

## Answering Short-Answer Questions

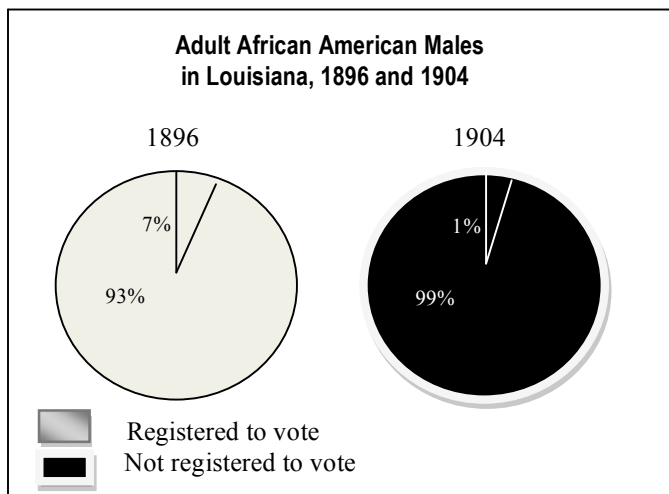
A short-answer question is one that calls for an answer in a sentence or two. Use these guidelines and examples to improve your responses to such questions.

### Example 1:

**Be specific. Use names, dates, numbers, and details when possible. Avoid generalizations.**

*Sample Question:*

What change is shown on these graphs?



*Sample Responses:*

*Too general:* The number of African American voters decreased around 1900.

*Specific:* Between 1896 and 1904, the percentage of African American males registered to vote in Louisiana fell 93 percent to just 1 percent.

### Example 2:

**Use complete sentences. Avoid sentence fragments.**

*Sample Question:*

What was Great Britain's response to the Boston Tea Party?

*Sample Responses:*

*Fragment:* The Intolerable Acts

*Complete Sentence:* Great Britain responded to the Boston Tea Party by passing a series of laws known as the Intolerable Acts.

### Example 3:

**Be precise. Avoid vague answers.**

*Sample Question:*

Who was Galileo and why is he remembered today?

*Sample Responses:*

*Vague Response:* Galileo was a scientist who discovered a lot of things about astronomy.

*Precise Response:* Galileo was an Italian astronomer who challenged the Catholic Church by providing that Earth is not the center of the universe.

### Example 4:

**Be complete but brief. Avoid wordy, rambling answers.**

*Sample Question:*

During the Constitutional Convention there was an important debate between large and small states about representation. What was the main issue in this debate?

*Sample Responses:*

*Wordy Response:* The main issue in the debate was a long argument between the large and small states over whether Congress should have one house or two houses and how many representatives each state should have in Congress, the same number, or more or less depending on how many people there were in that state.

*Complete but brief response:* The main issue in the debate between the large and small states over representation was whether Congress should represent states or people.