# Reform in Action

Comparing the goals and effects of Great Society policies

**9-12.US2.33** "Analyze the major features of the Great Society policy. This may include: • War on Poverty • Medicare/Medicaid • Head Start and Education Reform • Urban Renewal • Support for the Arts and Humanities • Immigration Reform • Environmental..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline the intended effects of at least four policies, circle a stated drawback, and write 1 and 2 beside two different ways federal action worked so you can compare how the policies changed people's lives.

### What Could Federal Action Change?

1. In 1965, a family in a crowded city might have faced several barriers at once: low wages, medical bills, and limited schooling. President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society tried to address such problems through federal action. The War on Poverty funded local programs and job training. Head Start offered preschool services to children from low-income families, while education laws sent federal aid to schools serving poor students. Medicare provided health coverage for older adults, and Medicaid helped eligible people with low incomes pay for care.

2. Cities offered another test of the Great Society. Building on earlier urban renewal efforts, federal money supported redevelopment, but projects sometimes displaced residents and broke up neighborhoods. Johnson also backed the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, created in 1965. Their grants supported cultural work and scholarship, not just roads or housing. These policies reveal different aims: changing the physical city and widening access to artistic and intellectual life. Who benefited depended on how programs were carried out.

3. The Great Society reached beyond poverty and cities. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 ended national-origins quotas that favored northern and western Europeans. New rules emphasized family ties and job skills, gradually changing who could immigrate. Environmental measures expanded federal responsibility too. The 1965 Water Quality Act pushed states to set water quality standards, while the 1967 Air Quality Act supported air pollution control. These reforms worked differently: some changed legal rules, while others funded services or set public protections.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Head Start and federal school aid address different stages of education?

2. How did Medicare and Medicaid address medical costs for different groups?

3. How did urban renewal and arts funding pursue different goals, and what risk accompanied renewal?

4. How did immigration reform and environmental measures use different kinds of federal action?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A neighborhood has few preschool slots, a polluted stream, and a threatened public theater. In 4 to 5 sentences, choose two different Great Society approaches to adapt, explain how each would address a specific need, and identify one limitation of your plan.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · 9-12.US2.33

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the intended effects of at least four policies, circle a stated drawback, and write 1 and 2 beside two different ways federal action worked so you can compare how the policies changed people's lives. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | How did Head Start and federal school aid address different stages of education? | **Head Start offered preschool services to children from low-income families. Federal aid went to schools serving poor students.** |
| 2 | How did Medicare and Medicaid address medical costs for different groups? | **Medicare provided health coverage for older adults. Medicaid helped eligible people with low incomes pay for care.** |
| 3 | How did urban renewal and arts funding pursue different goals, and what risk accompanied renewal? | **Urban renewal supported physical redevelopment, which sometimes displaced residents. Arts funding supported cultural work and scholarship.** |
| 4 | How did immigration reform and environmental measures use different kinds of federal action? | **Immigration reform changed legal rules about who could immigrate. Environmental measures pushed for water quality standards and supported air pollution control.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would adapt Head Start to offer preschool services to children from low-income families in the neighborhood. This could help families who have few early learning options. I would also use water quality rules like those strengthened in 1965 to push for a cleaner stream. These steps would address education and pollution, but neither would keep the public theater open.

Accept other accurate comparisons supported by the passage. For Part 3, look for two distinct approaches tied to neighborhood needs and a plausible limitation.