

**ELECTION OF 1896
ANSWER KEY**

Questions for Agricultural Prices in Dollars per Unit, 1865–1900

1. According to the chart, what happened to the amounts of wheat, cotton, and corn produced in the United States between 1865 and 1900? What are some possible reasons for this change in the amounts of agricultural commodities produced during this period of time?

All amounts increased. Possible reasons: population growth, expansion of the frontier, western settlement, improved agricultural techniques

2. During the period shown in the chart, what was happening to the price per unit of wheat, cotton, and corn?

With one exception (the year 1890), every year the price per unit decreased until 1895 and then increased slightly in 1900.

3. Which of the three commodities experienced the greatest change in the price per unit?

Wheat had the biggest percent change.

4. For an individual farmer whose livelihood depended on growing these agricultural commodities, what would have been the result of this price change?

Farmers would have made less money for the same amount of work and same amount of produced goods.

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Questions for Excerpt from the Republican Party Platform

1. What was the Republican Party's plan for stimulating the economy and encouraging trade?

The Republican Party's plan involved protection of domestic goods and reciprocity to promote foreign trade.

2. According to the Republican Party platform, what action would debase U.S. currency?

The free coinage of silver would debase U.S. currency.

3. What was the Republican Party's foreign policy?

The Republican Party believed the nation should be active in guarding its interests and supported the Monroe Doctrine in intervening if those interests were challenged.

4. Give three examples of the Republican Party's stance on human/civil rights.

Answers should include three of the following: one person, one vote; anti-lynching; free homesteads; women's equality

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Questions for “Cross of Gold”

1. According to Bryan, were farms or cities more important to United States society? How did he describe their relationship?

Farms were more important than cities. Cities could not exist without farms supporting them.

2. According to Bryan, the United States faced an economic choice between which two monetary systems? Which plan did Bryan support? Which system did Europe support?

The United States faced a choice between “bimetallism” and the gold standard. Bryan supported bimetallism. Europe supported the gold standard.

3. What much earlier event in U.S. history did Bryan refer to in his speech? Why do you think he made this reference?

Bryan referred to the American Revolution, specifically the initial events of 1776.

Student must make a claim and support it with evidence from the text. Answers should point toward Bryan’s desire to rally the crowd around the idea of independence, specifically independence from all other nations and their policies.

4. Bryan also referenced religious imagery in his speech, including the “cross of gold” phrase that gives his speech its name. Why do you think he chose to use this type of imagery given his audience?

Student must make a claim and support it with evidence. Answers could point toward: Bryan’s own strong religious faith; Bryan’s appeal to mostly rural, agrarian populations who were more likely to be involved in the religious revivals sweeping the nation at that time; the overall campaign’s portrayal of free silver as a moral issue rather than just an economic one.

Questions for “A Soliloquy”

1. What does the woman in this picture represent?

The woman in the picture represents democracy.

2. Who did she sweep off the path leading to the White House?

She swept people supporting Wall Street and the gold standard off the path leading to the White House.

3. What inference can be drawn from the cartoon concerning who the “decent people” were?

The “decent people” were supporters of “bimetallism,” or free silver, who depicted themselves as morally righteous and decent during their campaign.

4. Based on what you know about the election of 1896, which political party would most likely support the views expressed in this cartoon?

Populists would most likely support the views expressed in this cartoon.

Questions for “Crowds Visit McKinley”

1. Who came to visit McKinley in Canton, Ohio? What economic interest did this group represent?

The Commercial Democrats of Chicago, representing the mercantile industry, visited McKinley.

2. What had been the group’s previous political affiliation?

The group had previously exclusively supported the Democratic party.

3. What reasons were given by the group for changing their support to Republican candidate McKinley over his Democratic opponent Bryan?

They noted that policies of the current Democratic ticket would “create widespread disaster and ruin to the business interests of our country.”

4. How did McKinley’s style of campaigning in 1896 differ from that seen in modern-day presidential campaigns?

McKinley did not travel himself to campaign but rather welcomed groups to visit him at home where he gave speeches from his front porch.