A Deal Tested

Read how Roosevelt used federal power to address public problems.

USH.C.2.4.A "Describe the efforts of President Theodore Roosevelt's administration, including the promises of the Square Deal, Meat Inspection Act, trust-busting laws, and support for conservation."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one federal action in each area: fairness in the coal dispute, meat safety, trusts, and conservation. Circle the problem each action was meant to address.

Roosevelt's Square Deal in Action

1 In 1902, a coal strike threatened to leave homes without heat. President Theodore Roosevelt invited mine owners and workers to talks instead of automatically siding with owners. When owners resisted, he pressed for a settlement, and a commission later recommended higher pay and shorter hours for miners. This approach reflected his Square Deal, a promise that government would seek a fair deal for workers, businesses, and the public. Roosevelt did not promise that everyone would get the same result. He argued that federal power should check abuses and protect the public interest when private disputes harmed the nation.

2 Food and big business posed other tests. After reports exposed filthy conditions in meatpacking plants, Roosevelt backed the Meat Inspection Act of 1906. It required federal inspection of meat processed for interstate or foreign sale and set sanitation rules for packing plants. Roosevelt also used the Sherman Antitrust Act to challenge companies that restrained trade. His administration sued Northern Securities, a railroad holding company; in 1904, the Supreme Court ordered it broken up. Roosevelt did not oppose every large corporation. He targeted business practices he viewed as harmful, using federal enforcement to make competition and consumer protection more than promises.

3 Roosevelt also treated public land as a shared resource. His administration expanded national forests, and the U.S. Forest Service, created in 1905, managed them for long-term use. Under the Antiquities Act of 1906, Roosevelt designated places such as Devils Tower as national monuments, limiting damage to important natural and historic sites. He also established wildlife refuges, including Pelican Island, to protect birds. Conservation did not mean closing every resource to people: Roosevelt supported careful use of forests and water. Together, these actions show that his Square Deal reached beyond factories and railroads to the nation's land and wildlife.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Roosevelt's response to the coal strike put the Square Deal's promise into practice?

2. What problem did the Meat Inspection Act address, and what did it require?

3. How did the Northern Securities case show Roosevelt's approach to trusts?

4. Describe two ways Roosevelt's administration supported conservation and what each protected.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are writing to a newspaper editor in 1906. In 80 to 100 words, argue which two of Roosevelt's efforts would most help the public, explain how each worked, and identify one problem they could not fully solve. Connect your judgment to the Square Deal.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one federal action in each area: fairness in the coal dispute, meat safety, trusts, and conservation. Circle the problem each action was meant to address. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Roosevelt's response to the coal strike put the Square Deal's promise into practice?	**He brought owners and workers to talks and pressed for a settlement, seeking to protect workers and the public rather than automatically siding with owners.**
2	What problem did the Meat Inspection Act address, and what did it require?	**It addressed filthy meatpacking conditions by requiring federal inspection of meat processed for interstate or foreign sale and sanitation rules for packing plants.**
3	How did the Northern Securities case show Roosevelt's approach to trusts?	**His administration used the Sherman Antitrust Act to challenge a railroad holding company it viewed as restraining trade; the Supreme Court ordered the company broken up.**
4	Describe two ways Roosevelt's administration supported conservation and what each protected.	**It expanded national forests for long-term use and established wildlife refuges such as Pelican Island to protect birds. Students may also cite national monuments as protection for important natural and historic sites.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

To the editor: The Meat Inspection Act and the lawsuit against Northern Securities would most help the public. Federal inspection and sanitation rules could make meat shipped across state lines safer for families. Breaking up a railroad holding company that restrained trade showed that powerful businesses could face federal limits. Both efforts fit the Square Deal because the government acted for consumers rather than leaving decisions entirely to companies. Still, these actions could not guarantee safe food everywhere or end every unfair business practice. The government would need to keep enforcing its rules.

Accept other well-supported choices of two efforts. The response should explain how both worked, connect them to the Square Deal, and identify a plausible remaining problem.