

## Formative Assessment: Evaluating Evidence



**Thinking historically means identifying the evidence related to a claim, assessing its validity, and corroborating it by comparing multiple sources' interpretations of events, developments, or processes.**

**Directions:** Read the following secondary source and then answer the questions on evaluating evidence that follow. The multiple choice questions for this formative assessment are Weighted Multiple Choice (WMC) Questions. This means that there is only one *incorrect* answer, but the other 3 choices are weighted. The *best* answer is 3 points, the *second-best* answer is 2 points, and the *third-best* answer is 1 point. The *incorrect* answer is 0 points.

# Formative Assessment: Evaluating Evidence

Source: John Gast. "American Progress," 1872. [Library of Congress](#).

Note: This painting depicts Columbia, a personification of the U.S., moving west to represent America's westward expansion.



## Formative Assessment: Evaluating Evidence

1. Select the detail from the above image that *best* supports the claim:  
**The United States believed it was destined to take over North America because white Americans were morally superior to American Indians.**
  - A. Train tracks are being built from east to west.
  - B. The side of the painting with the settlers on it is light but the side with American Indians on it is dark.
  - C. The American Indians are associated with wild animals like bison and bears.
  - D. The settlers are holding more modern tools and guns but the American Indians have less technologically-advanced weapons and tools.

2. Justify your choice in the space below.



1. Select the detail from the above image that *best* supports the claim:  
**The United States believed it was destined to take over North America because white Americans were morally superior to American Indians.**
  - A. Train tracks are being built from east to west. **(0 points)**
  - B. The side of the painting with the settlers on it is light but the side with American Indians on it is dark. **(2 points)**
  - C. The American Indians are associated with wild animals like bison and bears. **(3 points)**
  - D. The settlers are holding more modern tools and guns but the American Indians have less technologically-advanced weapons and tools. **(1 point)**

2. Justify your choice in the space below.

**Choice C, worth 3 points, is the best piece of evidence to support the claim that the United States believed it was destined for expansion because it felt morally superior. By associating American Indians with wild animals, the painting dehumanizes American Indians, putting them morally lower than humans in general. Choice B also clearly shows the feeling of moral superiority, but the light-dark comparison isn't quite as strong as the dehumanization in Choice C, so is worth 2 points. Choice D is worth one point because it is clear that the artist is comparing technology between the two groups, implying superiority. Lastly, Choice A is worth 0 points since it only focuses on a technological advancement (trains) that does not necessarily relate to morality.**



## 1. Weighted Multiple Choice

3 points (Choice C)	2 points (Choice B)	1 point (Choice D)	0 points (Choice A)
			<b>Subtotal: _____ / 3</b>

## 2. Short Answer: Justify Your Answer

3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points
Student thoroughly justifies their choice of the <i>best</i> piece of evidence—which is worth three points as shown on the teacher key—that supports the claim.	Student thoroughly justifies their choice of either the 1 or 2 point option from the WMC question. OR Student's justification of the 3 point option needs deeper analysis.	Student's justification of their choice (either the 1 or 2 point option) lacks deep analysis.	Student either makes no attempt to justify their choice OR try to justify the 0 point option.
			<b>Subtotal: _____ / 3</b>

**Total: \_\_\_\_\_ / 6**

