Question 11

SOCIAL SCIENCE: This passage is adapted from the article “A Capital Capitol” by Gina DeAngelis (©2006 Canus Publishing Company).

The U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., one of the most recognizable buildings in the world, has been the working site of the U.S. Congress for more than 200 years.

In January 1812, French engineer Pierre L’Enfant was asked to design America’s grand capital city. L’Enfant submitted his idea to commissioners in August. It included a grand vista about a mile long, at one end of which would be the city’s “Congress House.” The U.S. government decided to hold a contest to find the best design for the new country’s Capitol. The winner was a physician named William Thornton.

Construction began in 1793, when President George Washington used a silver trowel to lay the cornerstone on Jenkins Hill (known today as Capitol Hill). It was hoped that Congress, which had been meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, would move in by the turn of the century.

By 1796, though, construction already was behind schedule. Worried lawmakers decided to focus on completing the north wing of the Capitol, but parts of that still were unfinished in 1800. Both branches of Congress, the Supreme Court, the District of Columbia courts, and the Library of Congress moved in anyway.

The passage suggests that compared to how much the War of 1812 slowed the construction of the Capitol, the Civil War slowed construction of the Capitol.

- A. much less.
- B. to an equal degree.
- C. slightly more.
- D. much more.

This selected-response question requires students to understand comparisons and contrasts described in the text (aligns with CCRA.R.3). Students must read the passage carefully in order to pick out key details about how the construction of the US Capitol was affected by the War of 1812 and the Civil War. Students must then infer what the passage is suggesting about the comparison between how these two wars affected the rate of the Capitol’s construction.

Explanation of Correct Response

In the fifth paragraph, the passage states that during the War of 1812, Congress “refused to worry about the [Capitol] building project.” The last paragraph describes the Civil War as only briefly interrupting the construction of the Capitol. Therefore, answer option A is the best and only option (the Civil War slowed construction “much less” than the War of 1812).