Module 19
The New Deal

Essential Question
What should be the role of the government of the United States during economic crises?

In this module you will learn about the programs of the New Deal and the impact that these programs had on the nation.

What You Will Learn . . .

Lesson 1: A New Deal Fights the Depression . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 780
The Big Idea After becoming president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt used government programs to combat the Depression.

Lesson 2: The Second New Deal . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 789
The Big Idea The Second New Deal included new programs to extend federal aid and stimulate the nation’s economy.

Lesson 3: New Deal, New Opportunities . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 799
The Big Idea New Deal policies and actions affected various social and ethnic groups.

Lesson 4: Culture in the 1930s . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 806
The Big Idea Motion pictures, radio, art, and literature blossomed during the New Deal.

Lesson 5: The Impact of the New Deal . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 812
The Big Idea The New Deal affected American society not only in the 1930s but also in the decades that followed.
Timeline of Events 1932–1941

United States Events

1932

1933 Franklin Delano Roosevelt is inaugurated.
1934 Congress creates the SEC to regulate the stock market.
1934 Indian Reorganization Act is passed.
1935 Congress passes the Social Security Act.

World Events

1932

1933 Hitler and the Nazi Party come to power in Germany.
1935 Mussolini leads Italian invasion of Ethiopia.

< 1936 President Roosevelt is reelected.
1936 Civil war begins in Spain.
1937 Japan invades northern China.
1937 The Hindenburg explodes.

1938 Route 66 is completed, linking Chicago, Illinois, to Los Angeles, California.
< 1939 The Wizard of Oz is released in movie theaters.
1939 Germany invades Poland.
1939 Mahatma Gandhi begins protesting British rule in India.

1940 President Roosevelt is elected a third time.
1940 The 1940 Summer Olympics in Tokyo are cancelled.
The Big Idea
After becoming president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt used government programs to combat the Depression.

Why It Matters Now
Americans still benefit from New Deal programs, such as bank and stock market regulations and the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Key Terms and People
Franklin Delano Roosevelt
New Deal
Glass-Steagall Act
Federal Securities Act
Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA)
Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)
National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA)
deficit spending
Huey Long

A New Deal Fights the Depression

One American’s Story
As the Depression dragged on, Keith Hufford had lost most hope of ever finding work. Then President Roosevelt began creating programs to employ young, able men like Hufford. Through one of these programs, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), Hufford found work protecting Utah forests. Finally, he was able to help his family financially. He recalled how his CCC job gave him a new sense of purpose after unsuccessfully looking for work for so long.

“...tramped half-heartedly into the forests and fields to plant and cut trees, build dams, lime kilns, fire breaks and trails, control insect pests, tree diseases, and risk our lives... A great deal of credit must be given to the boys for... the enthusiasm and zest with which they attacked a new project, anxious to get it completed... and in the meantime, secure in their knowledge the folks “back home” had a small, but helpful income.”
—Keith Hufford, quoted in “CCC in Utah”

President Roosevelt’s programs raised the hopes of the American people. To many, it appeared as if the country had turned a corner. It was beginning to emerge from the nightmare of the Great Depression.
Americans Get a New Deal

The 1932 presidential election showed that Americans were clearly ready for a change. The Depression had robbed people of work, food, and hope.

ELECTING FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT The Republicans renominated President Hoover. But they recognized he had little chance of winning. Too many Americans blamed Hoover for doing too little about the Depression. They wanted a new president. The Democrats pinned their hopes on Franklin Delano Roosevelt, known popularly as FDR. He was the two-term governor of New York and a distant cousin of former president Theodore Roosevelt.

As governor, FDR had proved an effective, reform-minded leader, working to combat unemployment and poverty. Unlike Hoover, Roosevelt possessed a “can-do” attitude and projected an air of friendliness and confidence. This attitude attracted voters.

Indeed, Roosevelt won an overwhelming victory. He captured nearly 23 million votes to Hoover’s nearly 16 million. In the Senate, Democrats claimed a nearly two-thirds majority. In the House, they won almost three-fourths of the seats. It was their greatest victory since before the Civil War.

WAITING FOR ROOSEVELT TO TAKE OVER Four months would elapse between Roosevelt’s victory in the November election and his inauguration as president in March 1933. The Twentieth Amendment, which moved presidential inaugurations to January, was not ratified until February 1933. It therefore did not apply to the 1932 election.

FDR was not idle during this waiting period, however. He worked with his team of carefully picked advisers—a select group of professors, lawyers, and journalists that came to be known as the “Brain Trust.” Roosevelt began to formulate a set of policies for his new administration. This program, designed to alleviate the problems of the Great Depression, became known as the New Deal. The term originated in a campaign speech when Roosevelt had promised “a new deal for the American people.” New Deal policies focused on three general goals: relief for the needy, economic recovery, and financial reform.

THE HUNDRED DAYS Roosevelt knew that for the New Deal to be able to improve the U.S. economy, he first needed to reestablish Americans’ confidence. His inauguration speech in 1933 was one of his first steps to do so. He reminded Americans that their fears for their economic future were unfounded and concerned “only material things.”

“This great Nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.”

—Franklin D. Roosevelt, from his first Inaugural Address, 1933
Immediately upon taking office, the Roosevelt administration launched a period of intense activity known as the Hundred Days, lasting from March 9 to June 16, 1933. During this period, Congress passed more than 15 major pieces of New Deal legislation. These laws, and others that followed, significantly expanded the federal government’s role in the nation’s economy and in citizens’ lives. They also changed the relationship between the federal and state governments.

Roosevelt’s first step as president was to reform banking and finance. By 1933 widespread bank failures had caused most Americans to lose faith in the banking system. On March 5, one day after taking office, Roosevelt declared a bank holiday and closed all banks to prevent further withdrawals. He persuaded Congress to pass the Emergency Banking Relief Act, which authorized the Treasury Department to inspect the country’s banks. Those that were sound could reopen at once. Those that were insolvent—unable to pay their debts—would remain closed. Those that needed help could receive loans. This measure revived public confidence in banks, since customers now had greater faith that the open banks were in good financial shape.

**AN IMPORTANT FIRESIDE CHAT** On March 12, the day before the first banks were to reopen, President Roosevelt gave the first of his many fireside chats—radio talks about issues of public concern, explaining in clear, simple language his New Deal measures. These informal talks made Americans feel as if the president were talking directly to them. In his first chat, Roosevelt took time to calm Americans’ fears about the bank crisis. He acknowledged that closing the banks had caused stress and hardship. But he reassured his
listeners that the banks would reopen and the American financial system would return as strong as ever.

As Roosevelt explained, the banking crisis was caused in large part by panic. When too many people demanded their savings in cash, banks would fail. This was not because banks were weak but because even strong banks could not meet such heavy demands. Over the next few weeks, many Americans returned their savings to banks.

**REGULATING BANKING AND FINANCE** Congress took another step to reorganize the banking system by passing the *Glass-Steagall Act* of 1933. This act established the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). The FDIC provided federal insurance for individual bank accounts of up to $5,000, reassuring millions of bank customers that their money was safe. It also required banks to act cautiously with their customers’ money.

Congress and the president also worked to regulate the stock market, in which people had lost faith because of the crash of 1929. The *Federal Securities Act*, passed in May 1933, required corporations to provide complete information on all stock offerings and made them liable for any misrepresentations. In June 1934 Congress created the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to regulate the stock market. One goal of this commission was to prevent people with inside information about companies from “rigging” the stock market for their own profit.

In addition, Roosevelt persuaded Congress to approve a bill allowing the manufacture and sale of some alcoholic beverages. The bill’s main purpose was to raise government revenues by taxing alcohol. By the end of 1933, the Twenty-First Amendment had repealed prohibition altogether.

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**First Fireside Chat**

In the first of his popular radio broadcasts known as fireside chats, President Roosevelt encouraged Americans not to lose faith in the banking system. Understanding that the complexities of modern banking were a mystery to most people, he sought to explain the system in simple terms. At the same time, he stressed to his listeners the vital role of banks in maintaining the American way of life.

> “When you deposit money in a bank the bank does not put the money into a safe deposit vault. It invests your money . . . to keep the wheels of industry and agriculture turning around. A comparatively small part of the money that you put into the bank is kept in currency—an amount which in normal times is wholly sufficient to cover the cash needs of the average citizen. . . . Some of our bankers had shown themselves either incompetent or dishonest in the handling of the people’s funds. . . . And so it became the Government’s job to straighten out this situation and do it as quickly as possible.”

> —Franklin D. Roosevelt, from a Fireside Chat, March 12, 1933

**Analyze Historical Sources**

According to Roosevelt, why is the money invested in banks important to the U.S. economy?
Helping the American People

While working on banking and financial matters, the Roosevelt administration also focused on other ways to stimulate economic recovery and to aid Americans.

RURAL ASSISTANCE Having suffered the double blow of the drought in the Dust Bowl and the national economic crisis, farmers were perhaps the hardest hit by the Depression. The government soon implemented several rural assistance programs to aid them. The Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) sought to raise crop prices by lowering production. The government achieved this goal by paying farmers to leave a certain amount of every acre of land unseeded. The theory was that reduced supply would boost prices. In some cases, crops were too far advanced for the acreage reduction to take effect. As a result, the government paid cotton growers $200 million to plow under 10 million acres of their crop. It also paid hog farmers to slaughter 6 million pigs. These subsidies upset many Americans, who protested the destruction of food when many people were going hungry. It did, however, help raise farm prices and put more money in farmers’ pockets.

Several New Deal programs focused specifically on the impoverished Tennessee River Valley. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), established on May 18, 1933, was particularly ambitious. The TVA renovated five existing dams and constructed 20 new ones, created thousands of jobs, and provided flood control, hydroelectric power, and other benefits to the region. The government also established the Cumberland Homesteads in eastern Tennessee. There, hundreds of poor families were resettled on small farms and worked in community-owned businesses. The community never attracted enough good-paying jobs, however, and the venture ultimately failed.

PROVIDING WORK PROJECTS The administration also established programs to provide relief through work projects and cash payments. One important program, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), put young men aged 18 to 25 to work. CCC members built roads, developed parks, planted trees, and helped in soil-erosion and flood-control projects. By the time the program ended in 1942, almost 3 million young men had passed through the CCC. The CCC paid a small wage, $30 a month, of which $25 was automatically sent home to the worker’s family. It also supplied free food and uniforms and lodging in work camps. Many of the camps were located on the Great Plains, where, within a period of eight years, the men of the CCC planted more than 200 million trees. This tremendous
revegetation program was aimed at preventing another Dust Bowl. Another major CCC project took place in Florida, where CCC workers built the 100-mile Overseas Highway to link Miami and Key West. The new highway was needed to replace the railroad—destroyed in a 1935 hurricane—that once linked these tourist destinations.

The Public Works Administration (PWA) was created in June 1933 as part of the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA). The PWA provided money to states to create jobs chiefly in the construction of schools and other community buildings. When these programs failed to make a sufficient dent in unemployment, President Roosevelt established the Civil Works Administration (CWA) in November 1933. It provided 4 million immediate jobs during the winter of 1933–1934. Some critics of the CWA claimed that the programs were “make-work” projects and a waste of money. However, the CWA built 40,000 schools and paid the salaries of more than 50,000 schoolteachers in America’s rural areas. It also built more than half a million miles of roads.

PROMOTING FAIR PRACTICES The NIRA also sought to promote industrial growth by establishing codes of fair practice for individual industries. It created the National Recovery Administration (NRA), which set prices of many products and established standards. The aim of the NRA was to promote recovery by interrupting the trend of wage cuts, falling prices, and layoffs. Economist Gardiner C. Means attempted to justify the NRA by stating the goal of industrial planning.

“The National Recovery Administration [was] created in response to an overwhelming demand from many quarters that certain elements in the making of industrial policy . . . should no longer be left to the market place and the price mechanism but should be placed in the hands of administrative bodies.”

—Gardiner C. Means, from “Industrial Prices and Their Relative Inflexibility”
The codes of fair practice had been drafted in joint meetings of businesses and representatives of workers and consumers. These codes limited production and established prices. Because businesses were given new concessions, workers made demands. Congress met their demands by passing a section of the NIRA guaranteeing workers’ right to unionize and to bargain collectively.

Many businesses and politicians criticized the NRA. Some charged that the codes served large business interests. There were also charges of increasing code violations.

**FOOD, CLOTHING, AND SHELTER** A number of New Deal programs concerned housing and home mortgage problems. The Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) provided government loans to homeowners who faced foreclosure because they couldn’t make their loan payments. In addition, the 1934 National Housing Act created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). This agency continues to furnish loans for home mortgages and repairs today.

Another program, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), was funded with $500 million to provide direct relief for the needy. Half of the money was given to the states as direct grants-in-aid to help furnish food and clothing to the unemployed, the aged, and the ill. The rest was distributed to states to support work relief programs. For every $3 within the state program, FERA donated $1. Harry Hopkins, who headed this program, believed that, whereas money helped people buy food, it was meaningful work that enabled them to gain confidence and self-respect.

**The New Deal Comes Under Attack**

By the end of the Hundred Days, millions of Americans had benefited from the New Deal programs. The public’s confidence in the nation’s future had rebounded as well. The government’s policy of **deficit spending**—spending more money than it receives in revenue—was stimulating economic recovery, despite putting the government deeply into debt. With more of their own money in their hands, consumers could buy goods and services and thus fuel economic growth.

Although President Roosevelt agreed to deficit spending, he did so reluctantly. He regarded it as a necessary evil to be used only at a time of great economic crisis. Nevertheless, the New Deal did not end the Depression, and opposition grew among some parts of the population.

Liberal critics worried that the New Deal would not go far enough to help the poor and to reform the nation’s economic system. Conservative critics argued that Roosevelt’s direct relief plan would cost the government too much. They also believed that he would use New Deal policies to control business and socialize the economy. Conservatives were particularly angered by laws such as the Agricultural Adjustment Act and the National Industrial Recovery Act, which they believed gave the federal government too much control over agriculture and industry. Many critics believed the New Deal would interfere with the workings of a free-market economy.
THE SUPREME COURT REACTS  By the mid-1930s conservative opposition to the New Deal had received a boost from two Supreme Court decisions. In 1935 the Court ruled the NIRA unconstitutional. It declared that the law upset the established system of checks and balances by giving legislative powers to the executive branch. Additionally, the Court said that the enforcement of industry codes within states went beyond the federal government’s constitutional powers to regulate interstate commerce. The next year, the Supreme Court struck down the AAA on the grounds that agriculture is a local matter and should be regulated by the states rather than by the federal government.

President Roosevelt feared that further Court decisions might dismantle the New Deal. To prevent such a Court action, in February 1937 he asked Congress to enact a court reform bill. If passed, the bill would reorganize the federal judiciary and allow FDR to appoint six new Supreme Court justices. Most observers saw this bill as a clumsy effort to “pack” the Supreme Court with friendly justices. They also viewed it as a dangerous attempt to upset the constitutional balance of power. Some of the Supreme Court’s rulings had been based on the belief that the executive branch had usurped too much legislative power. The court reform bill would further shift the relationship between the branches by allowing the executive to use legislation to interfere with judicial independence. As it turned out, the president got his way without reorganizing the judiciary. In 1937 an elderly justice retired, and Roosevelt appointed the liberal Hugo S. Black, shifting the balance of the Court. Rulings of the Court began to favor the New Deal. Over the next four years, because of further resignations, Roosevelt was able to appoint seven new justices.

THREE FIERY CRITICS  In 1934 some of the strongest conservative opponents of the New Deal banded together to form an organization called the American Liberty League. The American Liberty League opposed New Deal measures that it believed violated respect for the rights of individuals and property. Three of the toughest critics the president faced, however, were three men who expressed views that appealed to poor Americans: Charles Coughlin, Dr. Francis Townsend, and Huey Long.

Every Sunday, Father Charles Coughlin, a Roman Catholic priest from a suburb of Detroit, broadcast radio sermons that combined economic, political, and religious ideas. Initially a supporter of the New Deal, Coughlin soon turned against Roosevelt. He favored a guaranteed annual income and the nationalization of banks. At the height of his popularity, Father Coughlin claimed a radio audience of as many as 40–45 million people, but his increasingly anti-Semitic (anti-Jewish) views eventually cost him support.
Another critic was Dr. Francis Townsend, a physician and health officer in Long Beach, California. He believed that Roosevelt wasn’t doing enough to help the poor and elderly, so he devised a pension plan that would provide monthly benefits to the aged. The plan found strong backing among the elderly, thus undermining their support for Roosevelt.

Perhaps the most serious challenge to the New Deal came from Senator Huey Long of Louisiana. Like Coughlin, Long was an early supporter of the New Deal. But he, too, turned against Roosevelt. Eager to win the presidency for himself, Long proposed a nationwide social program called Share-Our-Wealth. Under the banner slogan “Every Man a King,” he promised something for everyone.

“We owe debts in America today, public and private, amounting to $252 billion. That means that every child is born with a $2,000 debt tied around his neck. . . . We propose that children shall be born in a land of opportunity, guaranteed a home, food, clothes, and the other things that make for living, including the right to education.”

—Huey Long, quoted in Record, 74 Congress, Session 1

Long’s Share-Our-Wealth program was very popular. By 1935 he boasted of having perhaps as many as 27,000 Share-Our-Wealth clubs and 7.5 million members. That same year, however, at the height of his popularity, Long was assassinated by a lone gunman.

As the initial impetus of the New Deal began to wane, President Roosevelt started to look ahead. He knew that much more needed to be done to help the people and to solve the nation’s economic problems.
The Big Idea
The Second New Deal included new programs to extend federal aid and stimulate the nation’s economy.

Why It Matters Now
Second New Deal programs continue to assist homebuyers, farmers, workers, and the elderly in the 2000s.

Key Terms and People
Eleanor Roosevelt
Works Progress Administration (WPA)
National Youth Administration (NYA)
Wagner Act
Social Security Act

One American’s Story
Dorothea Lange was a photographer who documented American life during the Great Depression and the New Deal. Lange spent considerable time getting to know her subjects—destitute migrant workers—before she and her assistant set up their cameras.

“So often it’s just sticking around and remaining there, not swooping in and swooping out in a cloud of dust... We found our way in... not too far away from the people we were working with... The people who are garrulous and wear their heart on their sleeve and tell you everything, that’s one kind of person. But the fellow who’s hiding behind a tree and hoping you don’t see him, is the fellow that you’d better find out why.”

—Dorothea Lange, quoted in Restless Spirit: The Life and Work of Dorothea Lange

Lange also believed that her distinct limp, the result of a childhood case of polio, worked to her advantage. Seeing that Lange, too, had suffered, people were kind to her and more at ease.

Federal agencies, such as the Farm Security Administration, which was established to alleviate rural poverty, funded much of Lange’s work. Her photographs of migrant workers helped draw attention to the desperate conditions in rural America. They also helped underscore the need for direct relief.
The Second Hundred Days

By 1935 the Roosevelt administration was trying to build on the programs established during the Hundred Days. Although the economy had improved, the gains were not as great as the president had expected. Unemployment remained high despite government work programs. And production still lagged behind the levels of the 1920s.

Nevertheless, the New Deal was popular. And President Roosevelt launched a second burst of activity, often called the Second New Deal or the Second Hundred Days. During this phase, the president called on Congress to provide more extensive relief for both farmers and workers.

First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, a social reformer who combined her deep humanitarian impulses with great political skills, prodded her husband in this direction. Throughout FDR’s first Hundred Days, Eleanor Roosevelt had used her influence in the Democratic National Committee to urge the administration to appoint women to government positions. In addition, she made sure that the New Deal included relief programs for women, as well as for men. She continued to focus on social issues during FDR’s second term. She traveled the country, observing social conditions. She also reminded the president about the continuing suffering throughout the country. She lobbied for civil rights and workers’ rights as well. Rexford Tugwell, one of the president’s top advisers, later said of the First Lady’s influence, “It would be impossible to say how often and to what extent American governmental processes have been turned in new directions because of her determination.”

REELECTING FDR The Second New Deal was underway by the 1936 presidential election. The Republicans nominated Alfred Landon, the governor of Kansas, while the Democrats, of course, nominated President Roosevelt. The election resulted in an overwhelming victory for the Democrats, who won the presidency and large majorities in both houses. The election marked the first time that most African Americans had voted Democratic rather than Republican. It also marked the first time that labor unions gave united support to a presidential candidate. The 1936 election was a vote of confidence in FDR and the New Deal.

Helping Farmers

Farmers were still in crisis as Roosevelt won reelection. Many were still suffering from the environmental disaster in the Dust Bowl. In addition, two of every five farms in the United States were mortgaged, and many farmers had defaulted on their loans. Thousands of these farm owners became tenant farmers when they lost their land to the banks. Making the farmers’ situation even harder was the fact that some owners of large farms were replacing workers with tractors and other automated farm machines. An official from a farmers’ association in Oklahoma described the effect of automation on poor tenant farmers in his state:

Eleanor Roosevelt visits a children’s hospital in 1937.
“In Creek County . . . we have the record of one land-owner purchasing 3 tractors and forcing 31 of his 34 tenants and croppers from the land. Most of these families left the State when neither jobs nor relief could be secured. This is over 10 families per machine, 10 families who must quit their profession and seek employment in an unfriendly, industrialized farming section of Arizona or California. . . . Tractors produce crops cheaper. A small farmer who is unable to equip his farm with a tractor loses out and is driven from the land. The small independent farmer begins slipping down on the ladder of agriculture, slipping down toward becoming a migrant.”

—Otis Nation, Director of the Oklahoma Tenant Farmers’ Union, from testimony before Congress

Seeing their needs, the government once again turned its attention to struggling farmers and worked to find ways to protect the land from the devastating effects of soil erosion.

**Document-Based Investigation Historical Source**

**“Migrant Mother” (1936), Dorothea Lange**

In 1935 Roy Stryker hired photographer Dorothea Lange to work for the New Deal’s Resettlement Administration, documenting the harsh living conditions of farmers. In February 1936 Lange visited a camp in Nipomo, California, where some 2,500 destitute pea pickers lived in tents or, like this mother of seven children, in lean-tos. Lange described her encounter with the woman. “I saw and approached the hungry and desperate mother, as if drawn by a magnet. . . . She said that they had been living on frozen vegetables from the surrounding fields, and birds that the children killed. She had just sold the tires from her car to buy food.” One of Lange’s photographs of the woman, titled “Migrant Mother,” was published in the San Francisco News on March 10, 1936. The photograph became one of the most recognizable symbols of the Depression and perhaps the strongest argument in support of New Deal relief programs.

**Analyze Historical Sources**

Why do you think “Migrant Mother” was effective in persuading people to support FDR’s relief programs?
FOCUSING ON FARMS  When the Supreme Court struck down the AAA early in 1936, Congress passed another law to replace it: the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act. This act paid farmers for cutting production of soil-depleting crops. It also rewarded farmers for practicing good soil conservation methods. Two years later, in 1938, Congress approved a second Agricultural Adjustment Act that brought back many of the Dust Bowl recovery features of the first AAA. The second AAA did not include a processing tax to pay for farm subsidies, a provision of the first AAA that the Supreme Court had declared unconstitutional.

The Second New Deal also attempted to help tenant farmers, sharecroppers, migrant workers, and many other poor farmers. The Resettlement Administration, created by executive order in 1935, provided monetary loans to small farmers to buy land. In 1937 the agency was replaced by the Farm Security Administration (FSA). The FSA loaned more than $1 billion to help tenant farmers become landholders. It also established camps for migrant farm workers, who had traditionally lived in squalid housing.

The FSA hired photographers such as Dorothea Lange, Ben Shahn, Walker Evans, Arthur Rothstein, and Carl Mydans to take many pictures of rural towns and farms and their inhabitants. The agency used their photographs to create a pictorial record of the difficult situation in rural America.

Roosevelt Extends Relief

In addition to farmers, the Second New Deal assisted students, women, African Americans, and Native Americans. One of the largest programs was the Works Progress Administration (WPA), headed by Harry Hopkins, the former chief of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. The WPA set out to create as many jobs as possible as quickly as possible. Between 1935 and 1943 it spent $11 billion to give jobs to more than 8 million workers, most of them unskilled. These workers built 850 airports throughout the country,
constructed or repaired 651,000 miles of roads and streets, and put up more than 125,000 public buildings. In addition, the WPA employed many professionals who wrote guides to cities, collected historical slave narratives, painted murals on the walls of schools and other public buildings, and performed in theater troupes around the country. At the urging of Eleanor Roosevelt, the WPA made special efforts to help women, minorities, and young people. Women workers in sewing groups made 300 million garments for the needy.

Although criticized by some as a make-work project, the WPA produced public works of lasting value to the nation. It also gave working people a sense of hope and purpose. As one man recalled, “It was really great. You worked, you got a paycheck and you had some dignity. Even when a man raked leaves, he got paid, he had some dignity.”

Another program, the National Youth Administration (NYA), was created specifically to provide education, jobs, counseling, and recreation for young people. The NYA provided student aid to high school, college, and graduate students. In exchange, students worked in part-time positions at their schools. One participant later described her experience.

“I lugged . . . drafts and reams of paper home, night after night. . . . Sometimes I typed almost all night and had to deliver it to school the next morning. . . . This was a good program. It got necessary work done. It gave teenagers a chance to work for pay. Mine bought me clothes and shoes, school supplies, some movies and mad money. Candy bars, and big pickles out of a barrel. It gave my mother relief from my necessary demands for money.”

—Helen Farmer, quoted in The Great Depression

For graduates unable to find jobs, or youth who had dropped out of school, the NYA provided part-time jobs, such as working on highways, parks, and the grounds of public buildings.

Improving Labor and Other Reforms

In a speech to Congress in January 1935, the president declared, “When a man is convalescing from an illness, wisdom dictates not only cure of the symptoms but also removal of their cause.” During the Second New Deal, Roosevelt, with the help of Congress, brought about important reforms in the areas of labor relations and economic security for retired workers.
IMPROVING LABOR CONDITIONS

In 1935 the Supreme Court declared the NIRA unconstitutional, citing that the federal government had violated legislative authority reserved for individual states. One of the first reforms of the Second New Deal was passage of the National Labor Relations Act. More commonly called the Wagner Act, after its sponsor, Senator Robert F. Wagner of New York, the act reestablished the NIRA provision of collective bargaining. The federal government again protected the right of workers to join unions and engage in collective bargaining with employers.

The Wagner Act also prohibited unfair labor practices such as threatening workers, firing union members, and interfering with union organizing. The act set up the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to hear testimony about unfair practices and to hold elections to find out if workers wanted union representation.

In 1938 Congress passed the Fair Labor Standards Act, which set maximum hours at 44 hours per week, decreasing to 40 hours after two years. It also set minimum wages at 25 cents an hour, increasing to 40 cents an hour by 1945. The exploitation of child workers, famously documented by photojournalist Lewis Hine at the turn of the century, was still a problem in many factories. Consequently, the act also set rules for the employment of workers under 16 and banned hazardous work for those under 18.

THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT

One of the most important achievements of the New Deal was creating the Social Security system. Roosevelt had a vision for a comprehensive system of social provisions. He said,

“I see no reason why every child, from the day he is born, shouldn’t be a member of the social security system. When he begins to grow up, he should know he will have old-age benefits. . . . If he is out of work, he gets a benefit. If he is sick or crippled, he gets a benefit. . . . Everybody ought to be in on it—the farmer and his wife, and his family. . . . cradle to the grave they ought to be in a social insurance system.”

—Franklin D. Roosevelt, quoted in The Roosevelt I Knew

With these goals in mind, the Social Security Act, passed in 1935, was created by a committee chaired by Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins. The act had three major parts:

• **Old-age insurance for retirees 65 or older and their spouses.** The insurance was a supplemental retirement plan. Half of the funds came from the worker and half from the employer. Although some groups were excluded from the system, it helped to make retirement comfortable for millions of people.

• **Unemployment compensation system.** The unemployment system was funded by a federal tax on employers. It was administered at the state level. The initial payments ranged from $15 to $18 per week.

• **Aid to families with dependent children and people with disabilities.** The aid was paid for by federal funds made available to the states.
# New Deal Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMPLOYMENT PROJECTS</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1933 Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)</td>
<td>Provided jobs for single males on conservation projects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933 Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA)</td>
<td>Helped states to provide aid for the unemployed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933 Public Works Administration (PWA)</td>
<td>Created jobs on government projects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933 Civil Works Administration (CWA)</td>
<td>Provided work in federal jobs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1935 Works Progress Administration (WPA)</td>
<td>Quickly created as many jobs as possible—from construction jobs to positions in symphony orchestras.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1935 National Youth Administration (NYA)</td>
<td>Provided job training for unemployed young people and part-time jobs for needy students.</td>
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<tr>
<th>BUSINESS ASSISTANCE AND REFORM</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
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<td>1933 Emergency Banking Relief Act (EBRA)</td>
<td>Banks were inspected by Treasury Department and those that were stable could reopen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933 Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)</td>
<td>Protected bank deposits up to $5,000. (Today, accounts are protected up to $250,000.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933 National Recovery Administration (NRA)</td>
<td>Established codes of fair competition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934 Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)</td>
<td>Supervised the stock market and eliminated dishonest practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935 Banking Act of 1935</td>
<td>Created a seven-member board to regulate the nation’s money supply and interest rates on loans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938 Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA)</td>
<td>Required manufacturers to list ingredients in foods, drugs, and cosmetic products.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>FARM RELIEF AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1933 Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA)</td>
<td>Aided farmers and regulated crop production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933 Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)</td>
<td>Developed the resources of the Tennessee Valley.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935 Rural Electrification Administration (REA)</td>
<td>Provided affordable electricity for isolated rural areas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOUSING</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1933 Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC)</td>
<td>Loaned money at low interest rates to homeowners who could not meet mortgage payments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934 Federal Housing Administration (FHA)</td>
<td>Insured loans for building and repairing homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937 United States Housing Authority (USHA)</td>
<td>Provided federal loans for low-cost public housing.</td>
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<tr>
<th>LABOR RELATIONS</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1935 National Labor Relations Board (Wagner Act)</td>
<td>Defined unfair labor practices and established the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to settle disputes between employers and employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938 Fair Labor Standards Act</td>
<td>Established a minimum hourly wage and a maximum number of hours in the workweek for the entire country. Set rules for the employment of workers under 16 and banned hazardous factory work for those under 18.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RETIREMENT</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1935 Social Security Administration</td>
<td>Provided a pension for retired workers and their spouses and aided people with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the end, because of political opposition and funding problems, the Social Security Act was not the total pension system or complete welfare system that Roosevelt envisioned. To avoid a huge tax hike, Roosevelt agreed to exclude certain workers, including farm workers and household workers, from the new program. Even so, it provided substantial benefits to millions of Americans.

**EXPANDING AND REGULATING UTILITIES** The Second New Deal also included laws to promote rural electrification and to regulate public utilities. In 1935 only 12.6 percent of American farms had electricity. Roosevelt established under executive order the Rural Electrification Administration (REA). The REA financed and worked with electrical cooperatives to bring electricity to isolated areas. By 1945, 48 percent of America’s farms and rural homes had electricity. That figure rose to 90 percent by 1949.

The Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935 took aim at financial corruption in the public utility industry. It outlawed the ownership of utilities by multiple holding companies—a practice known as the pyramiding of holding companies. Lobbyists for the holding companies fought the law fiercely, and it proved extremely difficult to enforce.

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**Lesson 2 Assessment**

1. **Organize Information** Create a chart to show how groups such as farmers, the unemployed, youth, and retirees were helped by the programs of the Second New Deal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second New Deal</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>How Helped</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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Which group do you think benefited the most from the Second New Deal? Explain.

2. **Key Terms and People** For each key term or person in the lesson, write a sentence explaining its significance.

3. **Evaluate** Why might the Social Security Act be considered the most important achievement of the New Deal?

   **Think About:**
   • the types of relief needed in the 1930s
   • alternatives to government assistance to the elderly, the unemployed, and people with disabilities
   • the scope of the act and its impact on citizens today

4. **Draw Conclusions** Why might critics of the first New Deal have favored the Second New Deal?

5. **Form Generalizations** Why was the NIRA considered pro-labor?

6. **Analyze Primary Sources** Many WPA posters were created to promote New Deal programs—in this case, the Rural Electrification Administration. How does this poster’s simplistic design convey the program’s goal?
NLRB v. Jones and Laughlin Steel Corp. (1937)

ORIGINS OF THE CASE
In 1936 the Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation was charged with intimidating union organizers and firing several union members. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) found the company guilty of “unfair labor practices” and ordered it to rehire the workers with back pay.

THE RULING
The Supreme Court ruled that Congress had the power to regulate labor relations and confirmed the authority of the NLRB.

LEGAL REASONING
In the 1935 National Labor Relations Act, or Wagner Act, Congress claimed that its authority to regulate labor relations came from the commerce clause of the Constitution. Jones and Laughlin Steel argued that its manufacturing business did not involve interstate commerce—it operated a plant and hired people locally.

The Court disagreed. Although production itself may occur within one state, it said, production is a part of the interstate “flow of commerce.” If labor unrest at a steel mill would create “burdens and obstructions” to interstate commerce, then Congress has the power to prevent labor unrest at the steel mill.

The Court also explained that the act went “no further than to safeguard the right of employees to self-organization and to select representatives . . . for collective bargaining.” Departing from earlier decisions, the Court affirmed that these are “fundamental” rights.

“Long ago we . . . said . . . that a single employee was helpless in dealing with an employer; that he was dependent . . . on his daily wage for the maintenance of himself and family; that, if the employer refused to pay him the wages that he thought fair, he was . . . unable to leave the employ and resist arbitrary and unfair treatment; that union was essential to give laborers opportunity to deal on an equality with their employer.”

As a result, the Wagner Act was allowed to stand.

LEGAL SOURCES

LEGISLATION
U.S. Constitution, Article 1, Section 8 (Commerce Clause)
“The Congress shall have Power . . . To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations and among the several States.”

National Labor Relations Act (1935)
“The term ‘affecting commerce’ means . . . tending to lead to a labor dispute burdening or obstructing commerce or the free flow of commerce.”

“It shall be an unfair labor practice for an employer . . . to interfere with, restrain, or coerce employees in the exercise of the rights [to organize unions].”

RELATED CASES
Schechter Poultry Corp. v. United States (1935)
The Court struck down the National Industrial Recovery Act, a key piece of New Deal legislation.
Choosing to work despite the strike, a storekeeper at the Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation tries to pass through picket lines.

WHY IT MATTERED

The 1935 Wagner Act was one of the most important pieces of New Deal legislation. Conservative justices on the Supreme Court, however, thought New Deal legislation increased the power of the federal government beyond what the Constitution allowed. By the time the Jones and Laughlin case reached the Court in 1937, the Court had already struck down numerous New Deal laws. It appeared to many as if the Wagner Act was doomed.

In February 1937 Roosevelt announced a plan to appoint enough justices to build a Court majority in favor of the New Deal. Critics immediately accused Roosevelt of trying to pack the Supreme Court, thus crippling the Constitution’s system of checks and balances.

Two months later, the Court delivered its opinion in Jones and Laughlin and at about the same time upheld other New Deal legislation as well. Most historians agree that the Court’s switch was not a response to Roosevelt’s “Court-packing” plan, which already seemed destined for failure. Nevertheless, the decision resolved a potential crisis.

HISTORICAL IMPACT

The protection that labor unions gained by the Wagner Act helped them to grow quickly. Union membership among non-farm workers grew from around 12 percent in 1930 to around 31 percent by 1950. This increase helped improve the economic standing of many working-class Americans in the years following World War II.

Most significantly, Jones and Laughlin greatly broadened Congress’s power. Previously, neither the federal nor the state governments were thought to have sufficient power to control the large corporations and holding companies doing business in many states. Now, far beyond the power to regulate interstate commerce, Congress had the power to regulate anything “essential or appropriate” to that function. For example, federal laws barring discrimination in hotels and restaurants rest on the Court’s allowing Congress to decide what is an “essential or appropriate” subject of regulation.

More recently, the Court has placed tighter limits on Congress’s power to regulate interstate commerce. In United States v. Lopez (1995), the Court struck down a law that banned people from having handguns near a school. The Court said Congress was not justified in basing this law on its power to regulate interstate commerce.

Critical Thinking

1. **Connect to History**  Lawyers for Jones and Laughlin said that the Wagner Act violated the Tenth Amendment. Chief Justice Hughes said that since the act fell within the scope of the commerce clause, the Tenth Amendment did not apply. Read the Tenth Amendment and then write a paragraph defending Hughes’s position.

2. **Connect to Today**  Do Internet research to read the opening sections of United States v. Lopez. There, Chief Justice Rehnquist offers a summary of the Court’s interpretation of the commerce clause over the years. Summarize in your own words Rehnquist’s description of the current meaning of the commerce clause.
New Deal, New Opportunities

One American’s Story

In 1939 African American singer Marian Anderson was invited to perform in Washington, DC. Despite being one of the most admired singers in the world and one of the top box office draws in the country, she was not allowed to perform at Constitution Hall because of her race. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and the NAACP arranged for Anderson to perform at the Lincoln Memorial on Easter Sunday. A crowd of nearly 75,000 people came to hear her sing. At the concert, Walter White, an official of the NAACP, noticed one girl in the crowd.

“Her hands were particularly noticeable as she thrust them forward and upward, trying desperately . . . to touch the singer. They were hands which despite their youth had known only the dreary work of manual labor. Tears streamed down the girl’s dark face. Her hat was askew, but in her eyes flamed hope bordering on ecstasy. . . . If Marian Anderson could do it, the girl’s eyes seemed to say, then I can, too.”

—Walter White, quoted in A Man Called White

The event became one of the most dramatic cultural events of the period. And it made Marian Anderson a symbol of progress for minorities in the United States. Her life reflected some of the difficulties African Americans and other minorities faced during the New Deal era. But Anderson’s triumph gave many African Americans and other minorities, including the girl that Walter White witnessed, hope that they too would get a “new deal,” instead of a “raw deal.”
Women Make Their Mark

In some ways, the New Deal represented an important opportunity for minorities and women; but what these groups gained was limited. Long-standing patterns of prejudice and discrimination continued to plague them and to prevent their full and equal participation in national life.

One of the most notable changes during the New Deal was the naming of several women to important government positions. Frances Perkins became America’s first female cabinet member. As secretary of labor, she played a major role in creating the Social Security system and supervised labor legislation. President Roosevelt, encouraged by his wife Eleanor and seeking the support of women voters, also appointed two female diplomats and a female federal judge.

However, women continued to face discrimination in the workplace. Male workers believed that working women took jobs away from men. A Gallup poll taken in 1936 reported that 82 percent of Americans said that a wife should not work if her husband had a job. One journalist suggested a simple plan for solving unemployment: fire all the women currently working and replace them with men instead.

Additionally, New Deal laws yielded mixed results. The National Recovery Administration, for example, set wage codes, some of which set lower minimum wages for women. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration and the Civil Works Administration hired far fewer women than men, and the Civilian Conservation Corps hired only men.

In spite of these barriers, women continued their movement into the workplace. Although the overall percentage of women working for wages increased only slightly during the 1930s, the percentage of married women in the workplace grew from 11.7 percent in 1930 to 15.6 percent in 1940. In short, widespread criticism of working women did not halt the long-term trend of women working outside the home.

Frances Perkins (1882–1965)

As a student at Mount Holyoke College, Frances Perkins attended lectures that introduced her to social reform efforts. Her initial work in the settlement house movement sparked her interest in pursuing a career in the social service. After witnessing the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in 1911, Perkins pledged to fight for labor reforms, especially those for women. A pioneer for labor and women’s issues, she changed her name from Fannie to Frances, believing she would be taken more seriously in her work.
African American Activism

In the 1920s African Americans had gained more political influence during the Harlem Renaissance. They built upon their success in the 1930s, as well. One notable activist was A. Philip Randolph, who organized the country’s first all-black trade union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. His work and that of others laid the groundwork for what would become the civil rights movement.

AFRICAN AMERICANS TAKE LEADERSHIP ROLES During the New Deal, Roosevelt appointed more than 100 African Americans to key positions in the government. Mary McLeod Bethune—an educator who dedicated herself to promoting opportunities for young African Americans—was one such appointee. Hired by the president to head the Division of Negro Affairs of the National Youth Administration, Bethune worked to ensure that the NYA hired African American administrators and provided job training and other benefits to minority students.

Bethune also helped organize a “Black Cabinet” of influential African Americans to advise the Roosevelt administration on racial issues. Among these figures were William H. Hastie and Robert C. Weaver, both appointees to Roosevelt’s Department of the Interior. Never before had so many African Americans had a voice in the White House.

Eleanor Roosevelt played a key role in opening doors for African Americans in government. She invited African American leaders, including Walter White of the NAACP, for an unprecedented meeting at the White House to help end discrimination against African Americans in some New Deal programs. She also coordinated meetings between the president and the NAACP to discuss anti-lynching legislation.

THE PRESIDENT FAILS TO SUPPORT CIVIL RIGHTS Despite efforts to promote racial equality, Roosevelt was never committed to full civil rights for African Americans. He was afraid of upsetting white Democratic voters in the South, an important segment of his supporters. He refused to approve a federal anti-lynching law and an end to the poll tax, two key goals of the civil rights movement. Further, a number of New Deal agencies clearly discriminated against African Americans, including the NRA, the CCC, and the TVA. These programs gave lower wages to African Americans and favored whites.

African Americans recognized the need to fight for their rights and to improve conditions in areas that the New Deal ignored. In 1934 they helped organize the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, which sought to protect the rights of tenant farmers and sharecroppers, both white and black. In the North, the union created tenants’ groups and launched campaigns to increase job opportunities.

In general, however, African Americans supported the Roosevelt administration and the New Deal, generally seeing them as their best hope for the future. As one man recalled, “Roosevelt touched the temper of the black community. You did not look upon him as being white, black, blue or green. He was President Roosevelt.”

Reading Check Evaluate the actions and policies of the Roosevelt administration on civil rights.

Mary McLeod Bethune, a close friend of Eleanor Roosevelt, was a strong supporter of the New Deal.
Mexican American Fortunes

Mexican Americans also tended to support the New Deal, even though they received even fewer benefits than African Americans did. Large numbers of Mexican Americans had come to the United States during the 1920s, settling mainly in the Southwest. Most found work laboring on farms, an occupation that was essentially unprotected by state and federal laws.

During the Depression, the need for farm labor decreased and farm wages fell to as little as nine cents an hour. Farm workers who tried to unionize often met with violence from employers and government authorities. The unemployment rate for Mexican Americans significantly increased during this time.

Although the CCC and WPA helped some Mexican Americans, these agencies also discriminated against them by disqualifying from their programs migrant workers who had no permanent address. Many of these workers decided to return to Mexico. But the United States government deported others. During the 1930s as many as 400,000 persons of Mexican descent, many of them U.S. citizens, were deported to Mexico. Those who remained in the United States lived in extreme poverty.

Native Americans Gain Support

Native Americans were another group that benefited from New Deal programs. In 1924 a law had granted Native Americans full citizenship. In 1933 President Roosevelt appointed John Collier as commissioner of Indian Affairs. Collier helped create the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, which marked a complete change in government policy. After nearly 50 years of forcing Native Americans to assimilate, the government abandoned this approach and moved to grant Native Americans autonomy. It also helped to restore some reservation lands to tribal ownership. The act mandated changes in three areas.

- **economic**—Native American lands would belong to an entire tribe. This provision strengthened Native American land claims by prohibiting the government from taking over unclaimed reservation lands and selling them to people other than Native Americans.
- **cultural**—The number of boarding schools for Native American children was reduced, and children could now attend public school on the reservations.
- **political**—Tribes were given permission to elect tribal councils to govern their reservations.

Some Native Americans who valued their tribal traditions hailed the act as an important step forward. Other Native Americans who had become more “Americanized” as individual landowners under the previous Dawes Act objected, because they were tired of white people telling them what was good for them.
Reviving Organized Labor

Although New Deal policies had mixed results for minorities, these groups generally backed President Roosevelt. In fact, one of FDR’s great achievements was to create the **New Deal coalition**—an alignment of diverse groups dedicated to supporting the Democratic Party. The coalition included southern whites, various urban groups, African Americans, and unionized industrial workers. As a result, Democrats dominated national politics throughout the 1930s and 1940s. The period also saw the growth of organized labor.

**LABOR UNIONS FLOURISH** As a result of the Wagner Act and other pro-labor legislation passed during the New Deal, union members enjoyed better working conditions and increased bargaining power. In their eyes, President Roosevelt was a “friend of labor.” Labor unions donated money to Roosevelt’s reelection campaigns. Union workers pledged him their votes.

Between 1933 and 1941, union membership grew from less than 3 million to more than 10 million. Unionization especially affected coal miners and workers in mass-production industries, such as the automobile, rubber, and
electrical industries. It was in these industries, too, that a struggle for dominance within the labor movement began to develop.

The American Federation of Labor (AFL) had traditionally been restricted to the craft unions, such as carpenters and electricians. Most of the AFL leaders opposed industry-wide unions that represented all the workers in a given industry, such as automobile manufacturing.

Frustrated by this position, several key labor leaders, including John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers of America and David Dubinsky of the International Ladies Garment Workers, formed the Committee for Industrial Organization to organize industrial unions. The committee rapidly signed up unskilled and semiskilled workers, and within two years it had won union recognition in both the steel and automobile industries. In 1938 the Committee for Industrial Organization was expelled from the AFL and changed its name to the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). This split lasted until 1955.

LABOR DISPUTES One of the main bargaining tactics of the labor movement in the 1930s was the sit-down strike. Instead of walking off their jobs, workers remained inside their plants. But they did not work. This prevented the factory owners from carrying on production with strikebreakers, or scabs. Some Americans disapproved of the sit-down strike, calling it a violation of private property. Nonetheless, it proved to be an effective bargaining tool.

Not all labor disputes in the 1930s were peaceful. Perhaps the most dramatic incident was the clash at the Republic Steel plant in Chicago on Memorial Day, 1937. Police attacked striking steelworkers outside the plant. One striker, an African American man, recalled the experience.

“I began to see people drop. There was a Mexican on my side, and he fell; and there was a black man on my side and he fell. Down I went. I crawled around in the grass and saw that people were getting beat. I’d never seen police beat women, not white women. I’d seen them beat black women, but this was the first time in my life I’d seen them beat white women—with sticks.”

—Jesse Reese, quoted in The Great Depression
Ten people were killed and 84 wounded in this incident, which became known as the Memorial Day Massacre. Shortly afterward, the National Labor Relations Board stepped in and required the head of Republic Steel, Tom Girdler, to negotiate with the union. This and other actions helped labor gain strength during the 1930s.

FDR WINS IN 1936 Urban voters were another important component of the New Deal coalition. Support for the Democratic Party surged, especially in large northern cities, such as New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago. These and other cities had powerful city political organizations that provided services, such as jobs, in exchange for votes. In the 1936 election, President Roosevelt carried the nation's 12 largest cities.

Support for President Roosevelt came from various religious and ethnic groups—Roman Catholics, Jews, Italians, Irish, and Polish and other Slavic peoples—as well as from African Americans. His appeal to these groups was based on New Deal labor laws and work-relief programs, which aided the urban poor. The president also made direct and persuasive appeals to urban voters at election time. To reinforce his support, he also appointed many officials of urban-immigrant backgrounds, particularly Roman Catholics and Jews, to important government positions.

Women, African Americans, Mexican Americans, Native Americans, and workers from all walks of life were greatly affected by the New Deal. It also had a tremendous influence on American society and culture.

Reading Check
Analyze Causes
What factors contributed to labor's growth?

Lesson 3 Assessment

1. **Organize Information** Using a web diagram, note the effects of New Deal policies on American women, African Americans, Mexican Americans, Native Americans, unionized workers, and urban Americans.

   ![](Effects of New Deal.webp)

   Write a paragraph explaining the effects of the New Deal on one of the groups.

2. **Key Terms and People** For each key term or person in the lesson, write a sentence explaining its significance.

3. **Synthesize** Why was the “Black Cabinet” important to the Roosevelt administration?

4. **Evaluate** How effective were unions in shaping political and economic policies? Do you think unions became too powerful? Explain.

5. **Analyze Motives** Why did urban voters support President Roosevelt?

6. **Summarize** What steps did women take toward equality during the 1930s?

   Think About:
   - hiring practices in federal programs
   - women’s opportunities in business and industry
   - New Deal programs that protected the rights of women
   - the role of women, such as Eleanor Roosevelt and Frances Perkins, in shaping New Deal policies

The New Deal 805
The Big Idea
Motion pictures, radio, art, and literature blossomed during the New Deal.

Why It Matters Now
The films, music, art, and literature of the 1930s still captivate today’s public.

Key Terms and People
Gone with the Wind
Orson Welles
Richard Wright
Zora Neale Hurston
The Grapes of Wrath

One American’s Story
Don Congdon, editor of the book *The Thirties: A Time to Remember*, was a high school student when the New Deal began. While many writers and artists in the 1930s produced works that reflected the important issues of the day, it was the movies and radio that most clearly captured the public imagination. Congdon remembers the role movies played at the time.

“Lots of us enjoyed our leisure at the movies. The experience of going was like an insidious [tempting] candy we could never get quite enough of; the visit to the dark theater was an escape from the drab realities of Depression living, and we were entranced by the never-ending variety of stories. Hollywood, like Scheherazade [the storyteller] in *The Thousand and One Nights*, supplied more the next night, and the next night after that.”

—Don Congdon, quoted in *The Thirties: A Time to Remember*

During the Great Depression, movies provided a window on a different, more exciting world. Despite economic hardship, many people gladly paid the 25 cents it cost to go to the movies. Along with radio, motion pictures became an increasingly dominant feature of American life.
The Lure of Motion Pictures and Radio

Although the 1930s were a difficult time for many Americans, it was a profitable and golden age for the motion picture and radio industries. By the late 1930s approximately 65 percent of the population attended the movies once a week. The nation boasted over 15,000 movie theaters. This was more than the number of banks and double the number of hotels. Sales of radios also greatly increased during the 1930s, from just over 13 million in 1930 to 28 million by 1940. Nearly 90 percent of American households owned a radio. More than ever before, people across the country and around the world shared cultural experiences through radio and motion pictures. Clearly, movies and radio had taken the world, especially Americans, by storm.

MOVIES ARE A HIT Wacky comedies, lavish musicals, love stories, and gangster films all vied for the attention of the movie-going public. Following the end of silent films and the rise of “talking” pictures, new stars such as Clark Gable, Marlene Dietrich, and James Cagney rose from Hollywood, the center of the film industry. These stars helped launch a new era of glamour and sophistication in Hollywood.

Some films made during the 1930s offered pure escape from the hard realities of the Depression. By presenting visions of wealth, romance, and good times, the movies made people forget their troubles. Perhaps the most famous film of the era, and one of the most popular of all time, was Gone with the Wind (1939). Another film, Flying Down to Rio (1933), was a light romantic comedy featuring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Astaire and Rogers went on to make many movies together, becoming America’s favorite dance partners. Other notable movies of the era include The Wizard of Oz (1939) and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937), which showcased the dazzling and innovative animation of Walt Disney.

Comedies, such as Monkey Business (1931) and Duck Soup (1931) starring the zany Marx Brothers, became very popular. So did films that combined escapist appeal with more realistic plots and settings. Americans flocked to see gangster films that presented images of the dark, gritty streets and looming skyscrapers of urban America. These movies featured hard-bitten characters struggling to succeed in a harsh environment where they faced difficulties that Depression-era audiences could easily understand. Notable films in this genre include Little Caesar (1930) and The Public Enemy (1931).

Some commentators believed that several films, such as Mr. Deeds Goes to Town (1936) by director Frank Capra, presented the social and political accomplishments of the New Deal in a positive light. These films portrayed...
honest, kindhearted people winning out over those with greedy special interests. In much the same way, the New Deal seemed to represent the interests of average Americans.

**RADIO ENTERTAINS** Even more than movies, radio embodied the democratic spirit of the times. Families typically spent several hours a day gathered together, listening to their favorite programs. It was no accident that President Roosevelt chose radio as the medium for his “fireside chats.” It was the most direct means of access to the American people.

Like movies, radio programs offered a range of entertainment. In the evening, radio networks offered excellent dramas and variety programs. **Orson Welles**, an actor, director, producer, and writer, created one of the most renowned radio broadcasts of all time. On October 30, 1938, radio listeners heard news that Martians had invaded Earth. Panic set in as many Americans became convinced that the world was ending. Of course, the story wasn't true. It was Welles's radio drama based on H. G. Wells’s novel *The War of the Worlds*. The broadcast revealed the power of radio at a time when Americans received fast-breaking news over the airwaves. Later, Welles directed movie classics such as *Citizen Kane* (1941) and *Touch of Evil* (1958).

After making their reputation in radio, comedians Bob Hope, Jack Benny, and the duo Burns and Allen moved on to work in television and movies. Soap operas—so named because soap companies usually sponsored them—tended to play late morning to early afternoon for homemakers. Children's programs, such as *The Lone Ranger*, generally aired later in the afternoon, when children were home from school.

One of the first worldwide radio broadcasts described for listeners the horrific crash of the *Hindenburg*, a German zeppelin (rigid airship), in New Jersey on May 6, 1937. Such immediate news coverage became a staple in society.

**The Arts in Depression America**

In contrast to many radio and movie productions of the 1930s, much of the art, music, and literature of the time was sober and serious. Despite grim artistic tones, however, much of this artistic work conveyed a more uplifting message. It often emphasized the strength of character and the democratic values of the American people.

A number of artists and writers embraced the spirit of social and political change the New Deal fostered. In fact, many received direct support through New Deal work programs. The government officials who headed these programs often believed that art played an important role in national life. Also, as Harry Hopkins, the head of the WPA, put it, “They’ve got to eat just like other people.” Some people, however, objected that artists got WPA assistance. Art, they claimed, was not real work.

**ARTISTS DECORATE AMERICA** The Federal Art Project (FAP), a branch of the WPA, paid artists a living wage to produce public art. It also aimed to increase public appreciation of art and to promote positive images of
American society. Project artists created posters, taught art in the schools, and painted murals on the walls of public buildings. These murals, inspired in part by the revolutionary work of Mexican muralists such as Diego Rivera, typically portrayed the dignity of ordinary Americans at work.

During the New Deal era, a number of American painters, such as Edward Hopper, Thomas Hart Benton, Jackson Pollock, and Iowa’s Grant Wood, whose work includes the famous painting *American Gothic*, produced outstanding works of art.

The WPA’s Federal Theater Project hired actors to perform plays. The project also hired artists to provide stage sets and props for theater productions that played around the country. It subsidized the work of important American playwrights, including Clifford Odets, whose play *Waiting for Lefty* (1935) dramatized the labor struggles of the 1930s.

**WOODY GUTHRIE SINGS OF AMERICA** Experiencing firsthand the tragedies of the Depression, singer and songwriter Woody Guthrie used music to capture the hardships of America. Along with tens of thousands of people from the Great Plains region, Guthrie was forced by the Dust Bowl to seek a better life elsewhere. He took the road west in search of brighter opportunities and wrote about his experiences in his songs. These “Dust Bowl Ballads” told
of the devastation brought by the dust storms. The ballads also revealed the trials of the journey west and the challenges that migrant farm workers faced.

A likable and easy-going performer, Guthrie had his own radio show—first in Los Angeles and later in New York City. However, disagreements with management and Guthrie’s desire to be on the move meant he rarely stayed at a job very long. When he was traveling, Guthrie wrote, often at the pace of a song a day. The hundreds of simple but honest songs Guthrie wrote about hard times and hope became popular around the country. Most notably, his song “This Land Is Your Land” would become a classic American folk song. Woody Guthrie had a major influence on the course of American folk music.

**DIVERSE WRITERS DEPICT AMERICAN LIFE** Many writers received support through yet another WPA program, the Federal Writers’ Project. This project gave the future Pulitzer and Nobel Prize winner Saul Bellow his first writing job. It also helped Richard Wright, an African American author, complete his acclaimed novel *Native Son* (1940), about a young man trying to survive in a racist world. Zora Neale Hurston wrote a stirring novel with FWP assistance—*Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), about a young woman growing up in rural Florida.

John Steinbeck, one of this country’s most famous authors, received assistance from the Federal Writers’ Project. He was able to publish his epic novel *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939). The novel reveals the lives of Oklahomans who left the Dust Bowl and ended up in California, where their hardships continued. Before his success, however, Steinbeck had endured the difficulties of the Depression like most other writers.

“**For the Present We Are Busy**” Sculptor Beniamino Benvenuto Bufano received assistance through the Federal Art Project (FAP). The FAP paid for his studio space in San Francisco, as well as a salary for him and his assistants. In a report to Congress, he stressed the value of public art and the importance of supporting artists to make it.

**Analyse Historical Sources**
According to Bufano, how was the FAP benefiting society?

“Our art must become . . . big enough to belong to everybody, too big for anyone to put in his pocket and call his own. We ask no more than this, but if we are to do these things we must have help. We must have money for our granite, we must have tools for our metals. We must have men who have schooled themselves in the crafts to help us produce. Art, to have power, must have these things. . . . Movements like a government art project are not an accident; they come from great needs, the need of the artist to give something to the world as much as from his need to survive. . . . WPA/FAP has been the hope of the greatest cultural renaissance in recent times. For the present we have steel, stone, and tools. We have the spirit of great men and great cities to move us. We are busy.”

—Beniamino Bufano, quoted in *Federal Support for the Visual Arts: The New Deal and Now*
Other books and authors examined the difficulties of life during the 1930s. James T. Farrell’s *Studs Lonigan* trilogy (1932–1935) provides a bleak picture of working-class life in an Irish neighborhood of Chicago. Jack Conroy’s novel *The Disinherited* (1933) portrays the violence and poverty of the Missouri coalfields, where Conroy’s own father and brother died in a mine disaster. Another best-selling novel of the time was Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings’s *The Yearling*, which depicted the tough life of a family living in rural Florida.

Other writers found hope in the positive values of American culture. Writer James Agee and photographer Walker Evans collaborated on a book about Alabama sharecroppers, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941). Though it deals with the difficult lives of poor farmers, it portrays the dignity and strength of character in the people it presents. Thornton Wilder’s play *Our Town* (1938) captures the beauty of small-town life in New England. Although artists and writers recognized America’s flaws, they contributed positively to the New Deal legacy. These intellectuals praised the virtues of American life and took pride in the country’s traditions and accomplishments.

**Lesson 4 Assessment**

1. **Organize Information** Create a web, filling in the names of those who contributed to each aspect of American culture in the 1930s.

   - Writers
   - Radio Stars
   - Movie Stars
   - Painters

   What contribution did each group make?

2. **Key Terms and People** For each key term or person in the lesson, write a sentence explaining its significance.

3. **Draw Conclusions** In your opinion, what were the main benefits of government support for art and literature in the 1930s? Support your response with details from the text.

   **Think About:**
   - the experiences of Americans in the Great Depression
   - the writers who got their start through the FWP
   - the subject matter of WPA murals and other New Deal–sponsored art
   - the benefits of art to society

4. **Make Inferences** What type of movies do you think might have been produced if the government had supported moviemaking as part of the New Deal? Use evidence from the module to support your response.

5. **Analyze Effects** How did the entertainment industry affect the economy?

6. **Analyze Causes** Why did the New Deal fund art projects?
The Big Idea
The New Deal affected American society not only in the 1930s but also in the decades that followed.

Why It Matters Now
Americans still debate over how large a role government should play in American life.

Key Terms and People
Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)
National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)
parity
Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

One American’s Story
George Dobbin, a 67-year-old cotton-mill worker, staunchly supported Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his New Deal policies. In an interview, Dobbin explained his feelings about the president.

“I do think that Roosevelt is the biggest-hearted man we ever had in the White House. . . . It’s the first time in my recollection that a President ever got up and said, ‘I’m interested in and aim to do somethin’ for the workin’ man.’ Just knowin’ that for once . . . [there] was a man to stand up and speak for him, a man that could make what he felt so plain nobody could doubt he meant it, has made a lot of us feel a sight [lot] better even when [there] wasn’t much to eat in our homes.”

—George Dobbin, quoted in These Are Our Lives

FDR was extremely popular among working-class Americans. Because of him, thousands of Americans like George Dobbin had gotten jobs, food, and money. The New Deal had given them hope and helped them to regain a sense of dignity. Far more important than FDR’s personal popularity, however, was the impact of the policies he initiated.
The End of the New Deal

The New Deal had helped reduce the suffering of Americans. Millions of people had received some form of help that ranged from direct relief to jobs that provided a steady paycheck. But Roosevelt’s programs still did not end the Great Depression. During his second term, FDR hinted at plans to launch a Third New Deal. In his inaugural address, the president exclaimed, “I see millions of families trying to live on incomes so meager that the pall of family disaster hangs over them day by day. . . . I see one third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished.”

However, the president did not favor deficit spending. And the federal government had already gone deeply into debt to provide jobs and aid to the American people. Although economic troubles still plagued the nation, President Roosevelt faced rising pressure from Congress to scale back New Deal programs. He cut back on spending, and as a result, industrial production dropped again. The number of unemployed increased from 7.7 million in 1937 to 10.4 million in 1938.

Meanwhile, President Roosevelt was becoming increasingly concerned with events in Europe, particularly Hitler’s rise to power in Germany. The federal government was soon preparing for war and spending money producing guns, tanks, ships, airplanes, and other war supplies. In 1939 the deficit rose again, to $2.9 billion. This massive spending finally brought the nation out of the Great Depression. During World War II, the deficit reached a high of about $54.5 billion in 1943.

Federal Deficit and Unemployment, 1933–1945

Interpret Graphs
1. What was the peak year of the deficit?
2. What relationship does there seem to be between deficit spending and unemployment? Why do you think this is so?
New Deal Programs Endure
The New Deal was effectively over by 1939, but its impact would last. New Deal economic and financial reforms, including the creation of the FDIC, the SEC, and Social Security, have helped to stabilize the nation’s finances and economy. Although the nation still experiences economic downturns, known as recessions, people’s savings are insured. They can also receive unemployment compensation if they lose their jobs.

BANKING AND FINANCE New Deal programs established new federal agencies in banking and finance. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), created in 1934, continues to monitor the stock market. The SEC also enforces laws regarding the sale of stocks and bonds. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), created by the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933, has shored up the banking system. It reassures individual depositors that their savings are protected against loss in the event of a bank failure. Today, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation insures individual accounts in United States federal banks for up to $250,000.

PROTECTING WORKERS’ RIGHTS Another area in which New Deal policies have had a lasting effect is the protection of workers’ rights. New Deal legislation, such as the Wagner Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act, set standards for wages and hours, banned child labor, and ensured the right of workers to organize and to bargain collectively. Today, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), created under the Wagner Act, continues to act as a mediator in labor disputes between unions and employers.

SOCIAL SECURITY One of the most important legacies of the New Deal has been that the federal government has assumed some responsibility for the social welfare of its citizens. Under President Roosevelt, the government created the Social Security system, designed to help a large number of needy Americans receive some assistance.

Document-Based Investigation Historical Source
A Monthly Check to You
When the Social Security system was established in 1935, the government distributed posters to familiarize Americans with the benefits of Social Security. This poster was printed in 1936 during the initial issuance of social security numbers at U.S. post offices.

Analyze Historical Sources
How does the Social Security poster illustrate how the federal government assumed some responsibility for the social welfare of citizens?
Social Security
Today, the Social Security system relies on mandatory contributions paid by workers—through payroll deductions—and by employers. The money is invested in a trust fund, from which retirement benefits are later paid. However, several problems have surfaced. For example, benefits have expanded. And Americans live longer than they did in 1935. Also, fewer workers are contributing to the system relative to the number of retirees eligible to receive benefits.

The long-range payment of benefits may be in jeopardy because of the large number of recipients. Continuing disagreement about how to address the costs has prevented legislative action.

The Social Security Act provided an old-age insurance program and aid to people with disabilities and families with dependent children. It also included an unemployment compensation system run jointly by the federal government and the states. It has had a major impact on the lives of millions of Americans since its founding in 1935.

THE RURAL SCENE The New Deal also had an impact on agriculture. New Deal legislation set quotas on wheat production to control surpluses. Under the second Agricultural Adjustment Act, passed in 1938, the Commodity Credit Corporation made loans to farmers. The amount of a farmer’s surplus crops and the parity price, a price intended to keep farmers’ income steady, determined the value of a loan. Establishing agricultural price supports set a precedent of federal subsidies to farmers that continued into the 2000s. Other programs, such as rural electrification, helped to improve conditions in rural America.

THE ENVIRONMENT New Deal efforts have affected the environment, both positively and negatively. President Roosevelt was highly committed to conservation and promoted policies designed to protect the nation’s natural resources. The Civilian Conservation Corps planted trees, created hiking trails, and built fire lookout towers. The Soil Conservation Service taught farmers how to conserve the soil through contour plowing, terracing, and crop rotation. Congress also passed the Taylor Grazing Act in 1934 to help reduce grazing on public lands. Such grazing had contributed to the erosion that brought about the dust storms of the 1930s. Some projects involved government-sponsored strip mining and coal burning, however, which caused air, land, and water pollution.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) put people to work building dams. These dams harnessed water power to generate electricity and helped prevent disastrous floods in the Tennessee Valley. The government also added to the national park system in the 1930s and established new wildlife refuges and wilderness areas. Great Smoky Mountains National Park, chartered in 1934, remains the most visited national park.

The Legacy of the New Deal
The reforms begun under the New Deal continue to influence American politics and society. The greatest impact of the New Deal is perhaps the extent to which it expanded the power of the federal government. By infusing the nation’s economy with millions of dollars, creating federal jobs, attempting to regulate supply and demand, and increasing government involvement in
settling labor and management disputes, New Deal reforms gave the government—and particularly the president—a more active role in shaping the economy. These changes also established the authority of the government to create agencies to regulate banking and investment activities. The increased federal oversight of the economy during the New Deal set a precedent for additional government involvement going forward.

The expansion during the New Deal also affected the relationship between the federal government and state governments. Federal officials attempted to involve the states in New Deal programs. Federal aid to the states increased from $217 million in 1932 to $2 billion in 1935. With these funds, state governments increased relief spending and provided new services. Some critics felt that the size of the government at both the federal and state levels got out of hand. They believed the expansion threatened the basic character of the nation. Supporters, on the other hand, believed this change was a welcome shift from the laissez-faire policies of the 1920s.

**Critical Thinking**

1. **Connect to History** How did the New Deal succeed? How did it fail? Write a paragraph that summarizes the main points.

2. **Connect to Today** Research the programs of the WPA and draft a proposal for a WPA-type program that would benefit your community today.

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**Point**

“The New Deal transformed the way American government works.”

Supporters of the New Deal believe that it was successful. Many historians and journalists make this judgment by using the economic criterion of creating jobs. The New Republic, for example, argued that the shortcomings of the WPA “are insignificant beside the gigantic fact that it has given jobs and sustenance to a minimum of 1,400,000 and a maximum of 3,300,000 persons for five years.”

Some historians stress that the New Deal was more than a temporary solution to a crisis. Professor A. A. Berle stated that, “human beings cannot indefinitely be sacrificed by millions to the operation of economic forces.”

According to historian William E. Luechtenburg, “It is hard to think of another period in the whole history of the republic that was so fruitful or of a crisis that was met with as much imagination.”

To Pulitzer Prize–winning historian Allan Nevins, the New Deal was a turning point in which the U.S. government assumed a greater responsibility for the economic welfare of its citizens.

**Counterpoint**

“Many more problems have been created than solved by the New Deal.”

Critics of the New Deal believe that it failed to reach its goals. Historian Barton J. Bernstein accepted the goals of the New Deal but declared that they were never met. To him, the New Deal “failed to raise the impoverished, it failed to redistribute income, [and] it failed to extend equality.”

In Senator Robert A. Taft’s opinion, “many more problems have been created than solved” by the New Deal. He maintained, “Whatever else has resulted from the great increase in government activity . . . it has certainly had the effect of checking private enterprise completely. This country was built up by the constant establishment of new business and the expansion of old businesses. . . . In the last six years this process has come to an end because of government regulation and the development of a tax system which penalizes hard work and success.” Senator Taft claimed that “The government should gradually withdraw from the business of lending money and leave that function to private capital under proper regulation.”

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Critical Thinking

1. **Connect to History** How did the New Deal succeed? How did it fail? Write a paragraph that summarizes the main points.

2. **Connect to Today** Research the programs of the WPA and draft a proposal for a WPA-type program that would benefit your community today.
The New Deal angered those who believed that it took more of their money in taxes and curtailed their freedom through increased government regulations. Many conservatives think President Roosevelt’s policies made the federal government too large and too powerful. They believe that the government stifled free enterprise and individual initiative. Liberal critics, in contrast, argue that President Roosevelt didn’t do enough to socialize the economy and to eliminate social and economic inequalities. Supporters of the New Deal contend, however, that the president struck a reasonable balance between two extremes—unregulated capitalism and overregulated socialism—and helped the country recover from its economic difficulties. One of Roosevelt’s top advisers made this assessment of the president’s goals.

“He had in mind a comprehensive welfare concept, infused with a stiff tincture of morality . . . He wanted all Americans to grow up healthy and vigorous and to be practically educated. He wanted business men to work within a set of understood rules. Beyond this he wanted people free to vote, to worship, to behave as they wished so long as a moral code was respected; and he wanted officials to behave as though office were a public trust.”

—Rexford Tugwell, quoted in Redeeming the Time

Overall, the New Deal legacy has many dimensions. It brought hope and gratitude from some people for the benefits and protections they received. The New Deal changed the relationship between government and citizens as well as the expectations about what citizens expect from their government. Roosevelt’s efforts to end the Great Depression also fueled one of the most fundamental and lasting debates about government in the nation’s history. To this day, Americans disagree about the appropriate role and size of the federal government.

Lesson 5 Assessment

1. Organize Information In a cluster diagram, show long-term effects of the New Deal.

Which long-term benefit do you think has had the most impact? Why?

2. Key Terms and People For each key term in the lesson, write a sentence explaining its significance.

3. Form Generalizations Some critics have charged that the New Deal was antibusiness and anti–free enterprise. Explain why you agree or disagree with this charge.

Think About:
- the expanded role of the federal government and the growth of federal bureaucracy
- the short-term effects on economic policies and capitalism
- the long-term effects on economic policies and capitalism

4. Summarize What events marked the end of the New Deal?

5. Evaluate How successful do you think Franklin Roosevelt was as a president? How did his ability to effect change compare with some of his predecessors? Support your answer with details from the text.

6. Analyze Effects How did New Deal programs benefit and harm the environment?
The Tennessee Valley Authority

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) is a federal agency that was established in 1933 to construct dams and power plants along the Tennessee River and its tributaries. The Tennessee River basin is one of the largest river basins in the United States, and people who live in this area have a number of common concerns. The TVA has helped the region in various ways: through flood and navigation control, the conservation of natural resources, and the generation of electric power, as well as through agricultural and industrial development.

The Tennessee Valley covers parts of seven states. Thus, the TVA became an enormous undertaking, eventually comprising dozens of major dams, each with associated power plants, recreational facilities, and navigation aids.

Like many dam projects, the TVA’s plans were not without controversy, however. The government forced people to move from the land that would be flooded upstream from the dams. The displaced families usually received little resettlement help. Relocation was especially hard for the residents who were affected by the construction of Norris Dam and Dale Hollow Dam. These areas had been home to many families for generations. Their family members were buried there and had to be exhumed and reburied elsewhere. Also of concern for some was the destruction of important animal habitats. In addition, some power companies in the region claimed that the cheap energy offered by the TVA gave the government an unfair advantage.
KENTUCKY DAM
Over a mile and a half long and 206 feet high, the Kentucky Dam created the 184-mile-long Kentucky Lake, a paradise for fishing.

THE CUMBERLAND RIVER
A similar series of dams, operated by the Corps of Engineers, is found on the Cumberland River. This system cooperates with the TVA.

NORRIS DAM
Located on the Clinch River, a tributary of the Tennessee River, the Norris Dam is named after Senator George W. Norris of Nebraska. Norris was a progressive leader who called for government involvement in the development of the power potential of the Tennessee River.

Before 1930 most homes in the area had no electricity. Women wash clothes outside this homestead near Andersonville, Tennessee, in 1933. Their estate was submerged when the Norris Dam filled.

Critical Thinking
1. Analyze Distributions Locate the dams on this map. Why do you think they might have been placed in these particular areas?
2. Create a Model Create a 3D model of a dam. Before you begin, pose a historical question your model will answer. Think about environmental changes caused by the construction of a dam.
Module 19 Assessment

Key Terms and People
For each key term or person below, write a sentence explaining its historical significance or contribution to the New Deal.
1. Franklin Delano Roosevelt
2. New Deal
3. Eleanor Roosevelt
4. Works Progress Administration (WPA)
5. National Youth Administration (NYA)
6. Social Security Act
7. Frances Perkins
8. Mary McLeod Bethune
9. Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO)
10. Richard Wright

Main Ideas
Use your notes and the information in the module to answer the following questions.

A New Deal Fights the Depression
1. How did President Roosevelt change the role of the federal government during his first Hundred Days?
2. How did the public benefit from the Federal Securities Act?
3. Why did some people oppose the New Deal?
4. Why did conflict develop between the Supreme Court and other branches of government over aspects of the New Deal?

The Second New Deal
5. What were the key programs of the Second New Deal, and in what ways did they extend federal aid?
6. How did the Wagner Act help working people?
7. Why was the passage of the Social Security Act noteworthy? What compromises did Roosevelt ultimately make to his vision for a comprehensive Social Security system?

New Deal, New Opportunities
8. Summarize the impact the New Deal had on various ethnic groups.
9. Why did many urban voters support Roosevelt and the Democratic Party?
10. Which do you think was more important in labor’s success: the passage of the Wagner Act or the success of the sit-down strikes? Explain.

Culture in the 1930s
11. What purpose did movies and radio serve during the Great Depression?
12. How did the literature, art, and music of the 1930s differ from the radio and movie productions of the time?
13. Explain how the New Deal programs supported artists and writers in the 1930s.

The Impact of the New Deal
14. List five New Deal agencies that are still in place today.
15. What benefits did the Tennessee Valley Authority provide? What negative impact did it have?
16. How did the New Deal affect the relationship between the states and the federal government?

Critical Thinking
1. **Categorize** Classify key New Deal programs as relief, recovery, or reform programs. In which area do you think the New Deal was most successful? Why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Deal Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Analyze Effects** Which kind of New Deal program do you think was intended to have the most immediate effect: those for relief, recovery, or reform? Explain.
3. **Make Inferences** Why do you think that most of the relief programs of the New Deal no longer exist?

4. **Develop Historical Perspective** Of the New Deal programs that were discontinued, which ones might be of use to the nation today? Explain and support your opinion.

5. **Form Opinions** Do you think the federal programs from the 1930s that still exist today are necessary?

6. **Evaluate** How would you judge the value of work programs such as the CCC, CWA, and the TVA?

7. **Contrast** Explain the different criticisms of the New Deal. How did business leaders’ reasons for opposing the New Deal differ from those of the American Liberty League?

8. **Form Generalizations** Do you think the expanded role of government as a result of the New Deal has been mostly positive or negative? Explain.

9. **Form Opinions** As a result of the New Deal, Americans began to look regularly to government for help. Do you think this is a good or bad trend?

10. **Develop Historical Perspective** The New Deal has often been referred to as a turning point in American history. Cite examples of political, economic, and social change that occurred as a result of the New Deal to explain why.

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**Engage with History**

Imagine that you are a journalist during the Great Depression. Your editor has asked you to write a feature about photographer Dorothea Lange. Write an article that analyzes how Lange used her camera to depict the Great Depression. In the article, describe Lange’s life and explain why she focused on the plight of sharecroppers and tenant farmers. Include some of Lange’s images, and make sure to credit them properly.

**Focus on Writing**

Do you think President Roosevelt adequately addressed the needs of the ailing economy? Do you think his New Deal policies extended far enough to restore public confidence? How far do you think the government should go to try to improve the lives of citizens? Is it appropriate to use deficit spending to relieve suffering? Write an essay in which you support your opinions with examples.

**Multimedia Activity**

Organize into small groups. Use the Internet and other sources to research other economic recessions in U.S. history, including those in recent history. Learn about the scope of the recessions and how they compare to the Great Depression in the 1930s. Analyze how effective each president at the time was in addressing the social and economic problems associated with the recessions. Then create a website that compares and contrasts the policies and leadership abilities of these presidents in economic crises.