



A-level HISTORY 7042/2J

Component 2J America: A Nation Divided, c1845–1877

Mark scheme

June 2025

Version: 1.0 Final



Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

No student should be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender identity and/or how they refer to the gender identity of others in their exam responses.

A consistent use of 'they/them' as a singular and pronouns beyond 'she/her' or 'he/him' will be credited in exam responses in line with existing mark scheme criteria.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

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Supporting Marking Guidance

A separate Supporting Marking Guidance document has been created for use in this series and any future series.

It has been written by the senior examining team. It applies to all A-level History options. The purpose of the guidance is to clarify key aspects of the mark scheme and further ensure consistency of approach across all options. The guidance does not reflect a change in the standard applied, but clarification and amplification of the standard. We hope that the guidance document will aid you in your understanding of how the standard should be applied and deepen your understanding of how the key aspects of the mark scheme work. The Supporting Marking Guidance should always be used in conjunction with the mark scheme, and any relevant examiner standardising and teacher training material.

Examiners can find the Supporting Marking Guidance on the associate extranet.

Teachers can find the Supporting Marking Guidance alongside the current mark scheme on Centre Services on results day. It will also be published with any future assessment materials on the public website.

Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity, you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level, you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly Level 3 with a small amount of Level 4 material it would be placed in Level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the Level 4 content.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

Section A

- 0 1** With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these three sources to an historian studying disputes over westward expansion, in the years 1845 to 1848.

[30 marks]

Target: AO2

Analyse and evaluate appropriate source material, primary and/or contemporary to the period, within the historical context.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Shows a very good understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance and combines this with a strong awareness of the historical context to present a balanced argument on their value for the particular purpose given in the question. The answer will convey a substantiated judgement. The response demonstrates a very good understanding of context. **25–30**
- L4:** Shows a good understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance and combines this with an awareness of the historical context to provide a balanced argument on their value for the particular purpose given in the question. Judgements may, however, be partial or limited in substantiation. The response demonstrates a good understanding of context. **19–24**
- L3:** Shows some understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance together with some awareness of the historical context. There may, however, be some imbalance in the degree of breadth and depth of comment offered on all three sources and the analysis may not be fully convincing. The answer will make some attempt to consider the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question. The response demonstrates an understanding of context. **13–18**
- L2:** The answer will be partial. It may, for example, provide some comment on the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question but only address one or two of the sources, or focus exclusively on content (or provenance), or it may consider all three sources but fail to address the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question. The response demonstrates some understanding of context. **7–12**
- L1:** The answer will offer some comment on the value of at least one source in relation to the purpose given in the question but the response will be limited and may be partially inaccurate. Comments are likely to be unsupported, vague or generalist. The response demonstrates limited understanding of context. **1–6**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Students must deploy knowledge of the historical context to show an understanding of the relationship between the sources and the issues raised in the question, when assessing the significance of provenance, the arguments deployed in the sources and the tone and emphasis of the sources. Descriptive answers which fail to do this should be awarded no more than Level 2 at best. Answers should address both the value and the limitations of the sources for the particular question and purpose given.

Source A: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:

Provenance, tone and emphasis

- the source originates from a Democratic magazine; therefore, the audience would be predominately those who voted for the Democrat Party across the North and South. The Democrats had long had a political drive for westward expansion, especially towards annexing land from Mexico. However, as a partisan newspaper, it may be limited as not all Democrats were in favour of expanding into Mexico or admitting Texas
- the date offers value as this is published following the 1844 election where Polk won on the promise to admit Texas, whilst Texas was admitted in December 1845 by Congress and President Tyler. Texas is still a very much-debated topic, with many in the North seeing the admission of Texas as early signs of the Democrats seeking aggressive expansionist policies
- the purpose is to justify the admission of Texas as a slave state into the Union as well as stating that it was in the national good to admit it, so as to achieve their 'Manifest Destiny'
- the tone begins very firmly by addressing the opposition to the admission of Texas to admit defeat, and continues firmly with the conclusion that Texas was now part of the Union. Further, there is a critical tone towards the opposition who press the idea that admitting Texas was a method for expanding slavery.

Content and argument

- the source argues that westward expansion has brought benefits to the Union, and those who are interfering with the annexation of new land must surrender. The Whigs had run on a platform in 1845 to reject the admission of Texas as a state. Following Clay's defeat to Polk in the electoral college count, many Whigs still were wary of the admission of such a large area
- the source continues to argue that the admission of Texas was a major achievement for the nation in achieving their 'Manifest Destiny'. The author, John O'Sullivan, coined this phrase in 1845, and was used by the Democrats throughout the 1840s and 1850s as justification for future westward expansion actions, such as the pursuit of California and New Mexico. This is emphasised as the start and at the end of the source
- the source argues that admitting Texas was not purely driven by desires to expand slavery. This offers a limited argument, as Texas does become a slave state. Texas was so large that it could have been potentially five slave states. This caused increased tension in the North that newly-elected President Polk, a slaveowner from Tennessee, would seek to further increase slavery expansion
- the source highlights the growing differences in opinion towards westward expansion as a whole, not just about Texas. The North were rapidly expanding across the northern mid-West, to new states such as Michigan, and there was no resistance to this. Whenever a new state wished to be admitted as a slave state, the North thundered its opposition, causing increased disputes.

Source B: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:

Provenance, tone and emphasis

- the author is President James Polk, who had previously won the 1844 election on an expansionist platform. Polk had a strong desire to reach the Pacific Ocean as President and claim more land for the Union from a very weak Mexico
- the date is 11 May 1846, two days before Congress declare war on Mexico. This is one year into Polk's administration, demonstrating that westward expansion issues, such as the impending Mexican War, would cause greater disputes
- the purpose of the speech was to encourage Congress to declare war with Mexico for their 'menaces' against the Union on what they believed was their territory. This is referring to the April 1846 'Thornton Affair' where Union soldiers had been attacked along the Rio Grande by Mexican troops, triggering war
- Polk's tone is extremely urgent, as he is pressuring Congress to use their constitutional rights to declare war for expansion. Polk's reputation for his desire of war with Mexico would cause Northern resentment towards him, with many Democrats leaving the party as they saw the Mexican War as a war to expand slavery. The North referred to the conflict as 'Mr Polk's War'.

Content and argument

- Polk argues that he had tried diplomatic measures with Mexico to expand westwards, however, this failed due to Mexican refusal to negotiate. The Mexican government had experienced a lot of changes in 1846, and the current government were unwilling to meet with Polk's ambassador, Slidell, in negotiating the sale of more Mexican land to the Union
- Polk emphasises the desire for the annexation of California and New Mexico as more territories for the Union. There was great fear about what Polk intended to do with this land should it be won, leading to many Northerners pushing for the Wilmot Proviso to be passed by Congress in August 1846 to prohibit the existence of slavery in any land acquired from Mexico
- Polk then blames the Mexicans for triggering hostilities, as they 'shed the blood of our fellow citizens on our own soil' and demands Congress grant him mobilisation of an army to fight the Mexicans. In truth, Polk had deliberately placed men on the border knowing the Mexicans still believed it to be their land. This was known as 'Polk's Gambit', to start a war without actually starting it himself
- Polk also claims that he wishes to bring the war to a quick close and finalise agreements over land with Mexico quickly. Whilst valuable as the war ends with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on 2 February 1848 with the annexation of California, New Mexico, Utah and around 500 000 sq. km of land, Polk's reaction to the Treaty demonstrated his disappointment, as he believed he could get more from Mexico.

Source C: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:

Provenance, tone and emphasis

- the audience is the House of Representatives, which offers value as it was predominantly Northern dominated. Wilmot would be aiming to gain more sectional support to prohibit the potential expansion of slavery into any new land acquired from Mexico before the war was over, suggesting disputes over westward expansion
- the author is David Wilmot from Pennsylvania. Despite being a Democrat and a member of President Polk's party, he is clearly against the potential of slavery expansion, offering value for how westward expansion was causing sectional divisions within political parties
- the date offers value as the war against Mexico was being won by the Union with the defeat of General Santa Anna at the Battle of Buena Vista. Speeches at this time would be more urgent to settle the outcome of the war and what to do with acquired territory. Wilmot had also pushed his 'Proviso' in August 1846 which stated for the prohibition of slavery in any land acquired from Mexico. As victory is inevitable, he is re-emphasising the proviso to secure the land for the North
- the tone is incredibly urgent and serious. The Senate had already rejected the Wilmot Proviso, with lots of Southern resentment to the bill. Wilmot is afraid of Northern reactions if slavery is allowed to expand to the West outside the Louisiana Purchase.

Content and argument

- Wilmot immediately addresses the main concern regarding more westward expansion and its inextricable link to the potential expansion of slavery into the newly acquired lands of California and New Mexico. Slavery had already been abolished by Mexico in 1829, in which Wilmot is arguing is a valid principle for why slavery shouldn't be reintroduced
- he argues that whilst he and the Democrats were in favour of admitting Texas as a slave state, the majority of Northern Democrats are now not in favour of allowing more land to become slave states. The Wilmot Proviso, which prohibited slavery into the new territories, passed in the House of Representatives 83-64 on sectional, not partisan lines, however, failed in the Senate. A key argument given by Northern Democrats was that they wanted free labour to expand and not face competition from black slaves and cotton plantations. This caused resentment from Southern Democrats, such as William Yancey of Alabama, who stormed out of the Senate believing the Democrats were 'abandoning their principles'
- Wilmot also argues that the lands acquired, California and New Mexico, are free. This offers value as California would later apply to join the Union as a free state, not a slave state. Neither California or New Mexico wished to allow slavery
- Wilmot also warns that the South already intend to spread slavery into these territories. The South had argued that they had fought in the Mexican War, not Northerners, and that Northerners were dictating the future of the land they had won. Calhoun, the leading Southern spokesman for slavery expansion and state rights and a Democrat, issued his 'Platform of the South' in 1847 challenging the North, stating Congress had no right to prohibit settlers taking their property into the territories, as the territories belonged to everyone, not Congress. This demonstrates how westward expansion caused sectional disputes within party lines.

Section B

- 0 2** 'In the years 1856 to 1860, the Lincoln-Douglas debates increased sectional tension between the Northern and Southern states more than any other factor.'

Assess the validity of this view.

[25 marks]

Target: AO1

Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. **21–25**
- L4:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. **16–20**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information, which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. **11–15**
- L2:** The answer is descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way, although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6–10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1–5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Arguments supporting the view that in the years 1856 to 1860, the Lincoln-Douglas debates increased sectional tension between the Northern and Southern states more than any other factor might include:

- the debates were closely monitored by the press during the mid-term Congressional elections. Douglas, Senator from Illinois, was considered the most popular Democrat in the country, and was now being challenged by Lincoln, who had a growing reputation for his speaking abilities, for the seat.
- Lincoln's 'House Divided' speech June 1858 caused increased sectional tension, especially with the South. Lincoln had stated this belief that 'this government cannot permanently endure half free and half slave' which worried the Southern planter class. His further statement that 'slavery was on the course of ultimate extinction' caused Southerners to mistakenly label him as an abolitionist, increasing tensions should he have won.
- The impact of Douglas's 'Freeport Doctrine' increased sectional tension, especially on partisan levels in the Democratic Party. His doctrine in August 1858 argued that territories could ignore the 1857 Dred Scott decision and police their area with popular sovereignty, ultimately rejecting slavery expansion if they chose to. This upset Southerners as they felt Douglas was betraying them, which would lead to a split in the Democrats as shown in the 1860 Democrat Conventions in Charleston and Baltimore.
- The results demonstrated increasing tension, despite Douglas's maintaining the seat. Douglas won the electoral college vote 54 to 46, however, Lincoln carried the popular vote. Southerners felt the growing popularity of Lincoln and the Republicans in the North would lead to a Democratic loss in the 1860 election.

Arguments challenging the view that in the years 1856 to 1860, the Lincoln-Douglas debates increased sectional tension between the Northern and Southern states more than any other factor might include:

- The impact of 'Bleeding Kansas' in May-June 1856 had increased sectional tension. Events such as the sacking of Lawrence and the Pottawatomie Creek Massacre had escalated tensions on both sides, with both sides held responsible for violence in the territory of Kansas.
- The outcome of the Dred Scott decision 1857 significantly increased sectional tension. The decision made in March 1857 stated that the Missouri Compromise was now unconstitutional, and slavery must be allowed to expand into the territories without Congressional resistance. Many Northerners, especially Republicans, felt this was further evidence of the growing 'Slave Power' conspiracy.
- The reactions to John Brown's Raid on Harper's Ferry, Virginia, October 1859 caused greater sectional tension. The threat of a slave revolt initiated by a militant abolitionist scared the Southern planter class, who claimed Brown was sponsored by Republican abolitionists and was in league with the Republican Party themselves.
- The results of the 1860 Presidential Election demonstrated sectional tension at its height. Lincoln of the Republicans won 180 electoral college votes without any votes from the South. Southerners saw the election of Lincoln to push state legislatures to consider talks for secession. South Carolina would lead the first wave of secession, voting on 20 December 1860 to secede.

Students will come to a judgement on the impact of the debates in comparison to other major events or individuals in the time period specified in the statement. Students may evaluate that the speeches delivered by both escalated tensions between both sections of the Union, as demonstrated by the split of the Democratic Party and the rise of the Republicans by the 1860 election. Alternatively, students may also conclude tensions had been triggered earlier or later by alternative events or by other individuals, such as John Brown or William Yancey at the Charleston Convention.

0 3 How significant was the military leadership of Grant in bringing about Union victory in the Civil War?

[25 marks]

Target: AO1

Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. **21–25**
- L4:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. **16–20**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information, which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. **11–15**
- L2:** The answer is descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way, although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6–10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1–5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Arguments supporting the view that the military leadership of Grant was significant in bringing about Union victory in the Civil War might include:

- his policy of ‘unconditional surrender’ earned him significant victories in key points in the Western Theatre, such as Fort Donelson (1862) and Vicksburg (1863)
- his ‘hard-war’ tactics were effective against the dwindling numbers of the Confederacy, exposing their weakness and leading to Confederate surrender
- his refusal to retreat in the Overland Campaign against Lee was significant as previous leaders had done so too easily, continuing the charge and removing the Confederacy’s chance at reinforcing their numbers
- Lincoln’s trust in Grant was deep, as he had failed to find a winning recipe of military leadership with previous appointments disappointing him such as McClellan
- his promotion to Lieutenant General in 1864 demonstrated his military skill and quality, meaning he was in charge of the entire command of the Union forces, and answered only to Lincoln.

Arguments challenging the view that the military leadership of Grant was significant in bringing about Union victory in the Civil War might include:

- Grant faced intense criticism from members of Congress and even some of his own men. The high casualty rate especially at Cold Harbour caused many to call him ‘The Butcher’ suggesting his leadership wasn’t the key reason
- regardless of Grant’s leadership, the reality that the Confederacy were running out of men due to high desertion rates, casualties and draft avoidance led to Union victory
- other generals such as Meade (Gettysburg) and Sherman (Atlanta Campaign) successfully defeated Confederate forces at crucial stages of the war, causing Union victory over the Confederacy
- the abundance of resources of the Union (manpower, naval supremacy, weapons, iron production etc) would have eventually seen the Union claim victory over a Confederacy running scarce on essential resources, such as bullets, shoes and food
- Lincoln’s own political leadership was more important than Grant’s: his delegation of responsibility to those such as Stanton and Seward created a united voice in defeating the Confederacy, as shown by his win in the 1864 election over McClellan.

Stronger answers will address both the achievements and shortcomings of Grant’s military leadership in respect of the stages of the war. Whilst Grant rising from relative obscurity to becoming arguably one of the Union’s most successful military generals is remarkable and should be stressed by the students, students may argue that other factors such as political leadership, or other campaigns Grant was not involved in such as Gettysburg or the Atlanta Campaign had a more significant impact on the outcome of the war.

0 4	'The Republican Party was responsible for the failure of Radical Reconstruction in the years 1868 to 1877.'
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[25 marks]

Target: AO1

Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.

Generic Mark Scheme

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- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Arguments supporting the view that the Republican Party was responsible for the failure of Radical Reconstruction in the years 1868 to 1877 might include:

- following the 1873 economic depression, the Republicans failed to support the South's economic recovery, focusing on their own economic status, thus increasing Democrat support in the South
- there were high levels of corruption surrounding the Republican Party and especially President Grant, causing huge swings in support for the Democrats, meaning the Republicans lost support for any Reconstruction policies
- the decline of the Radical Republican faction left a more conservative Republican Party who wished to see the South return to white control rather than African-Americans in state governments
- the 1877 Compromise saw Hayes and the Republicans give the South back to the Democrats in exchange for the Presidency and the removal of the military zones, therefore abandoning Reconstruction policies
- President Grant's reluctance to intervene in the South, especially with voting registration issues in Louisiana and Mississippi demonstrated the lack of will to enforce Reconstruction, leading to its failure.

Arguments challenging the view that the Republican Party was responsible for the failure of Radical Reconstruction in the years 1868 to 1877 might include:

- rise of white supremacist groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan, made it increasingly difficult for the Republicans to enforce Reconstruction and protect African-Americans' rights, leaving them at the mercy of the South
- Supreme Court rulings such as *US vs Cruikshank* made it difficult for the federal government to become involved in state matters, thus reducing the impact of federal supported Reconstruction
- Southern Democrats targeted Republican carpetbaggers and scalawags and ostracised them from society
- Southerners continued to enforce state supported 'black codes' in the South, restricting the rights and freedoms of emancipated blacks, causing Reconstruction to fail.

Students can gain full marks either supporting the argument the Republicans bore responsibility for the failure of Reconstruction or the argument that other factors bore responsibility for the failure of Radical Reconstruction. The best answers will continuously reflect on the reality of America during this time, considering the relationship of state governments vs federal power: the natural social reaction in the South to earlier Reconstruction changes such as the amendments to the Constitution; and the inevitable desire even by many conservative Northerners to return the South 'back to the South'.