NINETEENTH-CENTURY POLITICS IN THE UNITED STATES

1. The development of the modern presidency in the United States began with Andrew Jackson who swept to power in 1829 at the head of the Democratic Party and served until 1837. During his administration he immeasurably enlarged the power of the presidency. “The President is the direct representative of the American people,” he lectured the Senate when it opposed him. “He was elected by the people, and is responsible to them.” With this declaration, Jackson redefined the character of the presidential office and its relationship to the people.

2. During Jackson’s second term, his opponents had gradually come together to form the Whig party. Whigs and Democrats held different attitudes toward the changes brought about by the market, banks, and commerce. The Democrats tended to view society as a continuing conflict between “the people”—farmers, planters, and workers—and a set of greedy aristocrats. This “paper money aristocracy” of bankers and investors manipulated the banking system for their own profit, Democrats claimed, and sapped the nation’s virtue by encouraging speculation and the desire for sudden, unearned wealth.

3. The Democrats wanted the rewards of the market without sacrificing the features of a simple agrarian republic. They wanted the wealth that the market offered without the competitive, changing society; the complex dealing; the dominance of urban centers; and the loss of independence that came with it. Whigs, on the other hand, were more comfortable with the market. For them, commerce and economic development were agents of civilization. Nor did the Whigs envision any conflict in society between farmers and workers on the one hand and businesspeople and bankers on the other. Economic growth would benefit everyone by raising national income and expanding opportunity. The government’s responsibility was to provide a well-regulated economy that guaranteed opportunity for citizens of ability.

4. Whigs and Democrats differed not only in their attitudes toward the market but also about how active the central government should be in people’s lives. Despite Andrew Jackson’s inclination to be a strong President, Democrats as a rule believed in limited government. Government’s role in the economy was to promote competition by destroying monopolies and special privileges. In keeping with this philosophy of limited government, Democrats also rejected the idea that moral beliefs were the proper sphere of government action. Religion and politics, they believed, should be kept clearly separate, and they generally opposed humanitarian legislation.

5. The Whigs, in contrast, viewed government power positively. They believed that it should be used to protect individual rights and public liberty, and that it had a special role where individual effort was ineffective. By regulating the economy and competition, the government could ensure equal opportunity. Indeed, for Whigs the concept of government promoting the general welfare went beyond the economy. In particular, Whigs in the northern sections of the United States also believed that government power should be used to foster the moral welfare of the country. They were much more likely to favor social-reform legislation and aid to education.

1. The word immeasurably in the passage is closest in meaning to:
   _ frequently
   _ greatly
   _ rapidly
   _ reportedly

2. According to paragraph 1, the presidency of Andrew Jackson was especially significant for which of the following reasons?
   _ The President granted a portion of his power to the Senate
   _ The President began to address the Senate on a regular basis.
   _ It was the beginning of the modern presidency in the United States.
   _ It was the first time that the Senate had been known to oppose the President.

3. The author mentions bankers and investors in the passage as an example of which of the following?
   _ The Democratic Party’s main source of support
   _ The people that Democrats claimed were unfairly becoming rich
   _ The people most interested in a return to a simple agrarian republic
   _ One of the groups in favor of Andrew Jackson’s presidency
4. According to paragraph 3, Whigs believed that commerce and economic development would have which of the following effects on society?
   - They would promote the advancement of society as a whole.
   - They would cause disagreements between Whigs and Democrats.
   - They would supply new positions for Whig Party members.
   - They would prevent conflict between farmers and workers.

5. According to paragraph 3, which of the following describes the Whig Party's view of the role of government?
   - To regulate the continuing conflict between farmers and businesspeople
   - To restrict the changes brought about by the market
   - To maintain an economy that allowed all capable citizens to benefit
   - To reduce the emphasis on economic development

6. The word inclination in the passage is closest in meaning to
   - argument
   - tendency
   - example
   - warning

7. According to paragraph 4, a Democrat would be most likely to support government action in which of the following areas?
   - Creating a state religion
   - Supporting humanitarian legislation
   - Destroying monopolies
   - Recommending particular moral beliefs

8. The word concept in the passage is closest in meaning to
   - power
   - reality
   - difficulty
   - idea

9. Which of the following can be inferred from paragraph 5 about variations in political beliefs within the Whig Party?
   - They were focused on issues of public liberty.
   - They caused some members to leave the Whig party.
   - They were unimportant to most Whigs.
   - They reflected regional interests.

Directions: An introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below. Complete the summary by selecting the THREE answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some answer choices do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas in the passage.

The political system of the United States in the mid-nineteenth century was strongly influenced by the social and economic circumstances of the time.

1. The Democratic and Whig Parties developed in response to the needs of competing economic and political constituencies.
2. During Andrew Jackson’s two terms as President, he served as leader of both the Democratic and Whig Parties.
3. The Democratic Party primarily represented the interests of the market, banks, and commerce.
4. In contrast to the Democrats, the Whigs favored government aid for education.
5. A fundamental difference between Whigs and Democrats involved the importance of the market in society.
6. The role of government in the lives of the people was an important political distinction between the two parties.

Vocabulary
Find the words or expressions in the text which mean the following:

1. won overwhelmingly (para 1.)
2. admonished earnestly (para. 1)
3. united (para. 2)
4. produced (para. 2)
5. avid (para. 2)
6. eroded (para 2.)
7. benefits (para 3.)
8. prosperity, affluence (para. 3)
9. transactions (para. 3)
10. imagine, predict (para. 3)

Find the words or expression in the text that match the following definitions:

1. appropriate or suited for some purpose (para 4.)
2. A characteristic disposition to do, prefer, or favor one thing rather than another; a propensity (para 4.)
3. Exclusive control by one group of the means of producing or selling a commodity or service (para 4.)
4. a determined attempt (para. 5)
5. to make certain or sure; guarantee (para. 5)
6. health, happiness, prosperity, and well-being in general (para. 5)
7. To promote the growth and development of; cultivate (para. 5)
8. The act or result of helping; assistance. (para.5)