

Teacher Introduction

These Common Core History Assessments are designed to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they learn about America during World War I. The assessments are intended to be formative more than summative. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Similar sets of assessments are available (or planned) for each unit in a typical American History class.

★ *Historical Thinking and the Challenge of the Common Core*

This set includes nine assessments aligned with the first nine Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standards. We have left out the tenth Common Core History/Social Studies Reading standard, which does not lend itself to assessments of the sort provided here. The set also includes two writing tasks aligned with two key Common Core History/Social Studies Writing Standards.

These Common Core standards challenge history teachers to develop in students the complex literacy skills they need in today's world and the ability to master the unique demands of working with historical primary and secondary source texts. The Common Core standards are supportive of the best practices in teaching historical thinking. Such practices include close reading, attending to a source's point of view and purpose, corroborating sources, and placing sources in their historical context. These are the skills needed to make history less about rote learning and more about an active effort to investigate and interpret the past.

These assessments are also useful in many ways for ELA teachers. They assess many of the skills specified in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards, which put a good deal of emphasis on the reading of informational texts. The Anchor Standards form the basis for all of the various Common Core standards for English Language Arts.

★ *What Are These Assessments Like?*

- *A group of nine reading skills assessments and two writing tasks for each major era of American History*

Each reading skills assessment is based on one of the key Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standards. Two writing tasks are based on the first two College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing, which are the basis for the Common Core History/Social Studies Writing Standards. The two writing standards focus on writing arguments to support claims and writing informative/explanatory texts.

- *Based on primary or secondary sources*

In most cases, one primary source is used. In some cases, an assessment is based on more than one primary source or on a primary and a secondary source. The sources are brief. In most cases, texts have been slightly altered to improve readability, but without changing meaning or tone.

- *Brief tasks promoting historical literacy*

For each assessment, students write brief answers to one or two questions. The questions are not tests of simple factual recall. They assess the student's mastery of the skills addressed by that assessment's Common Core History/Social Studies Standard.

- *Two versions of each of the nine reading standards assessments*

A *Basic* and an *Advanced* version of each assessment are provided. The *Basic* Assessment addresses the Common Core Standard for grades 6–8. The *Advanced* Assessment is based on the Common Core Standard for grades 9–10 and grades 11–12 combined. Each version uses the same source or sources. In some cases, sources have been somewhat shortened for the *Basic* version.

- *Easy to use both as learning and assessment tools*

These assessments do not take valuable time away from instruction. The primary sources and background information on each source make them useful mini-lessons as well as tools to assess student historical thinking skills. The sources all deal with themes and trends normally covered when teaching the relevant historical era.

- *Evaluating student responses*

Brief but specific suggestions are provided defining acceptable and best responses to each question asked in the assessment. The suggestions are meant to aid in evaluating students, but even more importantly they are a way for teachers to help students better understand and master the skills on which the assessment is focused.

The Great Depression and the New Deal Assessment 1

Basic Level

Teacher Instructions

Based on Common Core Reading Standard 1 for grades 6–8

★ Key Ideas and Details

1. **(6–8)** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

★ Using this Assessment

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The Great Depression and the New Deal: Assessment 1 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 1 for grades 6–8. It asks students to cite specific textual evidence from two documents. It also challenges students to adapt that reading skill to the unique demands of thinking historically as they carefully interpret textual evidence in a primary source from a time in the past and a secondary source account of that same time in the past.

★ Evaluating Student Responses to this Assessment

[This section is not available for review on sample pages]

The Great Depression and the New Deal: Assessment 1

Directions: This exercise asks you to read a primary source document and a secondary source document carefully and answer questions about specific details in the documents. In order to better understand the documents, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the two assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

Document 1: A Secondary Source

Not all of the impact of the Depression was the result of business and consumer practices—weather was also a factor. The Midwest was hit by dust storms in the early 30s, then drought combined with the wind to turn these once fertile plains into what became known as the “Dust Bowl.” Farmers watched helplessly as their crops withered away, then found themselves unable to pay off their debts since they had nothing to sell. Many lost their land to foreclosure and effectively became refugees in their own country. Among the hardest hit were the farmers from Oklahoma, many of whom traveled west to California in search of work, but often found more hardship. John Steinbeck immortalized the plight of the “Okies” in his classic novel “The Grapes of Wrath.”

Source Information: This document is a secondary source account of the impact of drought and dust storms on Western farmers in the 1930s. A secondary source is an account of past events written later by someone who did not experience or take part in those events. As a secondary source, this document is not evidence from the 1930s. It is a later account by someone writing about those years. This passage is adapted from “Overview: The Great Depression and the New Deal,” in *African Americans and the NRA*.

Source: Gordonson, Kerry and Bill Williams. *The Great Depression and New Deal*. Document-Based Activities in U.S. History. Culver City, C.A.: Social Studies School Service, 2010.

Document 2: A Primary Source

Much has been written of our droughts here in Oklahoma, and how they have driven the farmers from the land. Droughts alone would not have permanently displaced these farmers. The great majority of migrants had already become share-tenants and sharecroppers. The droughts hastened a process that had already begun.

1. High interest rates. Very high rates are charged when crops are good and when they fail. Through such practices the farmer loses his ownership; he becomes a tenant, then a sharecropper, then a migrant.

2. The tenant and sharecropping system. When sharecroppers are charged 50 to 75 percent of all he produces to the landlords, plus 10 percent for the bank's share on money invested; when these robbing practices are carried on in a community or a state, is it surprising that 33,241 farm families have left Oklahoma in the past 5 years?

3. Land exhaustion, droughts, soil erosion, and the one-crop system of farming. Lacking capital and equipment, small farmers have been unable to terrace their land or conduct other soil-conservation practices. The tenant and sharecropping system is chiefly responsible for the one-crop system. The landlord dictates what crops are to be planted—invariably cotton—and the tenant either plants it or gets off.

4. Unstable markets [that is, prices go up and down uncontrollably].

5. Tractor farming.... A small farmer who is unable to equip his farm with a tractor loses out and is driven from the land.

6. The AAA [New Deal] program. A program of cutting down on the acreage under cultivation limits the amount of work for laborers in agriculture, creating a surplus of this type of labor, and it always results in lowering wages. The workers then go from place to place and from state to state in search of work.

Source Information: This document describes other aspects of the crisis facing farmers in the 1930s. It speaks of farm owners forced to become tenants and sharecroppers. In sharecropping, the landowner lets the tenant use some land in exchange for a share of the crops produced. Usually the landlord's share is a large one. These excerpts are from a report by Otis Nation, an organizer for the Oklahoma Tenant Farmers' Union. He gave the report to a committee in the U. S. House of Representatives on September 19, 1940.

Source: "Testimony of Otis Nation." *New Deal Network: Document Library*. Accessed September 27, 2013.
<http://newdeal.feri.org/tolan/tol07.htm#report>.

The Great Depression and the New Deal

Assessment 7

Advanced Level

Teacher Instructions

Based on Common Core Reading Standard 7 for grades 9–12

★ Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- 7. (9–10) Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.
- 7. (11–12) Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

★ Using this Assessment

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The Great Depression and the New Deal: Assessment 7 is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 7 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to do something historians must do all the time—integrate evidence found in a wide variety of primary sources presented in many visual and textual formats. It also asks them to judge the relative strengths and weaknesses of visual as compared with written sources.

Teacher _____

INSTRUCTIONS

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to this Assessment*

[This section is not available for review on sample pages]

The Great Depression and the New Deal: Assessment 7

Directions: This exercise asks you to study three primary source documents carefully and answer questions focused on what the sources have in common. In order to better understand these documents and their importance as historical evidence, read and make use of the source information just below or next to each document itself. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the two assessment questions that follow.

CCS Standard 7: (9–10) Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text. **(11–12)** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Document 1: A Written Primary Source

The country needs and, unless I mistake its temper, the country demands bold, persistent experimentation. It is common sense to take a method and try it; if it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something. The millions who are in want will not stand by silently forever while the things to satisfy their needs are within easy reach. We need enthusiasm, imagination and the ability to face facts, even unpleasant ones, bravely. We need to correct, by drastic means if necessary, the faults in our economic system from which we now suffer.

Source Information: This passage is from a commencement address and campaign speech Franklin Delano Roosevelt gave at Oglethorpe University, May 22, 1932.

Source: Roosevelt, Franklin D. "Address at Oglethorpe University, May 22, 1932." *New Deal Network: Document Library*. Accessed September 27, 2013. <http://newdeal.feri.org/speeches/1932d.htm>.

Document 2: A Visual Primary Source

Source Information: A cartoon by C. K. Berryman, published on January 5, 1934. It shows FDR as a doctor with various New Deal programs as remedies. Title: "Of course we may have to change remedies if we don't get results."

Source: Berryman, Clifford Kennedy. *Of Course We May Have to Change the Remedies If We Don't Get Results*. Cartoon. January 5, 1934. From Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Online Catalog, *Cartoon Drawings*. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/acd1996000384/PP/>.



Library of Congress

Student Handout

Year	Federal Spending (in \$ billions)	Federal Revenues (in \$ billions)
1927	\$2.9	\$4.0
1932	\$4.8	\$2.0
1934	\$6.5	\$3.1
1936	\$7.6	\$4.2
1938	\$7.2	\$7.0
1940	\$9.6	\$6.9

Document 3: A Primary Source

Source Information: This table shows federal government spending and revenue for each of several years. All figures are in billions of dollars.

Source: *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970*. Bicentennial edition. Washington: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1975.

Assessment Questions

1. Historian Richard Hofstadter once said, “At the heart of the New Deal there was not a philosophy but a temperament.” Do *all three* of these documents support Hofstadter’s view? Why or why not?

2. Earlier in this same speech, Roosevelt said this:

“I believe that we are at the threshold of a fundamental change ... Do what we may have to do to inject life into our ailing economic order, we cannot make it endure for long unless we can bring about a wiser, more equitable distribution of the national income.”

Does this still fit with Hofstadter’s view of the New Deal is lacking a philosophy? Why or why not?