

Culture Speaks

American creative works can reveal what people valued, feared, and debated.

8.26.A "identify examples of American art, music, and literature that reflect society in different eras such as the Hudson River School artists, the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," and transcendental literature; and"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each example of American art, music, or literature. Circle the nearby words or sentences that explain what the example reflected about society in its era.

Creative Works as Historical Evidence

- ① In the early 1800s, painters of the Hudson River School created large landscapes of places such as the Catskill Mountains and the Hudson River Valley. Artists including Thomas Cole and Asher B. Durand often showed glowing skies, forests, rivers, and tiny human figures. Their paintings reflected a society that saw the young nation's land as beautiful, vast, and worth protecting. They also appeared as factories and cities grew, so many viewers valued scenes that seemed untouched by development.
- ② During the Civil War, Julia Ward Howe wrote "Battle Hymn of the Republic" after hearing Union soldiers sing in 1861. Published soon afterward, its words used biblical images and presented the Union cause as a moral struggle against slavery. The song became popular in the North, where it expressed patriotism, religious belief, and support for the Union war effort. Its powerful marching rhythm also fit public rallies and soldiers' experiences. The song shows how music can carry a society's hopes and conflicts during war.
- ③ At about the same time, transcendental writers challenged Americans to trust conscience, nature, and individual judgment. Ralph Waldo Emerson argued that people should think for themselves rather than simply follow tradition. Henry David Thoreau described living simply at Walden Pond and later defended resistance to an unjust government. This literature reflected reform-minded debates before the Civil War, including arguments about slavery, personal freedom, and the proper limits of government. Like paintings and songs, essays and books revealed what people valued and questioned.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Name one detail commonly shown in Hudson River School paintings. What view of American society did those paintings reflect?

2 How did “Battle Hymn of the Republic” reflect Northern society during the Civil War?

3 What two ideas did transcendental writers urge Americans to trust? Name one public issue or debate their writing reflected.

4 How do the three examples in the passage show that creative works can be evidence about an era? Use at least two examples in your answer.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose an American painting, song, poem, novel, or essay from an era not discussed in the passage. Write three or four sentences that identify the work and its era, then explain two ways it reflects the society of that time.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each example of American art, music, or literature. Circle the nearby words or sentences that explain what the example reflected about society in its era. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Name one detail commonly shown in Hudson River School paintings. What view of American society did those paintings reflect?	They showed features such as forests, rivers, glowing skies, or tiny people in vast landscapes. They reflected the belief that the nation's land was beautiful, vast, and worth protecting.
2	How did "Battle Hymn of the Republic" reflect Northern society during the Civil War?	It expressed Northern patriotism, religious belief, and support for the Union cause, which it presented as a moral struggle against slavery.
3	What two ideas did transcendental writers urge Americans to trust? Name one public issue or debate their writing reflected.	They urged Americans to trust conscience, nature, and individual judgment. Their writing reflected debates about slavery, personal freedom, or limits on government.
4	How do the three examples in the passage show that creative works can be evidence about an era? Use at least two examples in your answer.	The Hudson River School showed Americans valuing natural land during growth of cities and factories. "Battle Hymn of the Republic" showed Northern wartime patriotism and support for the Union. Transcendental literature showed debates about freedom, conscience, slavery, and government.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Langston Hughes's 1926 poem "I, Too" comes from the Harlem Renaissance. Its speaker expects a future when he will be welcomed at the table, reflecting African Americans' demand for dignity and equality during an era of segregation. The poem also shows the creativity and pride of Black cultural life in the 1920s.

Accept equivalent passage-based descriptions for the short answers. For the open response, accept any accurate American work from a different era if the student identifies the work and era and clearly connects two features to society.