Below are examples of cognitive skill level descriptions for the Grade 8 Civics MCAS test. The examples are not an exhaustive list. How an item is written, including the stem and the options (key and distractors), may contribute to the cognitive skill assigned to the item. The cognitive skill may also depend on students’ experiences, such as certain contexts they are familiar with. In addition, the grade level at which the question is being asked is also a consideration.

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| **Cognitive Skill** | **Description** |
| ***Remembering*** | **Students identify or define a concept with no context.** *Note: These are not on the Grade 8 Civics test.* |
| ***Understanding/***  ***Level 1*** | **Students show an understanding of civics concepts and skills by:**   * Explaining a sequence of events, such as the experiences that led to the Declaration of Independence. * Identifying cause and effect, such as determining characteristics of the Articles of Confederation that led to the creation of the U.S. Constitution. * Identifying a key concept of U.S. government, such as representative democracy, based on a description or primary source. * Identifying the purpose of a source or the point of view of its author, such as describing the position of a political cartoon. * Distinguishing between fact and opinion, such as identifying a factual statement in a news article. * Completing a simple diagram, such as labeling the steps in the process of how a bill may become a law. |
| ***Applying/***  ***Level 2*** | **Students apply their civics knowledge and skills by:**   * Interpreting data from a simple table or graph to draw a conclusion, such as determining what proposal a town council should support based on the results of a public opinion survey. * Explaining a civics concept, such as federalism, when given an unfamiliar context. * Determining what evidence from a source can be used to support a claim. * Applying historical or civic knowledge to make an inference in a novel situation, such as determining whether a Federalist or an Anti-Federalist would most likely support a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution. * Interpreting an unfamiliar textual or visual source to draw a conclusion, such as determining what characteristic of the U.S. government was influenced by an Enlightenment thinker based on a quotation. * Writing a focus question that can be used to conduct an inquiry. (CR items only) |
| ***Analyzing & Evaluating/***  ***Level 3*** | **Students analyze or evaluate information and data using their civics knowledge and skills by:**   * Analyzing information and/or data from multiple sources to support a claim, such as evaluating voter participation data to describe how individuals may participate in the political process. * Analyzing an unfamiliar context to draw conclusions, such as making a claim about the First Amendment based on a description of an unfamiliar Supreme Court decision. * Using evidence from one source to evaluate the point of view of a second source, such as evaluating the claims of an editorial when given additional information. * Using evidence to support a focus question, such as selecting evidence from information about a public policy to support a claim. * Propose solutions to take informed action based on given criteria/constraints. (CR items only)   Note: Some items will reach this level due to students needing to construct an explanation in a constructed response (CR) based on an application of their knowledge. |