

Benchmark: 2a



**Brief Constructed Response Prompt:** How might the rights of minorities be threatened under a system of majority rule? Use an example to illustrate your answer.

**Possible Response(s):** Students may offer a variety of plausible responses.

Large groups (majorities) can be as abusive or repressive as a single tyrant. They might use their numbers to pass laws or engage in acts that strip people of fundamental rights or deny them justice. For years, a white, male majority denied the suffrage to women, African-Americans, Native Americans and others. Legislatures also passed poll taxes and literacy tests to prevent minorities from voting. Mobs tarred and feathered loyalists and lynched African Americans. Although we have much to celebrate, numerous examples of segregation, discrimination, and oppression from American history might be used to illustrate the dangers of a majority.

**Rubric**

- 2** = This response gives a valid answer with an accurate and relevant explanation.
- 1** = This response gives a valid answer with an inaccurate, irrelevant, or no explanation.
- 0** = inaccurate or no response