

The Great Society: Extending the New Deal?

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Worksheet 1:

Contrasting the Historical Context of the Great Society and the New Deal

Instructions: Read the following summaries and draw from them to answer the questions that follow.

1. The New Deal

In his March 4, 1933 Inaugural Address, President Franklin D. Roosevelt called for “a New Deal for the American people.” The nation was devastated by the Great Depression with banking paralyzed by a national crisis, the economy shattered, and unemployment at historically high levels. Roosevelt called Congress immediately in to session, and within the first 100 days it passed fifteen major programs that fundamentally changed American politics and the economy. Unemployment relief, banking reform, programs to boost agriculture, programs to reorganize industry, and programs to create jobs through public works spending quickly gained approval. The Tennessee Valley Authority was created to construct hydroelectric dams and spur the economic development of one of the nation’s poorest regions. A host of “alphabetical agencies” were created to bring relief to hard-hit people and to extend government oversight to a wide variety of issues. For example, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration led agricultural reform, the National Industrial Recovery Administration exercised authority over businesses, the Civilian Conservation Corps provided jobs and career training for unemployed young people, while the Public Works Administration created public works jobs. In President Roosevelt’s first term in office, the New Deal primarily addressed the immediate consequences of the Great Depression. During his second term, however, the “Second New Deal” saw the passage of legislation creating old age pensions (The Social Security Act), protecting of the rights of workers to form unions (The Wagner Act), and unsuccessfully attempting to create a system of national health insurance (under the proposed, but not passed, Wagner National Health Act, 1939). The New Deal transformed many aspects of American life, but did not significantly advance the cause of African American civil rights.

2. The Great Society

Despite the fact that the mid-1960s were a period of unprecedented prosperity and affluence for many Americans, President Lyndon B. Johnson declared that the time had come for America to eliminate poverty by attacking its causes. He used the term “Great Society” in his January, 1965 State of the Union Address to set a goal for the nation and to signal his intention to use the resources of the federal government to improve the living conditions and opportunities for disadvantaged Americans. Working with the 89th Congress (1965- 67), Johnson proposed 115 pieces of legislation, and Congress passed 89 of them. A few examples demonstrate the wide ranging assault launched against

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conditions that contributed to poverty and show how the Great Society provided programs to assist needy people at all stages of life. The Head Start program provided pre-school education and nutrition. The Higher Education Act provided federal support for education by increasing and improving resources at higher education institutions and providing financial assistance to students in postsecondary education. The Economic Opportunity Act led the war on poverty through the actions of a variety of educational, training and employment agencies, and the Job Corps trained unemployed workers. The Medicare program expanded Social Security to provide health insurance for the elderly. In addition, the Appalachian Regional Development Act directed federal resources to develop one of the poorest regions of the country. The Great Society also advanced civil rights. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 protected the rights of African Americans from race-based obstructions to voting — expanding the protections against racial discrimination contained in the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Questions:

1. How were the overall economic conditions in the nation different at the start of the New Deal and at the start of the Great Society?
2. What view of the role of government in society did the two initiatives have in common?
3. What areas of society were successfully addressed by the Great Society but not accomplished by the New Deal?

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Worksheet 2: Unscrambling New Deal and Great Society Programs and Legislation

Instructions: Label the programs and legislation listed in the left column as either New Deal or Great Society and briefly describe what it did. (Refer to the historical context summaries that you read in the previous Worksheet to support your answers.)

Scrambled Table of Programs

| Programs | Label each item either New Deal (ND) or Great Society (GS) and briefly tell what it did | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| The Voting Rights Act | | |
| Social Security Act | | |
| Civilian Conservation Corps | | |
| Appalachian Regional Development Act | | |
| Tennessee Valley Authority Act | | |
| Economic Opportunity Act | | |
| Medicare | | |
| The Job Corps | | |
| Agricultural Adjustment Act | | |
| Head Start | | |

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Worksheet 3: Contrasting the New Deal and the Great Society

Instructions: Read the following table. Note that it lists a few major topics addressed by legislation created during the New Deal and the Great Society programs. Complete the table by writing in the names of appropriate examples of New Deal or Great Society legislation. You can refer to the summary found on Worksheet 1 for clues. *Note:* The New Deal and Great Society addressed many more programs than are included on this list.

| <i>New Deal Legislation that Addressed the Following Topics (Note not all topics were addressed by both)</i> | <i>Great Society Legislation that Addressed the Following Topics (Note not all topics were addressed by both)</i> |
|---|--|
| Regional development | Regional development |
| Agricultural response to economic depression | Agricultural response to economic depression |
| Old Age Benefits | Old Age Benefits |
| Creating Jobs | Creating Jobs |
| Civil Rights | Civil Rights |
| Higher Education | Higher Education |
| Mass unemployment | Mass unemployment |
| Training young people for careers | Training young people for careers |

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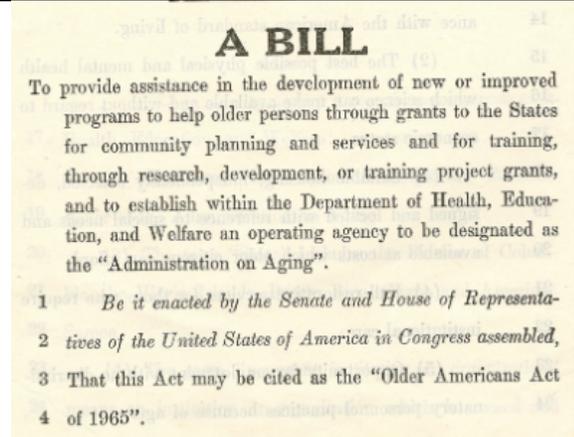
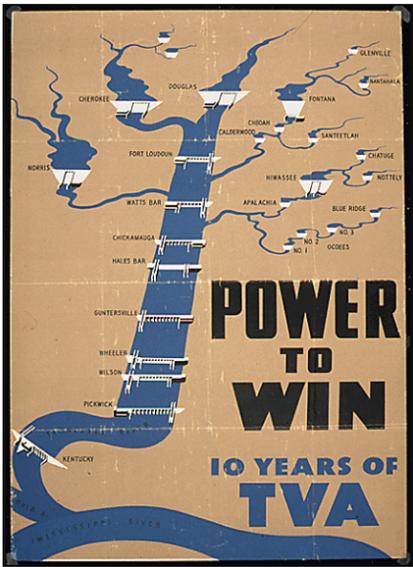
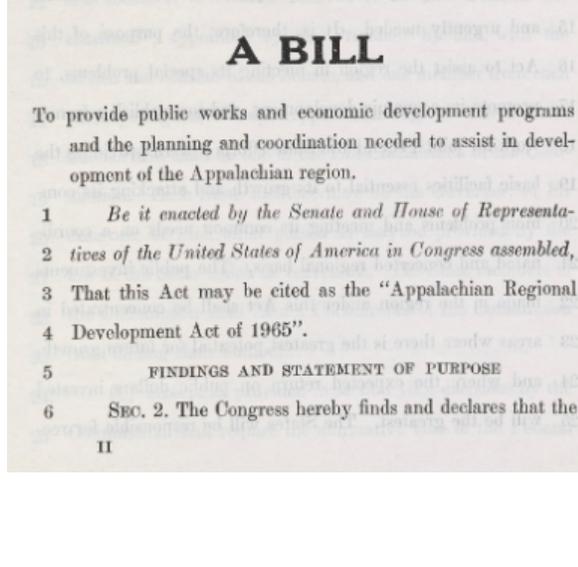
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Worksheet 4:

Matching Primary Sources to their Era of Creation

Instructions: Identify each of the following primary sources as an illustration of either the New Deal or Great Society.

| | |
|---|--|
|  <p>A BILL</p> <p>To provide assistance in the development of new or improved programs to help older persons through grants to the States for community planning and services and for training, through research, development, or training project grants, and to establish within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare an operating agency to be designated as the "Administration on Aging".</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,2 That this Act may be cited as the "Older Americans Act3 of 1965". |  |
| <p>New Deal or Great Society? Why?</p> | <p>New Deal or Great Society? Why?</p> |
|  <p>POWER TO WIN</p> <p>10 YEARS OF TVA</p> |  <p>A BILL</p> <p>To provide public works and economic development programs and the planning and coordination needed to assist in development of the Appalachian region.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,2 That this Act may be cited as the "Appalachian Regional3 Development Act of 1965". <p>FINDINGS AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">56 SEC. 2. The Congress hereby finds and declares that the <p>II</p> |
| <p>New Deal or Great Society? Why?</p> | <p>New Deal or Great Society? Why?</p> |

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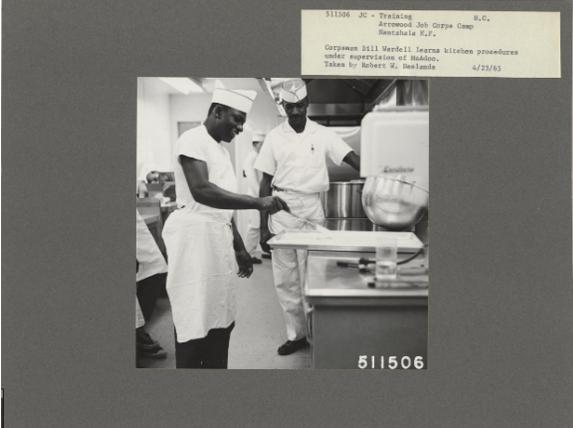
| | |
|--|---|
|  |  |
| <p>New Deal or Great Society? Why?</p> | <p>New Deal or Great Society? Why?</p> |
|  | <p>SEC. 2. No voting qualification or procedure shall be imposed or applied to deny or abridge the right to vote on account of race or color.</p> |
| <p>New Deal or Great Society? Why?</p> | <p>New Deal or Great Society? Why?</p> |

Image Sources

1. Older Americans Act: <http://acsc.lib.udel.edu/exhibits/show/legislation/item/167>
2. CCC workers: <https://www.lib.uidaho.edu/digital/cccidaho/items/cccidaho105.html>
3. TVA poster, NAID 515880: <http://catalog.archives.gov/id/515880>
4. Appalachian Regional Development Act: <http://acsc.lib.udel.edu/exhibits/show/legislation/item/51>
5. Lady Bird Johnson and the Head Start program, NAID 2803423: <http://catalog.archives.gov/id/2803423>
6. PWA construction, NAID 196781: <http://catalog.archives.gov/id/196781>
7. Job Corps training, NAID 7005130: <http://catalog.archives.gov/id/7005130>
8. Voting Rights Act: <http://acsc.lib.udel.edu/exhibits/show/legislation/item/198>

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