# Recovery for Whom?

Three viewpoints on work, family, and national recovery in the Great Depression

**USH.C.4.2.G** "Analyze points of view regarding the economic and social impact of the Great Depression on individuals, families, and the nation."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline one economic effect and circle one social effect in each paragraph. Number the three viewpoints, then notice how each person judges whether government help would work.

### Three Views of Recovery in 1935

1. In 1935, imagine a laid-off machinist named Ruth in a city where factory jobs are scarce. Her family has stopped buying meat, and her teenage son leaves school early each afternoon to earn small wages delivering groceries. Ruth thinks a job building a public school through the new Works Progress Administration would do more than put money in her pocket. It would let her son study instead of working and give neighbors a useful building. She sees federal work as a way to protect both family life and the wider community, although she would rather return to steady factory work.

2. On a small Oklahoma farm, imagine Eli watching drought and blowing soil ruin his crops. He cannot sell what he cannot grow, and his family debates leaving relatives and familiar neighbors to seek work elsewhere. Federal workers offer advice on protecting soil, while other farm programs pay eligible growers to plant less. Eli sees government help as a chance to stay, but he worries that neither advice nor payments can bring rain or replace a harvest quickly. Unlike Ruth, he does not expect a building project to solve his immediate problem. For him, recovery means keeping the farm productive and the family together.

3. Across town from Ruth, imagine a grocery owner named Mr. Vega. Families with little cash buy less from his store, and he sometimes lets longtime customers pay later. He favors public jobs because workers with wages can buy food, helping stores survive. Still, he worries that the federal government must pay for these programs and that rising public debt could burden the nation later. He sees aid as a trade-off, not a cure by itself. Ruth measures recovery by her son's return to school, Eli by a workable farm, and Mr. Vega by customers returning without a lasting bill for taxpayers.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why does Ruth think a public job could help her family and her community, even though she would prefer factory work?

2. How does Eli's view of government help differ from Ruth's? Use their different problems to explain.

3. Why does Mr. Vega support public jobs while also worrying about them? Include an effect on his store and an effect on the nation.

4. Compare how Ruth and Mr. Vega judge recovery. What does each want to see change, and why might they disagree about the cost of public jobs?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five-sentence statement from the viewpoint of a teacher in 1935 whose students' families face unemployment. Describe one economic effect and one social effect, take a position on federal work programs, and compare your view with Eli's or Mr. Vega's using a detail from the passage.

# Recovery for Whom?



## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one economic effect and circle one social effect in each paragraph. Number the three viewpoints, then notice how each person judges whether government help would work. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Why does Ruth think a public job could help her family and her community, even though she would prefer factory work? | **Wages could allow her son to stay in school, while the project would give neighbors a useful building. She would still prefer steady factory work.** |
| 2 | How does Eli's view of government help differ from Ruth's? Use their different problems to explain. | **Ruth sees a public building job as a way to earn wages and support her family. Eli needs productive land and worries that advice or payments cannot quickly replace crops lost to drought.** |
| 3 | Why does Mr. Vega support public jobs while also worrying about them? Include an effect on his store and an effect on the nation. | **Workers with wages could buy food at his store, but he worries that paying for the programs could increase national debt.** |
| 4 | Compare how Ruth and Mr. Vega judge recovery. What does each want to see change, and why might they disagree about the cost of public jobs? | **Ruth looks for wages that let her son return to school and help her community. Mr. Vega wants customers to return but worries that public jobs could leave taxpayers with lasting debt.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

As a teacher in 1935, I see children arrive hungry because their parents cannot find steady work. Some miss class to earn money, which makes it harder for them to keep up with their classmates. I support federal work projects because wages could help families buy food and keep children in school. Eli, however, needs healthy soil and crops more than a building job. Both of us want help for families, but we judge its value by different local needs.

Accept other passage-supported comparisons that distinguish economic from social effects. For Part 3, the teacher's viewpoint may support or question federal work programs if the five sentences include all requested elements.