

Standardized Test Practice

The First Americans

Making Generalizations



Learning the Skill

A broad statement drawn from a group of facts about a topic is called a **generalization**. To be valid, a generalization must be supported by evidence that is logical and factual. Learning to make generalizations will help you develop conclusions and identify trends. An example of a generalization is "Only tall people play basketball well." Can this be supported by facts? If not, it is not a valid generalization.

To make generalizations, follow these steps:

- Collect facts about a topic.
- Identify the relationships among the facts.
- Make a generalization that states a relationship and is consistent with the supporting facts.



Practicing the Skill

Directions: Read the following selection and complete the activity that follows.

"True farming began to emerge in the eastern woodlands [of North America] once hardier strains of maize and beans appeared after [A.D.] 700. The resulting growth in food production stimulated the rise of North America's first towns, in the Mississippi basin, by the twelfth century. These centered around large earth-work temple mounds. The Mississippian cultures shared a common religion known as the Southern Cult and were hierarchical.

The rulers were buried in mound-top mortuaries with rich grave goods and even human sacrifices. Large Mississippian towns, such as Cahokia, were the centers of powerful chiefdoms. By the fifteenth century, Mississippian culture was declining and its heartland was depopulated (the so-called "vacant quarter")."

—*Atlas of World History*, John Haywood, Ph.D., ed.,
(Barnes and Noble Books: New York, 1997), map 42.

Standardized Test Practice (continued)

1. **Identifying** What is the subject of the passage?

2. **Explaining** Use information from the passage to explain whether the following generalization is valid or invalid: *Cahokia was the only large town built by the Mississippians.*

3. **Making Generalizations** Use the information in the passage to formulate a generalization about the relationship between agriculture and the development of permanent communities in the eastern woodlands of North America.

Standardized Test Practice

Directions: Use the selection on the previous page to answer the following questions.

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| <p>1 Based on the passage, which of the following is a valid generalization?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A The typical Mississippian diet consisted of more than meat obtained from hunting.B All early native North American cultures practiced human sacrifice.C The first mainly agricultural North American societies emerged in the eastern woodlands around A.D. 700.D The Mississippians were the only early Native American culture to establish permanent communities. | <p>2 Which of the following characteristics apply to <i>all</i> Native Americans of the Mississippi basin?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">F They were hunter-gatherers.G They lived in small communities.H They practiced the same religion.J They developed a primitive form of democracy. |
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