Jobs and Evidence

Evaluate a New Deal policy using data and historical sources

OKH.P.2 "Use interdisciplinary tools to acquire, apply, and evaluate content understanding of the four strands of social studies. Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of government, the benefits of democratic systems..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number Congress's and the president's actions, underline two possible effects of the WPA, and circle two limits of the evidence.

What Can We Know About the WPA?

1 In 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Works Progress Administration (WPA), using funds Congress had approved for relief. With unemployment high, the federal government paid workers to build roads, schools, and parks. This marked a larger federal role in providing jobs, while the projects could improve travel and public services in specific communities.

ESTIMATED U.S. UNEMPLOYMENT, SELECTED YEARS



Percent of civilian labor force unemployed

2 The chart shows estimated U.S. unemployment rates, or the share of workers without jobs. Unemployment rose sharply before the WPA existed and was lower in 1940 than in 1933. WPA wages could support local businesses when workers bought goods. Still, a national rate cannot show which communities gained projects or whether the WPA alone caused the decline.

3 A county WPA project announcement could show where officials planned to spend money, but it cannot prove how many workers were hired. A worker's letter might describe the effect of wages on one household, but it cannot speak for everyone. To judge the policy, compare these sources with the national figures and ask whose experiences each source leaves out.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Congress and the president each help create the WPA?

2. How much lower was the estimated unemployment rate in 1940 than in 1933? Why does that change not prove the WPA caused the entire decline?

3. How could a WPA road project affect a community in a way the national unemployment chart would not show?

4. Which source would better show whether one household benefited, a project announcement or a worker's letter? What is one limit of that source?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a brief claim about whether the WPA fully solved unemployment. Use two different pieces of evidence from the passage or chart, then name one additional source you would seek to test your claim.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Number Congress's and the president's actions, underline two possible effects of the WPA, and circle two limits of the evidence. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Congress and the president each help create the WPA?	**Congress approved relief funds, and President Roosevelt established the WPA using those funds.**
2	How much lower was the estimated unemployment rate in 1940 than in 1933? Why does that change not prove the WPA caused the entire decline?	**It was 10.3 percentage points lower. The chart shows a change over time, not what caused all of it.**
3	How could a WPA road project affect a community in a way the national unemployment chart would not show?	**A road could improve local travel. The national rate does not show which communities received projects.**
4	Which source would better show whether one household benefited, a project announcement or a worker's letter? What is one limit of that source?	**A worker's letter could describe the household's experience, but one letter cannot represent every household.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The WPA helped but did not fully solve unemployment. It paid workers to build public projects, yet the estimated unemployment rate was still 14.6 percent in 1940. I would check county hiring records to learn whether jobs reached communities with high unemployment.

Accept claims that distinguish a possible benefit from proof of its size or cause. Additional sources should help test the claim, such as hiring records or records from local businesses.