Grades: 11th
Subjects: U.S. History & Geography, Tennessee History, and English Language Arts
Time required: 1-2 45 minute class periods
Author: Colbi Layne Hogan, Teaching with Primary Sources—MTSU

Overview
Looking back at photographs, art, and infrastructure created by New Deal agencies creates a mostly positive recollection of the era. The New Deal’s impact is still present today when flipping on a light switch in the Tennessee Valley or drawing a Social Security check. While aspects of the New Deal most certainly aided millions of Americans, it is important not to oversimplify its policies. Critics of the New Deal ranged from liberal-leaning citizens who felt that the Roosevelt administration should do more, to conservatives who accused the President of socialism. Identifying the complex nature of support and criticism of these governmental policies will allow a more nuanced understanding of the 1930s and 1940s.

Understanding Goal
Students will understand how the New Deal affected Americans differently and identify reasons for support and opposition to the Roosevelt administration’s policies.

Objectives
Students will:
• Recall the causes of the Great Depression and goals of the New Deal.
• Analyze photographs to determine the impact of various New Deal programs.
• Read and discuss the opinions of New Deal critics.
• Synthesize the positive and negative aspects of the New Deal to determine the overall impact of its agencies and programs.

Investigative Question
How did New Deal programs affect Americans in their daily life? For what reasons did Americans support or oppose the New Deal?

Knox County, Tennessee (Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)). Mr. Bacon adjusts an electric fan for his wife who is using an electric iron. The Bacons use 500 kilowatt hours of TVA electricity a month [June 1942]

Curriculum Standards
US History
• US.43 Analyze the impact of the relief, recovery, and reform efforts of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal programs, including: Agricultural Adjustment Act, Civilian Conservation Corps, Fair Labor Standards Act, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, National Recovery Administration, Securities and Exchange Commission, Social Security, Tennessee Valley Authority, Works Progress Administration
• US.44 Analyze the effects of and the controversies arising from New Deal economic policies, including charges of socialism and President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “court packing” attempt.

Tennessee History
• TN.51 Describe how the Great Depression and New Deal programs impacted Tennesseans, including the significance of: the Agricultural Adjustment Act, Civilian Conservation Corps, Tennessee Valley Authority, and Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

11th Grade English/Language Arts
• 11-12.RI.KID.1 Analyze what a text says explicitly and draw inferences; support an interpretation of a text by citing and synthesizing relevant textual evidence from multiple sources
• 11-12.RI.CS.6 Determine an author’s point of view and/or purpose in a text, analyzing how style and content contribute to its effectiveness.
### Resources
- **General planning...TVA...** [ca 1933-1945]
- **Scene in county agent's office, San Augustine, Texas. Farmer is receiving his AAA check** [April 1939]
- **Knox County, Tennessee TVA, Mr. Bacon...** [June 1942]
- **Training...WPA vocational school...** [July 1942]
- **Children of migratory agricultural workers...** [May 1940]
- **Lunchtime for young migrants...** [Feb. 1939]

### Materials
- **T-Chart Analysis Worksheet**
- Teacher Resources
- Interview Excerpt from Dr. M. Santos, 4 & 5
- New York Times Articles:
  - **New Group Appeals to ‘X-Ray’ New Deal**
  - **Attacks Advisers of the President**
- Pencil/pen

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**Training...Work Projects Administration (WPA) vocational school.** The complicated mechanism of an airplane engine will be no mystery to these District of Columbia students when they finish their WPA vocational training course in airplane mechanics. Upon completion of training, they will be qualified for jobs in some phase of the construction or maintenance of the United Nation's air armada [July 1942]

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| **Step 1** | These activities should follow an introductory lesson that details basics of the Great Depression, FDR, and New Deal agencies. Begin by jogging the memory of your students by asking:  
  * What were the major causes of the Great Depression?  
  * How were Americans affected by the economic crisis?  
  * What economic solutions did the Roosevelt administration propose?  
  * What was the purpose of New Deal agencies, such as WPA, TVA, or CCC? |
| **Step 2** | Explain that while many people were helped, not everyone benefited from New Deal programs and that there was criticism of the New Deal from both sides of the political spectrum. Distribute the **T-Chart Analysis Worksheet** so that students can record positive or negative aspects of the New Deal shown in the primary sources they will analyze. |
| **Step 3** | Display the photographs found in “Resources” and ask students to record how Americans were affected by each New Deal program pictured. This can be done as a class using a projector or in small groups using printed photos. Students will view employment opportunities and increased standards of living for rural Americans, farmers, homemakers, vocational students, children, and nursery workers, so most responses should be on the “positive” side of their T-Charts. |
Step 4 | Have students read excerpts from Dr. M. Santos’ interview (pg. 4 & 5). Encourage them to annotate in the margins as they read, paying close attention to Dr. Santos’ opinions. Discuss Dr. Santos’ negative thoughts about the New Deal and how he feels about President Roosevelt. Use the three comprehension questions at the bottom of the interview (pg. 5) to guide the discussion. Have students update their T-Charts. This time students will have more to write on the “negative” side of the chart.

Step 5 | As a class, read this excerpt from The New York Times: New Group Appeals to ‘X-Ray’ New Deal and discuss the purpose of America First, Inc. Ask students why the group’s leaders felt the need to “expose” the New Deal. Why does the group refer to New Deal activities as “propaganda”?

Step 6 | Next, have students independently read Attacks Advisers of the President, a follow-up article about America First, Inc. When recording their findings in their T-charts, encourage students to use direct quotations from the excerpt to describe praise or criticism of the New Deal.

Step 7 | Remind students of the lesson’s investigative questions: How did New Deal programs affect Americans in their daily life? For what reasons did Americans support or oppose the New Deal? Ask students to utilize notes in their T-chart to write a paragraph in the “Analysis” section at the bottom of the chart. Responses should include positive and negative examples of how New Deal programs affected American and explain the reasoning of its supporters and critics.

Step 8 | Lastly discuss what students have analyzed independently. Ask them to imagine living during the 1930s and 1940s and to think about how their lives and opinions of the New Deal may have been different based on that perspective.

**Evaluation**
- T-Chart-20 pts.
- T-Chart Analysis Summary-40 pts.
- Participation in class discussion-40 pts.

**Extension**
Assign each student one of the photographs or text sources used in this lesson. Ask them to create a new illustration, letter, or newspaper article that portrays the opposite viewpoint. Their version should be displayed alongside the original to show a more nuanced version of the primary source. See example product to the right.

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**Farmers and the New Deal**
- Student’s explanation of how receiving a check from the AAA affected farmers in a positive way...
- Student’s explanation and illustration portraying how the AAA affected farmers in a different way...

For example, many sharecroppers and tenant farmers lost their jobs and were not compensated through New Deal programs.

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Children of migratory agricultural workers playing games, at the WPA (Work Projects Administration) nursery school at the Agua Fria migratory labor camp, Arizona [May 1940]
1. As to the New Deal, I believe that it has been a failure as it has protected the trusts more than the American people. Today, the poor are poorer, and the trusts are richer. Another reason: this is a county that is controlled by the trusts. When one stands on the street, and closes his eyes for a moment, and then opens them and looks; everything, absolutely all that one sees is made by the trusts. The automobile that passes by, the street car, the trucks, everything that one wears: shoes, clothes, etc. When one enters a restaurant, he sees the plates, the tables, the spoons, all is made by the trusts. 95% of what one eats is controlled by the trusts. The trusts for more than 200 years have been controlling all the industries, and killing the small business men. We have reached a state in which the trusts dominate all, as they are the owners of the money, or nearly all the money that there is in the United States.

2. The war can already be seen between one trust and others; the strongest will dominate the weaker trusts, and the capital will be reduced to a few men who will control everything.

3. In my particular opinion, all is not lost. A few men are necessary, who would have sufficient energy and intelligence to make social laws: as for example, all machines which displace ten men, should give the salary to those ten men. For example, one machine can, manipulated by the number of individuals which it displaces, taking turns by hour. The Capitalist will have the right to a certain equitable percentage, and there cannot be a capitalist who can have as capital more than one million dollars. All that passes this amount the Federal government will confiscate it for the betterment of the community.

4. The utility companies should be the property of the communities. All poor men who passes 50 years should be pensioned of he government, with a modest pension, but at the same time sufficient for the necessities of each one.

5. The system of voting in this county should be reformed, as the system that exists nowadays is very antiquated as it is frustrated in nearly all the country. One of the principal things that should be done is the [carnet?] (identification card) with the picture and finger prints to avoid fraud. . . .
6. Days before the NRA, lard was at .07 per pound, today May 1935, lard is at 21. and thus successively all the article, an enormity; but nevertheless, the workers earn less today than before the NRA -- those who work -- and those who do not work, have multiplied to such an extent that if I should say that 25,000,000 workers are without work at the present moment, I would not be mistaken. . . .

7. I do not believe that Roosevelt will solve this crisis, for if he had wanted to, as he promised to the American people, he would have solved it, as the Legislature and the Senate have given Roosevelt more power than any other president of the United States. . . .

8. I must state in making these declarations that I was one of so many fools that believing in the so much "cackled" ([casarado?]) New Deal, and that I went to deposit my vote for the one who is today President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, who has 
"[desepcionado?]" (deceived) my most pure illusions with the respect to the solution of this great crisis which effects "en le mas profun-
do," (4) (in the most profound) the people of the United States. . . .

9. I wish to state also that I will not vote again for any candidate for Presi-
dent of the United States, who belongs to the Democratic or Republi-
can party, as I believe that anyone of these presidents has not an ideol-
ogy really democratic and just, for those of us who work, and produce, and are respectful of the law.

1. Why does Dr. Santos believe that the New Deal has been a failure?

2. What plans does he have for making the United States a better place to live?

3. How does he feel about President Roosevelt? Why does he feel the way he does?
NEW GROUP APPEARS TO ‘X-RAY’ NEW DEAL


WASHINGTON, Sept. 9 (AP).—The organization of another “nonpartisan” group, America First, was announced tonight. Its avowed purpose “to give the New Deal an X-ray exposure” brought to at least six the national agencies set up to appraise the Washington government.

The officers are James True, a business writer, president; Robert B. Armstrong Sr., newspaper man, who was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in the Theodore Roosevelt administration, vice president, and Walter L. Reynolds, who aided the House Communist investigation in 1931, secretary-treasurer.

Its announced objective is to “preserve for all Americans the protection of the American Constitution.” Other organizations include the recently formed American Liberty League, Americans, Inc.; the American Coalition and the Roosevelt Human Rights League.

“America First, Inc.,” said the organization, “will be supported by business and professional men and women in all parts of the country and will cooperate with leading patriotic societies, chambers of commerce and trade associations. A group of eminent lawyers is being organized to take the necessary steps to restore the Constitution to its full powers.

“In addition, a field force of vigilantes of 1934 is being organized throughout the country to keep tab on the campaign promises of every candidate.

“Unlike other recently organized movements, America First, Inc., will combat and expose the propaganda and subversive activities originating within the New Deal.”

The New York Times
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ATTACKS ADVISERS OF THE PRESIDENT

America First, Inc., Calls Upon Roosevelt to Dismiss His NRA Bureau Heads.

CHARGES ‘RED’ AFFILIATION


WASHINGTON, Sept. 16 (AP).— America First, Inc., one of several groups founded recently with the announced purpose of “defending the Constitution,” today called on President Roosevelt to dismiss government officials “opposed to our democratic system of government.”

In a letter to Mr. Roosevelt, James True, president of the organization, said recovery had been retarded because capital and industry feared “arbitrary and detrimental action on the part of many of the officials you have appointed to office.”

“Obviously following the theories of Karl Marx,” Mr. True wrote, “your administrators and advisers have based their plans on the Soviet Russian system of regimentation and collectivism.”

He listed “a few of the most prominent” in order that “there may be no question as to the actual belief and motives of the officials to whom we refer.”

First on the list was Donald Richberg, general counsel of NRA, secretary of the executive council which recently filed with the President optimistic reports on recovery progress. Others were Dr. Rexford G. Tugwell, Under-Secretary of Agriculture; James M. Landis, Federal Trade Commissioner; Frederick C. Howe, AAA consumers’ counsel; Henry T. Hunt, general counsel of PWA, and Paul H. Douglas of the NRA consumers’ advisory board.

Mr. True referred to Donald Richberg, who recently was in controversy with General Hugh S. Johnson over NRA reorganization plans, as “Acting President” during Mr. Roosevelt’s Summer vacation.

All were listed as members of the American Civil Liberties Union, and Messrs. Richberg and Tugwell as contributors to a magazine which was called an “advocate of revolutionary socialism.” With reference

to the Civil Liberties Union, Mr. True quoted from the report of the Lusk committee to the New York Legislature in 1928 that it was “a supporter of all subversive movements. It attempts not only to protect crime, but to encourage attacks upon our institutions.”

Other officials who were said to “have been actively affiliated in socialistic and communistic movements” were: Secretaries Iokes and Perkins, William E. Dodd and William C. Bullitt, Ambassadors to Germany and Russia respectively; Sidney Hillman of the NRA Labor Advisory Board, William Leiserson, chairman of the Petroleum Labor Policy Board; Arthur E. Morgan, chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority; Francis B. Sayre, Assistant Secretary of State; Dr. Leo Wolman, chairman of the Automobile Mediation Board; Robert Fechner, director of emergency conservation work; Mordecai Ezekiel, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture.

Asserting that industry feared “repressals” from these officials, Mr. True asked the President to instruct all government employees that there would be none, “even though their legitimate activities may indicate convictions, that do not conform to the policies of your administration.”

Mr. True also asserted that the government this Fall planned to “inject itself into all business as a matter of general relief,” employing 5,000,000.

“This is an attempt,” he said, “to take profit out of industry and private business and to put the burden on the backs of already overtaxed Federal taxpayers.”
Teaching with Primary Sources — MTSU: T-Chart

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**Analysis:**

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