

Lesson Design: Changing Times TVA and Tennessee

1. Select the state standard that you wish to teach with this lesson.

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.

I selected standard US.51 because it is one of the standards that may have an extended response prompt written for it. The standard addresses the impact of TVA from multiple perspectives; therefore, it is perfect for creating a lesson using a variety of primary and secondary sources. However, there are some challenges in using this standard. First, the standard asks students to analyze the development of TVA and debate issues related to the Dale Hollow Dam. However, my research indicated that Dale Hollow Dam was built by the Army Corp of Engineers and is not part of the TVA system. Therefore, I decided not to include it in my lesson. The second challenge is that the standard calls for students to debate, not write. I decided to have the students write an argumentative essay about Norris Dam using evidence from the sources to support their opinions as to whether or not the benefits were worth the costs.

2. Determine the outcome or goal of the lesson based on the standard.

I decided that the outcome or goal of the lesson will be for students to analyze primary and secondary sources about Norris Dam and TVA. They will determine the point of view or bias of the source. They will demonstrate mastery of the concepts by writing three to four paragraphs that cite evidence from at least three different sources, including one text source.

3. Write prompt and guiding questions for the topic.

Writing the prompt for this question required re-wording the standard to exclude Dale Hollow Dam and change the outcome from a debate to an argumentative essay. I reviewed the sample extended response item available from the [state assessment website](#) to make sure that the structure and format of my prompt and guiding questions aligned with the state's expectations. I also made sure to include the focus areas listed in the standard in the prompt so that students could be sure to mention those concepts in their papers.

Standard 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.

Prompt and Guiding Questions for 8.9

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?

4. Select primary and secondary sources for student analysis in this lesson.

Selecting the sources for this lesson presented two main problems. First, the volume of sources available meant that it took some time to sort through and find sources that addressed the topics of rural geography, economics and culture. The second challenge was that many of the materials available were produced by TVA and therefore reflect the belief that building Norris Dam was beneficial. To compensate for this bias, students will have to draw inferences from the sources. I reviewed the [TCAP EOC Blueprint](#) to determine the types of sources to be included in the prompt. However, the source types in the standard and those listed in the EOC Blueprint varied. I decided to focus on maps, photographs and primary source documents since they are listed in the standard and include other types of sources if they added to student understanding.

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

This essay from the Teach Tennessee History website gives students a good overview of the purposes of TVA and its role in the New Deal.

Map- [TVA Map](#)

Printable map from the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission showing locations of dams, reservoirs and power generation map. I selected this map because it gives students a sense of TVA's scope and the number of reservoirs TVA has created.

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

This chart is part of a larger document created by TVA available from the National Archives. I selected it to pair with the map so students would begin to understand the impact of dam building on local communities

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

I found the video while searching for sources on TVA. One of the difficulties I encountered with the available sources was providing a balanced view of the issues. The video both provides students with an overview of the issues and gives the teacher a starting point for discussing bias or perspective in the primary source documents.

Press Release- [BVI](#)

This document will be used for an introductory activity on sourcing and identifying bias in sources.

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

I combined a quote and photographs from a manuscript by Marshall Wilson titled *Families of Norris Reservoir Area* to create this source set. Wilson was a TVA employee who had extensive contact with families through his work as a relocation agent. I also included a TVA document on the proper procedures for grave relocation from the National Archives. I selected these sources because they demonstrate the cultural importance of a connection to the land and family ties.

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

This source set from the National Archives contains photographs of the Stooksbury farm as well as the form completed by the TVA agent assessing the value of the farm. A related memo notes that the owner was not happy with the price he was offered and had made no plans to leave. I selected this document to demonstrate that even though Mr. Stooksbury benefitted economically from a job with TVA, he was not willing to take the price offered him and had no interest in having electricity at his new residence.

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

This source set from the National Archives contains a record of correspondence relating to Mrs. Fanny Cotham. Mrs. Cotham was displaced by a TVA dam in West Tennessee and felt that TVA did not keep its promise to help her relocate to a new home. Mrs. Cotham's letters reveal both the financial and emotional strains of relocation.

Primary Source- [On the Farm](#)



This document was produced by TVA to convince farmers of the benefits of electric power.

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

This document is the script for a play by the Federal Theatre Project about the benefits of TVA. I choose it both to demonstrate the economic benefits of TVA and also to ensure that students recognize the connections between TVA and the other programs of the New Deal.

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

I selected this document to show the racial discrimination common in the South was continued by TVA both in its hiring practices and its new planned community of Norris.

Primary Source- [TVA Helps Farmers](#)

I selected this document to show how TVA affected the geography and economy of the south by improving farming through the use of crop rotation and chemical fertilizers.

5. Determine order and structure of lesson activities

I planned this lesson to combine both individual and group analysis of documents. Many of the primary sources and primary source sets are lengthy and will take time to read in class. If you do not feel that your students can or will read some of the primary source documents for homework, you may want to select shorter excerpts from these documents to assign instead.

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; 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 into one or more of these categories

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 employee 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.

6. Assessment

The writing prompt that will be used to assess mastery of the objective was created in step 3. 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.

