

2026 MCAS Sample Student Work and Scoring Guide

Grade 8 Civics

Question 7: Constructed-Response

Reporting Category: Government Structures

Practice Category: Explanations and Reasoning

Standard: [8.T3.4](#) - Describe the respective roles of each of the branches of government.

Item Description: Evaluate a claim about the distribution of Republicans and Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives using evidence from a map.

This item can be found in the released item sets on the [MCAS Resource Center](#).

Question

Two students each make a claim based on the map.

Student 1's claim: There should have been more Republicans than Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives following the 2020 elections.

Student 2's claim: Even though Republican representatives were distributed over a larger area of the United States, there were more Democratic representatives in the House following the 2020 elections.

Student 2's claim is correct.

Using your knowledge of civics, explain one reason student 2's claim is correct.

Continue to the following page to see the source. Continue to page 3 to see the sample student responses for this question.

Source

In the 2020 elections, 222 Democrats and 213 Republicans were elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

The map shows the distribution of members of the U.S. House of Representatives across the United States by political party.



Note: There are additional non-voting representatives in the U.S. House of Representatives, including members from Puerto Rico and Washington, DC.

Score Point 1A*

Student two's claim is correct due to how the amount of U.S House of Representatives officials are determined. Although there is way more surface area covered by the Republicans, some Republican states such as Wyoming, have less people compared to places like Massachusetts or California, which are part or fully Democratic. U.S House Representatives amounts are determined by the population of a state, so places like California will have more Representatives than places like Idaho. Due to this, student two's claim of there being more democratic representatives despite the surface area being against them, makes it correct.

Score Point 1B*

Student 2's claim is correct based on the fact that the the number of representitives is based on population and becuse the republicans have less population over more area they have less power.

Score Point 0

Even though there may be more republicans, its about the size of the state, the larger the state the more represenatives it has.

*Letters are used to distinguish between sample student responses that earned the same score (e.g., 1A and 1B).