Two Paths Through Crisis

Compare presidential responses to the Great Depression

SS24.US2.4a "Differentiate between the ways Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt dealt with the Great Depression."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two Hoover actions and circle two Roosevelt actions, then number one action by each president that addresses the same problem.

Who Should Lead the Recovery?

1. In 1932, a closed factory left families hunting for work while bank failures wiped out savings. President Herbert Hoover believed recovery depended largely on businesses, local charities, and state governments. He urged employers to keep workers and supported federal spending on public construction, but resisted making direct federal payments to unemployed people. In 1932, his Reconstruction Finance Corporation lent money to banks and railroads to prevent further collapse. Hoover expected stronger institutions to restore jobs and confidence, rather than putting federal relief directly into families' hands.

2. When Franklin Roosevelt took office in 1933, he also wanted banks to survive, but he used a broader federal response. He declared a national bank holiday, and Congress passed a law allowing sound banks to reopen after review. His New Deal sent federal relief funds to states through the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. The Civilian Conservation Corps paid young men to work on conservation projects. Roosevelt treated immediate aid and federal jobs as tools for recovery, not just support for financial institutions.

3. The two presidents did not divide neatly into 'government action' and 'no government action.' Both backed federal measures and sought to restore confidence. Their choices differed in who received help first and how directly Washington acted. Hoover favored loans to institutions and relied more on private and local relief. Roosevelt put the federal government more directly in charge of emergency aid, bank oversight, and work programs. Neither approach ended the Depression quickly, but their contrasting responses changed expectations about the federal government's responsibilities.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Hoover's and Roosevelt's approaches to relief for unemployed families differ?

2. Both presidents tried to steady banks. What different steps did they take?

3. How did each president try to address the shortage of jobs?

4. Why would it be inaccurate to say Hoover took no federal action while Roosevelt did?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a short editorial arguing which president's approach would better help a family facing unemployment and a closed bank. Compare both approaches, name one policy of each president, and explain one limit of your choice.

ANSWER KEY

Two Paths Through Crisis

GRADE 11 · SS24.US2.4a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two Hoover actions and circle two Roosevelt actions, then number one action by each president that addresses the same problem. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Hoover's and Roosevelt's approaches to relief for unemployed families differ?	**Hoover relied more on charities and state and local governments and resisted direct federal payments. Roosevelt sent federal relief funds to states.**
2	Both presidents tried to steady banks. What different steps did they take?	**Hoover's Reconstruction Finance Corporation lent money to banks. Roosevelt declared a bank holiday and had banks reviewed before sound ones reopened.**
3	How did each president try to address the shortage of jobs?	**Hoover urged employers to retain workers and supported public construction. Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps paid young men for conservation work.**
4	Why would it be inaccurate to say Hoover took no federal action while Roosevelt did?	**Hoover supported federal public construction and loans to institutions. Roosevelt used the federal government more directly for relief and jobs.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A family with no paycheck and a closed bank needs more than a promise that recovery will spread. Hoover's Reconstruction Finance Corporation lent to banks, hoping stronger institutions would restore confidence and jobs. Roosevelt reviewed banks before allowing sound ones to reopen, while his New Deal also provided relief through states and paid jobs through the Civilian Conservation Corps. I would choose Roosevelt's approach because it addresses lost income as well as banking trouble. Still, federal programs could not end the Depression quickly, so the family's hardship might continue.

Accept either president as the editorial's choice if the argument compares their approaches, accurately names a policy of each, and explains a plausible limit. Do not accept the claim that Hoover opposed all federal action.