

Changing Times: TVA and Tennessee

Introduction:

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Tennessee Valley Authority Act on May 18, 1933, it both advanced the goals of his New Deal and ushered in a period of rapid geographic, economic and social change for the Tennessee Valley region.

Guiding Questions:

How did the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) change the Tennessee Valley?

Did the benefits of Norris Dam and other TVA projects outweigh the costs?

Learning Objectives:

The learner will analyze primary and secondary sources for examples of geographic, economic and social change created by TVA.

The learner will identify bias or perspective in primary and secondary sources.

The learner will demonstrate knowledge of changes by responding to the writing prompt with a written piece of three to four paragraphs.

Curriculum Standards:

History

US.51 Citing evidence from maps, photographs and primary source documents, analyze the development of TVA on Tennessee's rural geography economy, and culture, and debate the issues of the Norris Dam and Dale Hollow Lake controversies.

English Language Arts

Informational Text: Key Ideas and Details: 1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Informational Text: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: 7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Writing Standards: Text Types and Purposes: 1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects

Reading

1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
7. Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

Writing

Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

- a. Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences the claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

Materials Needed:

Informational Text: [Tennessee Valley Authority and the New Deal](#)

Map: [TVA Map](#)

Informational Chart/Primary Source: [Family Removal Chart](#)

Video/Secondary Source: [Norris Dam \(extended version\)](#)

Press Release- [BVI](#)

Primary Source set: [Graves Removal Operations](#)

Primary Source Set: [Stooksbury Family Relocation](#)

Primary Source Set: [The Difficulties of Displacement](#)

Primary Source: [On the Farm](#)

Primary Source: [Federal Theatre Project: Power](#)

Primary Source: [Racial Discrimination during the Norris Dam Project](#)

Primary Source: [TVA Helps Farmers](#)

Background:

Informational Text: [Tennessee Valley Authority and the New Deal](#)



Writing Prompt:

Analyze the development and impact of TVA on the rural geography, economy and culture of Tennessee. Cite evidence from maps, photographs, and primary sources to support your argument. Address counterclaims in your essay.

- Did the benefits of Norris Dam and other TVA projects outweigh the costs?

Lesson Activities:

- **Activity 1: Read and annotate primary source document**

Homework

Assign each student one of the following documents for homework: [Racial Discrimination during Norris Dam Building Project](#), [TVA Helps Farmers](#), [On the Farm](#) or [Federal Theatre Project: Power](#). Have the students read the document; and write a one or two sentence summary and highlight three to five sentences they feel support their summary.

- **Activity 2- [TVA Map](#) and [Family Removal Chart](#)**

Whole Class Activity

Give students a copy of the TVA map and the Family Relocation Chart. Ask them to study the documents and then describe the relationship between the map and the chart. Discuss as a class. Next, ask them to briefly tell how the document they read for homework relates to the map and chart.

- **Activity 3- Introduce and discuss prompt**

Whole Class Activity

Introduce the prompt to students and spend a few minutes discussing the concepts of geographic, economic and cultural change. Ask them to categorize the homework readings.

- **Activity 4- [Video Norris Dam \(extended version\)](#)**

Whole Class Activity

Begin by asking students to define the terms bias and perspective. Have them look back at their homework reading and identify the author and draw some inferences about the bias or perspective that is present in that document.



Discuss. Next, show them the website for [Currents of Change](#) and challenge them to find who funds the site and the curriculum. Next show them the [press release](#) about BVI, the group responsible for the curriculum. Ask students what perspective or bias a video produced for a group of retired TVA employees might have. Discuss. Remind students that identifying the perspective or bias in a source does not mean the source is completely false, but rather that they must actively consider the question as they analyze the source. While viewing the Norris Dam video, have students decide if the video is biased or presents a balanced view of the issues. Discuss the video as a class.

- **Activity 5: Group Analysis of Primary Source Sets**

Small Group

This activity uses a modified jigsaw approach. Each group should have four students who each read a different assignment for homework. This will give the group members different perspectives when examining their source group. Give each group one primary source set. Have the students examine the sources and look for evidence of positive or negative geographic, economic and cultural change in the sources. Discuss each source set as a class.

- **Activity 6:- Pre-writing**

Small Group

While each student will be responsible for writing an individual essay, they will benefit from continuing to work with their group members while planning their essays. They will need to cite evidence from at least three sources in their essays and may benefit from discussing the sources and prompt with their group members a final time. Students may also benefit from a whole class final discussion before beginning to write.

Assessment:

Students will be instructed to write three to four paragraphs in response to the prompt. Because of the extensive preparation provided in the analysis activities, students should complete the writing quickly. Using either the rubric created by the state or a modified version of it will streamline the grading process.

Extending the Lesson:

Have students compare the Norris Dam project with the Three Gorges Dam project in China.



Have students research TVA's attempts at flood control or malaria eradication.

Have students research the controversies related to the construction of Tellico or Watts Bar dams.

Have students research recent discussions of privatizing TVA.

