

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

## The Erie Canal Document-Based Question

**Directions:** The following task is based on the following documents (1-3). The documents may have been edited for the purposes of this exercise. The task is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the source of the document and the author's point of view.

**Historical Context:** During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, construction of the Erie Canal led to economic growth of the United States.

**Task:** Using the information from the documents and your knowledge of social studies, answer the questions that follow each document in Part A. Your answers to the questions will help you write the Part B essay in which you will be asked to

Discuss how the Erie Canal led to economic growth in the United States.

## Part A

### Short-Answer Questions

*Directions:* Analyze the documents and answer the short-answer questions that follow each document in the space provided.

#### Document 1A

By 1825, the Erie Canal gave another boost to New York's already busy seaports. Commercial vessels could now travel north up the Hudson River all the way to Lake Erie. This new waterway not only connected the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes, it caused a terrific boon [increase] in industry all along the Hudson River and made New York's ports and harbor more valuable than ever.

Between 1830 and 1860, New York City grew at an astounding rate....

Source: Virginia Schomp, *New York Celebrates the States*, Benchmark

#### Document 1B

Prior to construction of the canal, New York City was the nation's fifth largest seaport, behind Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia and New Orleans. Within 15 years of its opening [Erie Canal], New York [City] was the busiest port in America, moving tonnages greater than Boston, Baltimore and New Orleans combined. . . .

Source: New York State Canal Corporation

1a Based on the documents, state *one* way the Erie Canal affected the economic growth of New York State.

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b Based on the documents, state *one* way the Erie Canal affected the economic growth of New York City.

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Shipping Freight During  
the Erie Canal Era  
(New York City to Buffalo)

	Dirt Road	Canal
Method	Wagon	Boat
Amount of Time	21 Days	8 Days
Cost	\$100/ton	\$10/ton

Source: James Silver, *American History Activities*,  
The Center for Applied Research in Education (adapted)

2a According to this chart, how many days did it take to ship freight from New York City to Buffalo using the Erie Canal?

\_\_\_\_\_

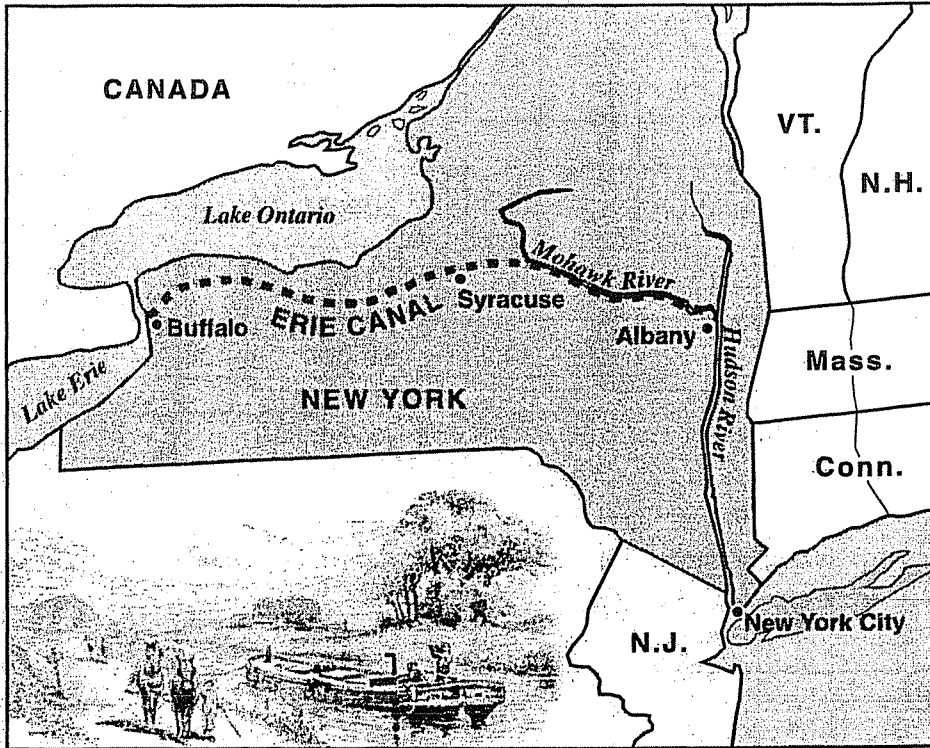
b Using information from the chart, state *two* economic advantages of using the Erie Canal instead of dirt roads to transport freight during the canal era.

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Source: James Silver, *American History Activities*,  
The Center for Applied Research in Education (adapted)

3 Based on the map, state *one* way the Erie Canal was important to the economic growth of the United States.

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## Part B

### Essay

**Directions:** Write a well-organized essay that includes an introduction, several paragraphs, and a conclusion. Use evidence from ALL THREE DOCUMENTS in the body of the essay. Support your response with relevant facts, examples, and details. Include additional outside information.

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### Guidelines

**In your essay, be sure to**

- Address all aspects of the *Task* by accurately analyzing and interpreting ALL the documents.
- Incorporate information from documents in the body of essay
- Incorporate relevant outside information
- Support the theme with relevant facts, examples, and details
- Use a logical and clear plan of organization
- Introduce the theme by establishing a framework that is BEYOND a simple restatement of the *Task* or *Historical Context* and conclude with a summation of the theme.

