

Grade 6: 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 question addresses standard 6.70.

The information and drawing below relate to an advance in ancient Roman civilization.

Explain what the Roman solution to the sanitation problem indicates about Roman civilization.

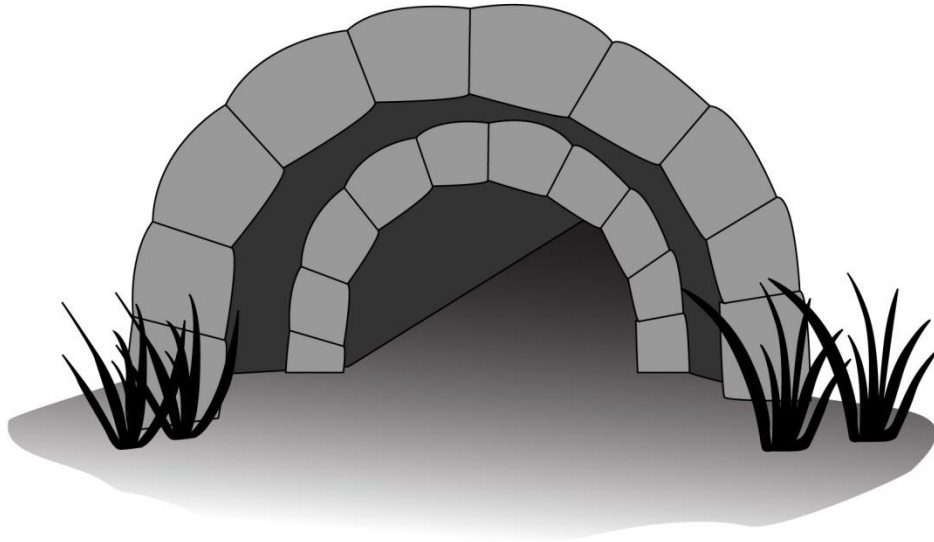
- What was the solution to the sanitation problem and what achievements of Roman civilization does it illustrate?
- How did the solution contribute to the growth of Roman cities?
- How did solving the sanitation problem in Roman cities also help explain why the Romans contributed in so many important ways to the development of Western civilization?
- Use the information below and your knowledge of ancient Rome to support your answer.

Every civilization establishes laws and procedures to manage its society. As people began to move together into villages, towns, and cities, one area of management became important: the removal of waste. Civilizations manage sanitation through laws and engineering. The Romans established a law, the Dejecti Effusive Act, which fined a person who poured waste out the window during the daytime. Yet, the Romans did not rely on laws alone. In History of Sanitation, historian John Cosgrove describes how the Romans dealt with the issue of sanitation:

The first sewers of Rome were built between 800 and 735 B.C., and . . . were intended to carry off the surface water and in other ways serve to drain the site of the ancient city. Indeed, the Cloaca Maxima, which was constructed during the period of the Kings, from 735 to 510 B.C., . . . became part of a combined sewage system for the city.

That the engineers who designed the sewerage system of Rome had a clear conception of the service expected of such drains, is evidenced by the manner in which the system was proportioned. The pipes gradually enlarged . . . until they finally reached the outlet . . . in the Tiber. It is stated by early writers that so complete was this system of sewers that every street in the ancient city was drained by a branch into the Tiber.

The Cloaca Maxima was one of the largest and most celebrated of the ancient sewers. The solidity of this structure can be judged by the fact that it has been in uninterrupted service for over 2,400 years, and at the present time is still in use, with no signs of immediate failure. The arches were made of neatly jointed stones fitted together without cement. . . . The actual dimensions of the mouth of the sewer are 11 feet wide and 12 feet high. The lateral branches . . . were of a size in proportion with their requirements. . . .



While each street in Rome was provided with an adequate sewer, it is more than probable that only a small percentage of the population had branches extending into their houses. . . .

. . . A practice seems to have grown up then of throwing . . . liquid and solid matter from the windows, sometimes to the discomfort or injury of hapless pedestrians.

To provide against accidents due to this cause, the Dejecti Effusive Act was passed.

—John Joseph Cosgrove, *History of Sanitation*, 1909

Sample A:

In Rome, there was a huge sanitation problem that could only be fixed by building sewage systems to carry out the sewage and to make everything cleaner. First of all, they had to have engineers that would design the systems and that would make sure that they work properly. The engineers made the pipes bigger, the mouth of the sewer 11 feet wide, and made the sewer 12 feet high. These were built on each street in Rome and they had a law passed saying that you can't throw liquid and solid matter out of windows and on to sidewalks, hitting people walking below. This act was called the Dejecti Effusive Act. The largest and most celebrated sewer was called the Cloaca Maxima and it had an uninterrupted service for a little over 2,400 years. The Cloaca Maxima is still in use today and hasn't ever stopped working.

By creating these sewer systems, the cities of Rome were growing more and more by the minute. Since they were now cleaner than they were before, many new people came and decided to move to these cities because they were a sanitary and safe place for children to play, crops to grow, and families and friends could spend more time together outdoors. With the new people, more crops, and a cleaner city, Rome was now more populated and had a large food supply. The citizens could handle their newly found sanitation by their government making new laws and acts stating what they could and could not do with the waste that they had. The cities have grown even more since then. They now have an advanced sewage system.

Solving the sanitation problem in Roman cities also helped explain why the Romans contributed in so many important ways to the development of Western civilizations because with them staying clean and sanitary, they might not have been going to war with the Western civilizations as much as they used to. They now were building more sewage systems or planting crops so they weren't very involved with wars and fights with neighboring countries, territories, or civilizations. There was now peace between the Roman civilization, the Western civilization, and all the civilizations around them. They were sanitary and had more free time with them not going to war as much.

With the Romans having their new sewage systems, they now knew how to keep sanitary and not live in filth as they did before. They now didn't go to war as much, were clean, had great sewage systems, and had a booming economy that was growing right before their eyes.

Score Point: Content 3, Literacy 4

Content: The student's response demonstrates a general understanding of the knowledge and skills related to the development of societies and civilizations which is demonstrated through adequate explanation and analysis (*By creating these sewer systems, the cities of Rome were growing more and more by the minute. Since they were now cleaner than they were before, many new people came and decided to move to these cities because they were a sanitary and safe place for children to play, crops to grow, and families and friends could spend more time together outdoors*). The response address all aspect of the question and uses evidence from the stimulus to support some facets of the response (*In Rome, there was a huge sanitation problem that could only be fixed by building sewage systems to carry out the sewage and to make everything cleaner. First of all, they had to have engineers that would design the systems and that would make sure they work properly. The engineers made the pipes bigger, the mouth of the sewer 11 feet wide, and made the sewer 12 feet high*). The response contains incorrect conjectures (*...also helped explain why the Romans contributed in so many important ways to*

the development of Western civilizations because them staying clean and sanitary, they might not have been going to war with the Western civilizations as much as they used to), keeping it at a score point 3.

Literacy: The response focuses on topics directly related to the question (*By creating these sewer systems, the cities of Rome were growing more and more by the minute. Since they were now cleaner than they were before, many new people came and decided to move to these cities*) and develops claims with relevant, well-chosen, concrete details and examples (*The engineers made the pipes bigger, the mouth of the sewer 11 feet wide, and made the sewer 12 feet high*). The relationships among ideas and concepts are cohesive and clear (*The cities could handle their newly found sanitation by their government making new laws and acts stating what they could and could not do with the waste that they had*) producing information appropriate for the task. The paper maintains an objective tone throughout, contains few errors in grammar and mechanics, and uses transition to create cohesion throughout. The response has a conclusion which contains support for the information provided. Although it has a limited introduction, the response still receives a score point 4.

Sample B:

" The intention of sewers were to carry off surface water and in other ways serve to drain the site of the ancient city." Before sewers were around, the roads would flood. When the sewers were invented, the roads would no longer flood because you would have the drains to carry the water to the Tiber River. Eventually, all of the drains in the city flowed into the Tiber River. The Romans had many solutions and achievements like, what was the solution to the sanitation problems and what are the achievements of the Roman civilization, how did the solution contribute to the Roman cities. Lastly, how did solving the sanitation problem in Rome cities help with the ideas that the Romans contributed to the Western Civilization.

The solution to the sanitation problem was making a law called the "Dejecti Effect Act." The law fined people who poured waste out their window during daytime. With no one pouring waste into the sewers anymore that meant that the water was not as much contaminated as it was. With stopping most of the sanitary issues the achievement of this illustrates that they it was time for a change, so they made the "Dejecti Effusive Act" and built the sewers. The sanitation problem was fixed by making the "Dejecti Effusive Act" and building more and more sewers.

The solution contributed to the growth of Roman cities by having high tech sewage where every one wanted to live. They also could attract more traders after a rain storm because the sewage system would have drained all the water back to the Tiber River. The roads would soon be dry because of the drains, so traders could come and trade with other people. The sewage system was very helpful and attracted a lot of people.

Solving the sanitation problem in Roman helped them contribute many important ideas develop to the Western civilization because they now knew from experience that they needed to build sewers which helped the Western civilization by them not having floods. When they don't have floods, they can have more traders come and trade to get the materials that they need to survive. It also means that more people will be attracted to live there because they have advanced technology.

All of the solutions and achievements helped the Roman Empire by giving them more credit to get famous. The Romans passes laws to keep their city safe. The invention of the sewage system made their city more popular, and more safe. The Roman Empire had many great ideas and this one was the best.

Score Point: Content 2, Literacy 3

Content: The student's response demonstrates a limited understanding of some of the knowledge and skills related to the development of societies and civilizations. The student attempts to address all aspects of the task but the explanations lack depth and detail while the analysis lacks focus and clarity (*With stopping most of the sanitary issues the achievement of this illustrates that they it was time for a change, so they made the "Dejecti Effusive Act" and built sewers. The sanitation problem was fixed by making the "Dejecti Effusive Act" and building more and more sewers*). Little evidence is used to support the response and although the student arrives at acceptable conclusions (*The solution contributed to the growth of Roman cities by having high tech sewage where every one wanted to live*), the response contains a large misunderstanding of the passage. The

student's response focuses on preventing flooding rather than sanitation, demonstrating only a partial understanding.

Literacy: The student's response contains an introduction but with limited clarity. A conclusion is provided and offers some support for the information given. Although some information is inappropriate for the task, topics and claims are developed with relevant facts and examples (*The solution to the sanitation problem was making a law called the "Dejecti Effect Act." The law fined people who poured waste out their window during daytime*). The relationships between ideas and concepts are described (*They also could attract more traders after a rain storm because the sewage system would have drained all the water back to the Tiber River. The roads would soon be dry because of the drains, so traders could come and trade with other people*). The student establishes and maintains an objective tone throughout and contains a few errors in grammar and mechanics, but these errors detract little from the overall comprehensibility of the paper.

Sample C:

The Romans had laws that state if you were to throw garbage out your window then you would be fined for littering. Romans made a sewer to cary waste all across Rome, but only a few percentage of people and their houses had branches to the sewer. Problems were common making a sewer like the Dejecti Effusive, but eventually the pipes got larger and they did not have as many problems as they did before. They whole reason why they made a sewer was because people in Rome would litter the streets and make it look like a nasty country. When the people of rome had littered the streets they made it dangerous to people because they could slip and fall and die or serverely danger them. the solution was the sewer, and the people who made the sewer had to go to the law maker to try to pass a bill that would make every one use they Dejecti Effusive and sooner the act was passed and that also made people from other countries to see Rome because it was clean and it looked very appealing to people. When trash was gone in many places it would not clog up Rome and it could make room for civilization like the western civilization in Rome. After how helpful the Romans saw how nice and good of a place it looked many people contributed to the sewer because they knew it would make Rome so much better and they were not wrong it helped Rome in many ways.

Score Point: Content 2, Literacy 2

Content: This response demonstrates a limited understanding of the historical period referenced in the question. The explanations provided lack depth and detail (*...made people from other countries to see Rome because it was clean and it looked very appealing to people. When trash was gone in many places it would not clog up Rome*) and the analysis lacks focus and clarity (*When people of Rome littered the streets they made it dangerous to people because they could slip and fall and die or severely danger them. The solution was the sewer, and the people who made the sewer had to go to the law maker to try to pass a bill...*). Additionally, the student uses little to no evidence from the stimulus for support. The student's conclusions are both incomplete (*Romans made a sewer to cary waste all across Rome, but only a few percentage of people and their houses had branches to the sewer*) and contain content errors (*Problems were common making a sewer like the Dejecti Effusive...*), demonstrating only a partial understanding.

Literacy: The student's response contains neither an introduction nor a conclusion. The response does focus on topics partially related to the question (*The Romans had laws that state if you were to throw garbage out your window then you would be fined for littering. Romans made a sewer to cary waste all across Rome...*) and describes some of the relationships among ideas (*They whole reason why they made a sewer was because people in Rome would litter the streets and make it look like a nasty country. When the people of rome had littered the streets they made it dangerous to people...*). The response contains errors in grammar and mechanics that partially detract from the overall comprehensibility. The overall lack of clarity, development, and mechanical errors keeps this response at a score point 2.

Sample D:

The solution to the saniation was that they drained the branch to the tiber they branches where getting into houses or gettingn to close to them.! When they drined the branches it help rome expanded the city and stuff.!

Score Point: Content 1, Literacy 1

Content: This response demonstrates little to no understanding of the knowledge and skills related to the development of societies and civilizations. The little information provided contains many content errors and flaws in reasoning (...they branches where getting into houses or getting to close to them) which shows no understanding of the historical period referenced in the question.

Literacy: The response contains and overwhelming amount of errors in grammar and mechanics as well as no development of topics and ideas, keeping this response at a score point 1.