

# SOCIAL STUDIES 1107

## CONTENTS

<b>I. THE GREAT WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The First Global Conflict .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>A Plan for Peace .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>II. THE GOLDEN TWENTIES .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Changing Postwar Attitudes .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Changing Postwar Life Styles .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>III. THE GREAT DEPRESSION .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Progress before the Depression .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Conditions during the Depression .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>IV. THE NEW DEAL .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>The Founder of the New Deal .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>The Program of the New Deal .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>GLOSSARY .....</b>	<b>45</b>

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## SECTION OBJECTIVES

**Read these objectives.** When you have completed this section, you should be able:

9. To explain the effects of Franklin D. Roosevelt's leadership on recovery in the United States during the depression years:
  - 9.1 To explain how Roosevelt's background prepared him for the job of rescuing the United States from depression,
  - 9.2 To describe Roosevelt's philosophy of recovery, and
  - 9.3 To explain the promises and plans Roosevelt put into action for the nation's recovery.

## VOCABULARY

**Study these words** to enhance your learning success in this section.



apropos

collective bargaining

sharecropper

## THE FOUNDER OF THE NEW DEAL

The famed saying, "Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their country" was never more **apropos** than during the early thirties. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was very well prepared for the job. His political career gave him valuable experience and helped him to function with great confidence and efficiency as President of the United States.

**His personal preparation.** Being a distant cousin of former President Theodore Roosevelt gave Franklin Roosevelt's name an image that commanded respect. His father, James Roosevelt, was a wealthy railroad man. Franklin Roosevelt had private tutors until he was fourteen years old. He spent a great deal of time in outdoor activities, such as fishing, bird studying, and livestock farming. Two of his hobbies were collecting model ships and stamps. Roosevelt's outgoing personality and inner confidence continued to grow through his careful training during his childhood in Hyde Park, New York. After graduating from Groton School in Massachusetts, young Franklin entered Harvard University where he spent four productive years. Roosevelt was editor of the school's newspaper, an experience that served him well during his political career. After Harvard, Roosevelt graduated from Columbia University Law School in 1907 and began private practice with a law firm in New York.



**Franklin D. Roosevelt**

*Term of Office: 1933-1945*

The future President was elected as a Democratic state senator in New York in 1910 and was re-elected in 1912. He served as assistant Secretary of the Navy from 1913 to 1921 under President Wilson. In 1920 Roosevelt ran for Vice-President on a Democratic ticket with James M. Cox, the governor of Ohio.

However, the Republican candidate, Warren G. Harding, won the election by a landslide, and Franklin Roosevelt returned to private law practice in New York.

In the summer of 1921, Roosevelt contracted polio. His legs were almost completely paralyzed, but he refused to be defeated by the disease. An indication of his determination can be seen in his statement, "Once I spent two years in bed trying to move my big toe; after that job anything seems easy."

In a political comeback Franklin Roosevelt

was elected governor of New York in 1928. As governor he wrestled with problems at the state level similar to those that Hoover encountered at the national level. In 1930 he started a broad relief program in New York that set a pattern he could later use for the entire country. The name of Roosevelt and the fact that he was not a Republican greatly enhanced his chances for election as President in 1932. He had a great love for his country, and he had a plan to help the nation recover from the economic depression.



**Write true or false.**

- 4.1 \_\_\_\_\_ Franklin Roosevelt's father was a wealthy railroad man.  
4.2 \_\_\_\_\_ Roosevelt was Secretary of the Navy under President Wilson.  
4.3 \_\_\_\_\_ Franklin Roosevelt served two terms as a state senator.



**Complete these statements.**

- 4.4 President Roosevelt had been governor of the state of \_\_\_\_\_ .  
4.5 Roosevelt was elected President in \_\_\_\_\_ .  
4.6 Roosevelt was determined to become stronger after he contracted \_\_\_\_\_ .



**Answer this question.**

- 4.7 In what ways was Roosevelt prepared for the presidency? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**His personal philosophy.** Franklin Roosevelt's thinking was undoubtedly influenced by his father. James Roosevelt was a Democrat with conservative tendencies and had been a diplomat under President Cleveland. He influenced his son to develop courage and positive decision making. James Roosevelt strongly emphasized the principle of not allowing special interest groups to force one into making decisions. This background laid the foundation for his son's political career.

Another person who heavily influenced Franklin's outlook on life was his distant cousin, Theodore Roosevelt, who was also from New York. Theodore Roosevelt was the twenty-sixth President of the United States. In addition to both men becoming Presidents, both were outdoorsmen and continually returned to estates in New York for recreation and relaxation during their careers. Both men had physical handicaps (Theodore had asthma).

Theodore and Franklin had private tutors while growing up and were taught to work hard and to give fair and unprejudiced treatment to all people. Both loved their country and believed in firm action to defend it when necessary. Also, the Roosevelt cousins attended Harvard University and Columbia Law School and served as assistants to the Secretary of the Navy. Both Roosevelts also used dramatics extremely well in the political arena. The two men ran for the office of Vice-President and both began their political careers in the state of New York.

A political difference between the two men was that Theodore was a Republican and Franklin, a Democrat. Yet, Franklin Roosevelt greatly admired his older cousin and was not hesitant to adopt some of his progressive ideas in politics. He initiated programs involving risks, he tried new ideas and changed outmoded traditional programs, and he increased the efficiency of the government to improve the nation's fiscal and social conditions.



**Complete these activities.**

4.8 List six similarities of the two Roosevelts.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

e. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

f. \_\_\_\_\_

4.9 Was Theodore Roosevelt's influence on Franklin Roosevelt positive? Explain.

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## THE PROGRAM OF THE NEW DEAL

Before he was elected President, Franklin D. Roosevelt had promised the people a New Deal. The New Deal was a set of policies that was produced from the ideas of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson and was mixed with Franklin Roosevelt's own philosophy. The New Deal promised that injustices within the business and financial communities would be controlled, and agriculture and labor groups were promised more welfare relief. Roosevelt's New Deal was not a radical move to socialism as some claimed, but was rather a shift toward a more middle-ground course of action.

**Practical promises.** Franklin Roosevelt's plan was to distribute the nation's abundance broadly to those in need. He determined that if the private sector would not find a way to solve

the nation's economic problems, then the government would solve them. In his first inaugural address, Roosevelt began his psychological attack on the Depression with his famous phrase, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." This phrase was to become a source of encouragement to the nation throughout the Roosevelt administration. In the address, Roosevelt called for strict control of banking and credit, a work project that would employ many jobless citizens, and a Good Neighbor Policy in world affairs.

The people of the United States needed the encouragement Roosevelt's talk gave. Their response to his words was overwhelmingly positive; they were ready to accept the challenge for discipline, duty, and a return to values of high morality. Many people believed

that the nation had fallen into sin in the 1920's and was now reaping what it had sown.

In President Roosevelt's New Deal the emphasis was to build from the bottom up, not from the top down. The key to the program was the hardworking common man. Farmers, small banks and businesses, and average homeowners were among those who would be helped. Also, tariff reduction would be sought to encourage international trade. Roosevelt declared publicly that he was going to try bold experiments; if one experiment did not work, he would attempt another.

To carry out the details of his New Deal, Roosevelt carefully selected a cabinet of competent people. Much of the success of his plan depended on the loyalty and hard work of these individuals. They had to believe in the ability of their President, and they must have confidence in his goals. Although this cabinet included individuals of a variety of political persuasions and experiences, it constituted an important part in the success of the New Deal.



**Complete these statements.**

- 4.10 Roosevelt's New Deal grew out of the ideas of Presidents a. \_\_\_\_\_ and b. \_\_\_\_\_ .
- 4.11 Roosevelt determined that if the \_\_\_\_\_ sector would not help the needy, the government would.
- 4.12 The emphasis in Roosevelt's New Deal was to build from \_\_\_\_\_ .



**Answer this question.**

- 4.13 What was Roosevelt's famous phrase that encouraged the country throughout his administration? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Positive action.** President Roosevelt intended to put his plans for national recovery into immediate action. As soon as his term in office began, Roosevelt initiated his First Hundred Days program. This program stressed passing as much legislation as soon as possible; any legislative action at all was better than the economic standstill the nation was experiencing.

One of the first things Roosevelt did as President was to get Congress to pass the Emergency Banking Act. This act prevented panic withdrawals of funds from banks by the public. The act also called for the banks to close, be evaluated by the government, and reopen only if approved as being fiscally sound. President Roosevelt gave the first of his famous "fireside chats" on March 12, 1933. He assured the people that their money would be safer " . . . in a reopened bank than under the mattress."

The President's efforts caused people to regain confidence in the nation's banking system and to stop hoarding money. A steady flow of money began to return to most banks. Only 5 per cent of the banks permanently closed. The Emergency Banking Act was not an effort to nationalize banks as some supposed; on the contrary, the government saved the nation's private banks. The act also removed the nation's currency from the gold standard; the people could no longer pay or demand payment in gold.

In attempting to reduce unemployment from a figure of twelve million, Congress established the Civilian Conservation Corps. This organization gave jobs to young men between seventeen and twenty-five years of age. These young men received thirty dollars a month for planting trees, maintaining parks, and doing various building projects. Many of the hundreds



of thousands who entered this program also received meals, housing, and clothing.

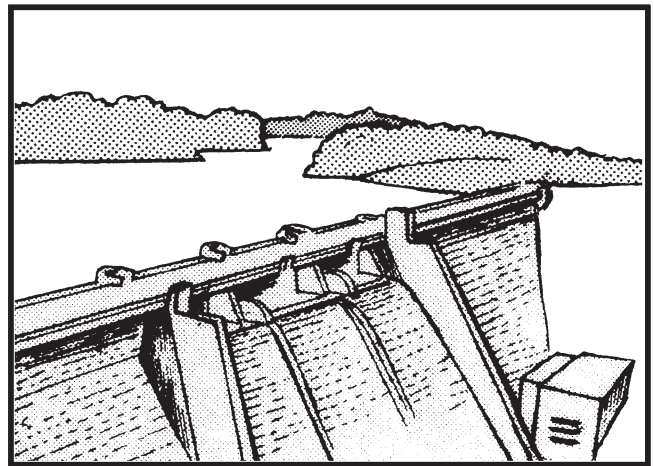
Congress passed the Federal Emergency Relief Act on May 12. Five hundred million dollars were made available to individual states for relief to the unemployed. Much of this money was given out as work relief, giving people a sense of worth and dignity as they earned their checks. The Agricultural Adjustment Act was passed in May and gave farm prices "equality of purchasing power." This act gave farmers higher prices for less production, and they were paid not to farm certain amounts of acreage of crops, such as wheat, cotton, corn, tobacco, and rice, or to produce more than specified quotas of hogs, milk, and milk products. This principle of restriction bothered most farmers, but most accepted it as a temporary measure to help the economy and themselves. Because of legal problems, a modification of the same act was passed in 1936 to replace the Agricultural Adjustment Act. The main addition provided that farmers who practiced soil conservation would be paid by the government for doing so. Another bill, commonly referred to as the second Agricultural Adjustment Act, was passed in 1938. In addition to paying farmers not to produce certain acreage, this second Agricultural Adjustment Act provided for surplus crops to be bought and stored by the government for bad years that might come. A similar program was used quite well by Jacob's son, Joseph, to avert starvation during the famine days in Egypt (Genesis, Chapter 41).

Agriculture was getting the help it needed, but the nation's industry was still in an extremely critical position. On June 16, 1933, Congress passed the National Industrial Recovery Act aimed at business standards used by various industries. The petty, prejudiced, and merciless practices of competition that were common in the years immediately preceding the Depression had to be eliminated. Private companies and the Federal government were asked to form fair business codes together. Included in these codes were minimum and maximum prices, production controls, credit terms, and other needed codes. However, by May of 1935, the act was declared unconstitutional. Industry refused to control prices; purchasing power did not increase; the competition standards practiced by many companies were inconsistent. Although the National Industrial Recovery Act had little effect on the recovery of the nation's

economy, it did influence such changes as minimum and maximum wages, legislation on child labor, and **collective bargaining** for workers.

On August 5, 1935, the Social Security Act was signed. The demands for the distribution of wealth and support for the aged caused the New Deal to break with the tradition of letting families provide for their elderly. The Social Security Act provided for old-age pensions, old-age insurance, unemployment insurance, and a number of other public health programs. Social Security was handled solely by the Federal government although employees and employers paid into it. Many people were financially helped by this act, and the morale of the country was significantly raised.

President Roosevelt had been interested in natural resource conservation for many years. Because of this interest, the Tennessee Valley Authority was approved. Thirty dams were built on the Tennessee River and its tributaries to provide flood control and other benefits. After the dams were built, boats were able to navigate the Tennessee River from Paducah, Kentucky, to Knoxville, Tennessee, some 630 miles. Soil was improved in that area because grass and trees were planted, in addition to crops, to prevent soil erosion. The Tennessee Valley Authority lowered charges for electricity and greatly helped the rebuilding of the Tennessee Valley's economy. Other conservation projects were carried out in the Northwest and Southwest regions of our country.



**Tennessee Valley Authority**

After his overwhelming victory in 1936, President Roosevelt had to protect his New Deal from the opposition of the United States Supreme Court. The Court had continually rejected measures of the New Deal as unconstitutional, hindering the program greatly. Roosevelt was worried that the nine justices were too conservative and growing too old. He wanted to appoint six additional justices as the

nine members passed seventy years of age. However, this plan to have fifteen Supreme Court justices was met with vigorous resistance. Although his idea failed, the Supreme Court decisions tended to be less harsh against the New Deal. Also, as conservative justices died, these justices were replaced by more liberal thinking men. Roosevelt had lost a battle, but he was beginning to win the war.



**Write true or false.**

- 4.14 \_\_\_\_\_ President Roosevelt began his New Deal by initiating his First Hundred Days program.
- 4.15 \_\_\_\_\_ Roosevelt's informal radio talks were called "fireside chats."
- 4.16 \_\_\_\_\_ The Social Security Act, passed in 1933, provided for corporation health programs for employees to be handled by the corporations.



**Match these items.**

- |      |       |                                  |   |
|------|-------|----------------------------------|---|
| 4.17 | _____ | Emergency Banking Act            | a. equality for farm prices               |
| 4.18 | _____ | Federal Emergency Relief Act     | b. improved business ethics               |
| 4.19 | _____ | Agriculture Adjustment Act       | c. prevented panic withdrawals            |
| 4.20 | _____ | National Industrial Recovery Act | d. work relief for states                 |
| 4.21 | _____ | Tennessee Valley Authority       | e. helped minorities                      |
|      |       |                                  | f. electrical power and soil conservation |



**Complete this activity.**

- 4.22 Choose one of the acts of Roosevelt's New Deal and write a one-page report. Include in your report how the act affected the United States.



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In the 1930's many people had only enough money to buy food; they were unable to secure automobiles, college educations, and medical and dental services. In some areas of our nation, people paid bills with produce and personal items.

President Roosevelt's New Deal specifically dealt with the plight of minorities in the United States, especially black people, Mexican-Americans, and Indians. The New Deal for

minorities was administered by such individuals as Harold Ickes, former president of the Chicago Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt, the President's wife. Some of their goals for improved conditions were to cut down the unemployment level of black people, to help the thousands of farm tenants and **sharecroppers** who lost their land, to help

minorities receive better wages, and to improve the living conditions of migrant workers. President Roosevelt's foreign policy was similar to that of Woodrow Wilson. Roosevelt sought world peace and strived to have a Good Neighbor Policy. He was able to develop a working relationship with Canada in the north and Latin American countries in the south; he did not have as much success with Europe and Asia. President Roosevelt personally spoke to representatives of the Nazi and Japanese powers, and he also wrote letters condemning their actions prior to the second global war. As his attempts for peace failed, the President increased the nation's preparation for war. Through fireside chats, press conferences, and messages to Congress, President Roosevelt endeavored to keep the people informed and to prepare the people for the coming conflict.

By the end of the 1930's, the United States was recovering well from the Depression. The progress from the eight years of Roosevelt's New Deal was very evident. Although millions of people were still out of work, the positive action of Roosevelt's program had put millions of others back to work. The President had inspired a discouraged people, and the people had begun to see that conditions were better. With a war approaching, economic problems would certainly decrease. Formerly unemployed people would either be in military service, have work supporting the war effort, or take positions servicemen had vacated. War is not a desirable solution to a country's economic problems, but it does help remedy the crippled economy of an industrial nation. Such was the case of the United States at the end of the 1930's.



**Write true or false.**

- 4.23 \_\_\_\_\_ President Roosevelt's foreign policy was similar to that of Woodrow Wilson.
- 4.24 \_\_\_\_\_ Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy did not fare well.
- 4.25 \_\_\_\_\_ President Roosevelt was not concerned with most minorities.
- 4.26 \_\_\_\_\_ Harold Ickes and Mrs. Roosevelt led the fight to help minorities.



Before you take this last Self Test, you may want to do one or more of these self checks.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Read the objectives. Determine if you can do them.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Restudy the material related to any objectives that you cannot do.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Use the SQ3R study procedure to review the material:
  - a. **S**can the sections,
  - b. **Q**uestion yourself again (review the questions you wrote initially),
  - c. **R**ead to answer your questions,
  - d. **R**ecite the answers to yourself, and
  - e. **R**evue areas you didn't understand.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Review all vocabulary, activities, and Self Tests, writing a correct answer for each wrong answer.