEs in Standard 6 will comprise no less than one-fourth and no more than one-half of the percentage for the combined reporting category (30%).

Achievement-Level Definitions

Achievement-level definitions briefly describe the expectations for student performance at each of Louisiana's five achievement levels. The achievement levels are part of Louisiana's cohesive assessment system and indicate a student's ability to demonstrate proficiency on the Louisiana student standards defined for a specific course. Achievement level descriptors (ALDs) are content specific and describe the knowledge, skills, and processes that students typically demonstrate at each achievement level. The LEAP U.S. History Achievement Level Descriptors are available in the LDOE Assessment library.

The following list identifies the achievement-level definitions for the LEAP assessment program:

- **Advanced:** Students performing at this level have **exceeded** college and career readiness expectations and are well prepared for the next level of study in this content area.

- **Mastery:** Students performing at this level have **met** college and career readiness expectations and are prepared for the next level of study in this content area.
- **Basic:** Students performing at this level have **nearly met** college and career readiness expectations and may need additional support to be fully prepared for the next level of study in this content area.
- **Approaching Basic:** Students performing at this level have **partially met** college and career readiness expectations and will need much support to be prepared for the next level of study in this content area.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Students performing at this level have **not yet met** the college and career readiness expectations and will need extensive support to be prepared for the next level of study in this content area.

Test Administration

The school or district test coordinator will communicate each school's testing schedule. For updates to the testing schedule, refer to the 2026-2027 Louisiana Assessment Calendar. All LEAP assessments are timed. No additional time is permitted, except for students who have a documented extended time accommodation (e.g., an IEP).

Administration	Testing Window	Student-Level Results
Fall	November 30 - December 18, 2026	In window
Spring	April 1 - May 12, 2027	Near the end of the test window
Summer	June 21 - June 25, 2027	In window

Scheduling Requirements for Computer-Based Testing

Computer-based testing allows school systems some flexibility in scheduling. However, to reduce incidences of testing irregularities, school systems must adhere to the following scheduling and administration practices:

- Testing students in the same grade level across the school at or very close to the same time
- Completing makeup testing for students immediately upon their return
- Limiting student interaction during breaks between test sessions
- Isolating students who have not completed testing for the day (e.g., students with extended time accommodation)
- Preventing interaction between groups of students taking the same tests at different times within a testing day
- Requiring the completion of a session once it is opened (i.e., limiting the reopening of test sessions)
- Taking the sessions within a content area in the correct order (e.g., U.S. History Session 1 taken before U.S. History Session 2, U.S. History Session 2 taken before U.S. History Session 3)

We also recommend:

- limiting sessions to no more than three in one day for a student; and
- administering no more than one session that includes an extended-response task or writing prompt (i.e., U.S. History Session 2, English I and English II Session 1 and Session 2) in a day to an individual student.

For more information about scheduling and administration policies, refer to the Online Assessment Scheduling Guidance, found on the LDOE Assessment Resources webpage.

Testing Materials

All students must receive scratch paper and pencils from their test administrator for each test session. Provided scratch paper must **not** have any writing on it. Scratch paper must be collected at the end of each session and any scratch paper with writing must be returned to the school test coordinator.

Computer-Based Testing Platform

Students will enter their answers into the online testing system. When composing their written responses, students will type their responses into an answer box like the one shown. The toolbar at the top of the response box allows students to undo or redo an action; and add boldface, italics, or underlining to their response. There is a limit to the amount of characters that can be typed into the response box; however, it is set well beyond what a student might produce given the LEAP expectations for written responses and timing. The character count is not included on the response box so students focus on the quality of their responses rather than the amount of writing.

The computer-based tests include the following online tools, which allow a student to select answer choices, “mark” items, eliminate answer options, take notes, enlarge the item, and guide the reading of a text or an item line by line. A help tool is also featured to assist students as they use the online system.

- Pointer

- Cross-off

- Highlighter

- Sticky note

- Magnifier

- Line guide

- Masking

- Help

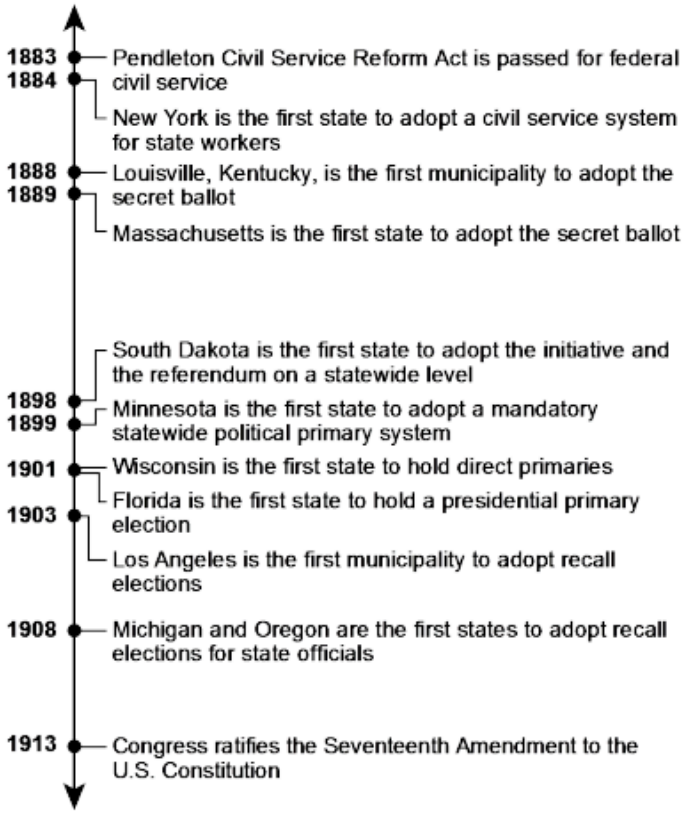
All students taking the computer-based test should work through the Online Tools Training, using the online tools so students are well prepared to navigate the online testing system.

Sample Test Items

This section includes sample test items. The answer key, alignment information, and links to rubrics can be found on the Answer Key and Rubrics table. These are sample items from the LEAP 2025 U.S. History Item Set – Political Machines and Progressive Reforms and the LEAP 2025 U.S. History Task Set – The American Transportation System of the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries. The full item set and full task set are available in the LDOE Assessment Guidance library. The practice test, sample item set, and sample task set provide examples of how the content may be assessed in U.S. History. They include source documents, technology-enhanced, selected-, constructed-, and extended-response questions.

Source 4

Political Reforms during the Progressive Era



Based on Source 4, which statement **best** explains how Progressive reformers influenced the political process?

- ☐ A. Reform efforts expanded suffrage to racial minorities.
- ☐ B. Reform efforts increased public participation in politics.
- ☐ C. Reform efforts restricted the power of the federal government.
- ☐ D. Reform efforts created a political system with two parties.

Multiple-Select Item

Source 1

Excerpt from *To Hold Your District: Study Human Nature and Act Accordin'*
by George Washington Plunkitt

This excerpt is from a speech given by George Washington Plunkitt, a member of the Tammany Hall machine, who also served as a state senator between 1884 and 1904.

THERE's only one way to hold a district: you must study human nature and act accordin'. . . .

To learn real human nature you have to go among the people, see them and be seen. I know every man, woman, and child in the Fifteenth District . . . I know what they like and what they don't like, what they are strong at and what they are weak in, and I reach them by approachin' at the right side. . . .

What tells in holdin' your grip on your district is to go right down among the poor families and help them in the different ways they need help. I've got a regular system for this. If there's a fire in Ninth, Tenth, or Eleventh Avenue, for example, any hour of the day or night, I'm usually there with some of my election district captains as soon as the fire engines. If a family is burned out I don't ask whether they are Republicans or Democrats, and I don't refer them to the Charity Organization Society, which would investigate their case in a month or two and decide they were worthy of help about the time they are dead from starvation. I just get quarters[1] for them, buy clothes for them if their clothes were burned up, and fix them up till they get things runnin' again. It's philanthropy, but it's politics, too—mighty good politics. Who can tell how many votes one of these fires bring me? The poor are the most grateful people in the world, and, let me tell you, they have more friends in their neighborhoods than the rich have in theirs.

If there's a family in my district in want I know it before the charitable societies do, and me and my men are first on the ground. I have a special corps to look up such cases. The consequence is that the poor look up to George W. Plunkitt as a father, come to him in trouble—and don't forget him on election day.

Another thing, I can always get a job for a deservin' man. I make it a point to keep on the track of jobs, and it seldom happens that I don't have a few up my sleeve ready for use. I know every big employer in the district and in the whole city, for that matter, and they ain't in the habit of sayin' no to me when I ask them for a job.

[1]**quarters**: lodgings

Based on Source 1, which statements **best** describe the relationship between political machines and local communities in the late nineteenth century?

Select the **two** correct answers.

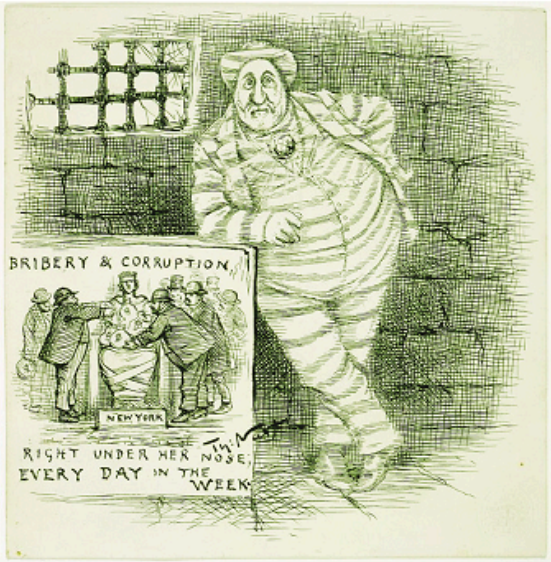
- ☐ A. Political machines provided aid to urban communities in exchange for votes.
- ☐ B. Political machines worked with labor unions to expand their influence in local communities.
- ☐ C. Political machines emerged among immigrant groups in rural communities.
- ☐ D. Political machines used a system of patronage to gain the support of voters and their communities.
- ☐ E. Political machines worked with voters to eliminate corruption in government.
- ☐ F. Political machines worked with voters to block immigrants from moving into their communities.

Technology-Enhanced Item

Source 2

The Spirit of Tweed is Mighty Still
by Thomas Nast

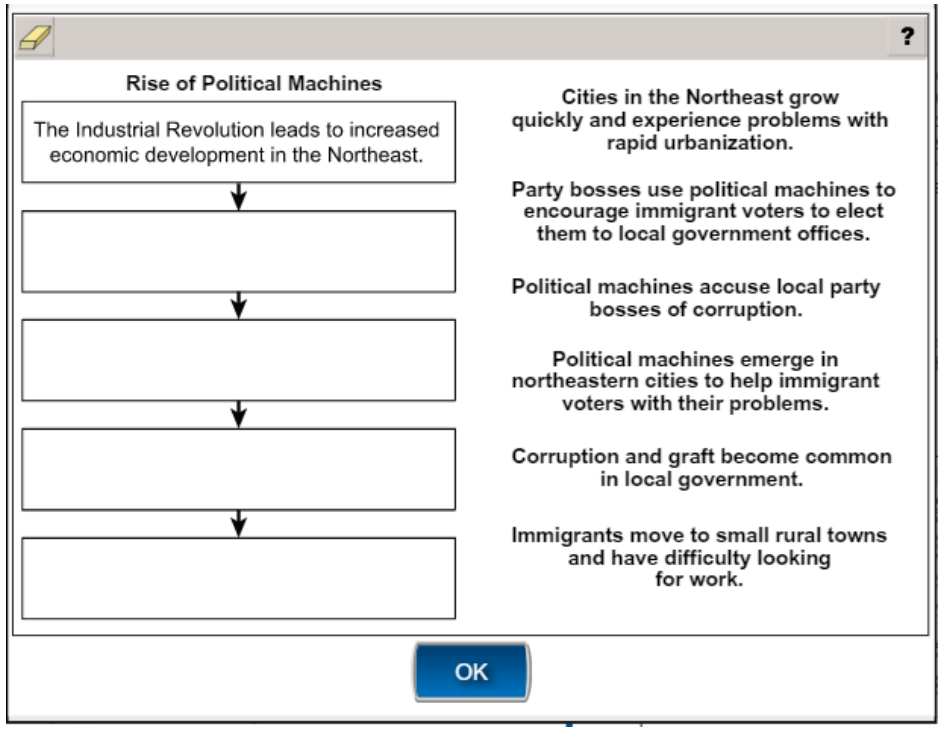
This political cartoon was published by *Harper's Weekly* in 1886 with the caption: "The spirit of Tweed is mighty still . . . and even yet you don't know what you are going to do about it!"



Source: Library of Congress.

Political machines emerged in the late nineteenth century.

Drag and drop the **four** correct events into the flow chart in chronological order from earliest to most recent to show the rise of political machines and their effects.



Constructed-Response Item

Source 3

Excerpt from *What Will the Harvest Be?*
by Robert La Follette, Sr.

This excerpt is from campaign literature for Senator Robert La Follette that was published in the early twentieth century.

What Will the Harvest Be?

There was a time in Wisconsin when the boss and representatives of the railroads nominated the candidates for both parties. How? By intervening between the voter and the nomination and "getting" the delegates.

You remember how it was done; railroad passes, entertainment, money, influence. Men who could not be elected as delegates sat in conventions on proxies[1] purchased as merchandise. Delegates honestly elected were unseated by fraud, and contesting delegates seated. These were some of the means.

There was a time in Wisconsin when the railroads ruled and ruled supreme. They openly boasted of their power. For more than thirty years no law was enacted except by consent of the railroads.

La Follette secured the anti-lobby law and drove from the capitol some of the most corrupt and notorious characters of the age. This law must be enforced.

La Follette secured the anti-pass law and thus did away with the common and wholesale bribery of public officials.

La Follette secured the corrupt practices acts designed to purify the caucuses[2] and elections. This law must be strengthened and enforced. It has been flagrantly violated in recent years.

La Follette, with a clear vision, saw then what Roosevelt and Hughes[3] see now—that the people must be freed from boss rule.

La Follette secured the primary election law. Under the primary law you vote direct for your choice, your vote is your own, if there is failure it is your failure. Make the fight for right men and right laws in the open, as you can, and you will win.

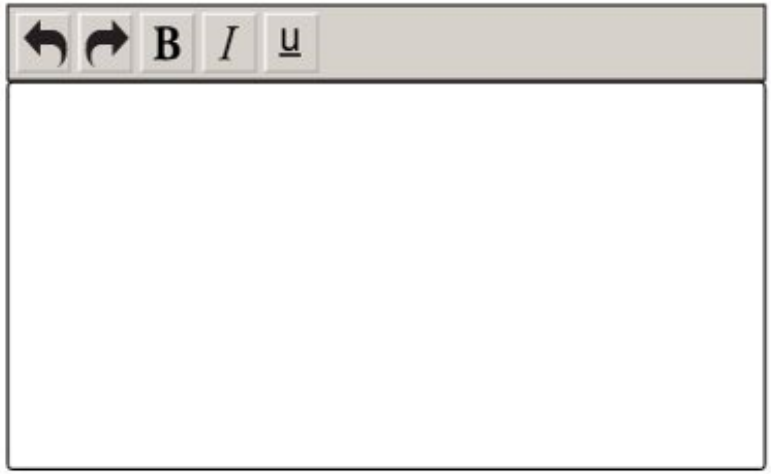
This great movement in Wisconsin has given Wisconsin a reputation throughout the nation. It is the Wisconsin Idea and other states are following in its wake.

[1]**proxies**: substitutes, representatives

[2]**caucuses**: meetings of political party members to select candidates

[3]**Hughes**: Charles Evans Hughes, a Republican governor who was part of the Progressive movement

Based on the sources and your knowledge of U.S. history, describe **one** problem caused by political corruption and explain how Progressives proposed to reform that problem.



Source 4

Transportation Industry Statistics (1910–1940)

Railroad Industry Statistics

Year	Number of Railroad Employees	Number of Passengers Carried	Tons of Freight Carried
1890	749,000	492,431,000	76,207,000,000
1900	1,018,000	576,831,000	141,597,000,000
1910	1,699,000	971,683,000	255,017,000,000
1920	2,076,000	1,269,918,000	413,699,000,000
1930	1,517,000	707,987,000	385,815,000,000
1940	1,046,000	456,088,000	375,369,000,000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Automobile Industry Statistics

Year	Number of Passenger Cars Produced	Number of Manufacturing Employees
1900*	2,000	4,192
1910*	76,000	181,000
1920*	343,000	1,905,560
1930	323,000	2,784,745
1940	465,000	3,717,385

*Information for employees is taken from previous year

Source: Automobile Manufacturers Associations.

Domestic Airline Industry Statistics

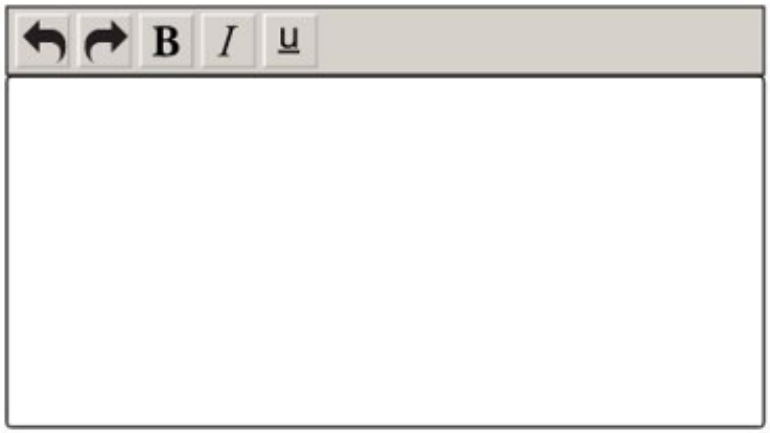
Year	Number of Airline Employees	Number of Passengers Carried
1930	2,778	384,506
1932	4,020	476,041
1934	4,201	475,461
1936	7,079	931,683
1938	9,008	1,197,100
1940	15,984	2,802,781

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

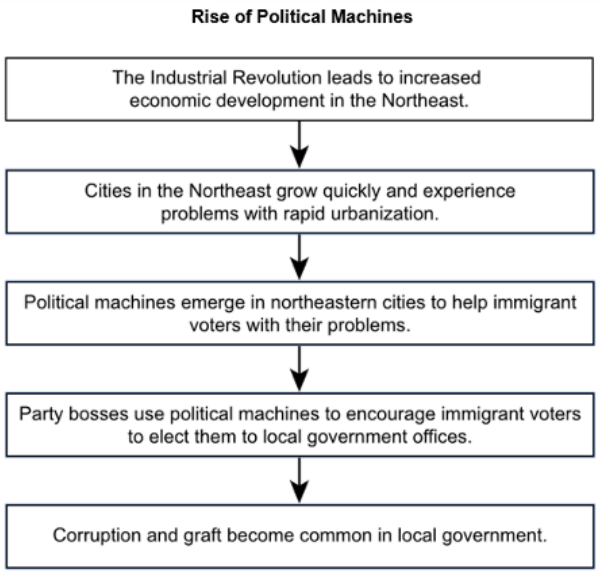
Based on the sources and your knowledge of U.S. history, analyze how the development of the transportation system in the United States affected the country economically and culturally in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

As you write, follow the directions below.

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



Answer Key and Rubrics

Item	Answer Key	Standard	Resource
Multiple-Choice Item	B	US.2.8	LEAP 2025 U.S. History Item Set – Political Machines and Progressive Reforms
Multiple-Select Item	A, D	US.2.6	
Technology-Enhanced Item		US.2.6	
Constructed-Response Item	Sample Constructed-Response Item Rubric and Scoring Notes	US.2.8	
Extended-Response Item	Sample Extended-Response Task Rubric and Scoring Notes	US.4.3	LEAP 2025 U.S. History Task Set – The American Transportation System of the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries

Resources

Assessment Guidance

- Assessment Development Educator Review Committees: describes the item development process and the associated committees, includes information on applying for participation
- 2026-2027 Louisiana Assessment Calendar: includes information on testing windows for test administrations
- LEAP 2025 U.S. History Achievement Level Descriptors: contains descriptions of the knowledge, skills, and processes that students demonstrate with relative consistency and accuracy at each level

Assessment Resources

- LEAP Technology-Enhanced Item Types: provides a summary of the different kinds of technology-enhanced items students may encounter in any CBT across courses and grade-levels
- LEAP 2025 U.S. History Sample Item Set and LEAP 2025 U.S. History Sample Task Set: offers examples of how the content may be assessed
- LEAP 2025 U.S. History Practice Test Answer Key: includes answer keys, scoring rubrics, alignment, and annotated student responses

DRC INSIGHT Portal:

- includes access to tutorials, manuals, and user guides
- Online Tools Training: allows students to become familiar with the tools available in the online testing platform

K-12 Social Studies Planning Webpage

- U.S. History Companion Document: provides the standards and GLEs for U.S. History and assists educators in interpreting the GLEs
- Social Studies Sample Scope and Sequence: U.S. History: provides a yearlong overview along with unit topics and instructional activities to support teachers in creating opportunities for students to explore the content and develop and support claims about U.S. History concepts
- Louisiana Student Standards for Social Studies (LSSS): outline what students should know and be able to do in social studies
- Social Studies Learning Progression: outline social studies knowledge progressions from kindergarten through high school
- Social Studies Course Frameworks: suggested resources designated to support teachers in implementing the LSSSS
- Land of Liberty: U.S. History curriculum for whole-class instruction designed to align with the 2022 LSSS

Contact the LDOE

- assessment@la.gov for assessment questions
- classroomsupporttoolbox@la.gov for curriculum and instruction questions
- LDOE Newsletters: subscribe to LDOE newsletters; includes archived copies of newsletters including LDOE Weekly School System Newsletters and Teacher Leader Newsletter.
- socialstudies@la.gov: for curriculum and instruction questions.