Jobs and Judgment

Hoover's response to unemployment and the public's reaction

USH.C.4.2.H "Analyze how President Herbert Hoover's philosophy of "rugged individualism," public works projects, and restrictive monetary policies attempted to address massive unemployment; describe examples of public reaction to such measures (e.g...."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one action or belief for each of Hoover's three approaches, circle a result for workers or businesses, and number three examples of public reaction.

A Crisis of Jobs and Confidence

1 By 1932, nearly one in four U.S. workers was unemployed. President Herbert Hoover believed "rugged individualism" meant people, businesses, and local communities should solve many problems without depending on direct federal aid. He asked employers to keep wages steady and urged charities and local governments to help families. He feared that regular federal cash payments would weaken self-reliance and strain the budget. Yet local aid could not match the scale of unemployment as tax revenue and donations fell. For a worker with no wages, a food line offered immediate help, but it could not provide a lasting job.

2 Hoover also supported federal public works, including roads and government buildings. Construction hired some workers and bought materials from businesses, which could support additional jobs. In 1932, he signed a law that expanded federal loans for public works and emergency relief. Still, projects took time to start and employed only a fraction of those without work. Money policy created another obstacle. The Federal Reserve, an independent central bank, allowed the money supply to contract as banks failed. Hoover defended the gold standard, which limited responses to the crisis. Scarcer credit made it harder for businesses to expand and hire.

3 People judged these efforts by what they saw around them. Some families built makeshift settlements called Hoovervilles, a bitter nickname that blamed the president for their hardship. In 1932, thousands of World War I veterans, known as the Bonus Army, marched on Washington to demand early payment of a promised bonus. Congress refused, and Hoover ordered federal troops to clear veterans who remained; images of the crackdown deepened public anger. In the presidential election that year, voters chose Franklin D. Roosevelt over Hoover. The result did not prove that every Hoover policy failed, but it showed how strongly many Americans wanted a different response.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How was Hoover's reliance on charities and local governments meant to help unemployed people, and why did it fall short?

2. How could public works create jobs beyond the construction sites, and why could they not quickly end unemployment?

3. How did the shrinking money supply and Hoover's support for the gold standard make it harder to address unemployment?

4. What did Hoovervilles and the Bonus Army's march reveal about public reaction to Hoover's response? How did voters respond in 1932?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 90 to 110 word recommendation to Hoover in 1932. Propose one change to his approach, explain how it might affect unemployment, predict how one group in the passage might react, and identify one possible drawback.

ANSWER KEY

Jobs and Judgment

HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.4.2.H

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one action or belief for each of Hoover's three approaches, circle a result for workers or businesses, and number three examples of public reaction. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How was Hoover's reliance on charities and local governments meant to help unemployed people, and why did it fall short?	**Charities and local governments could provide immediate help, such as food. Falling donations and tax revenue meant they could not meet the need or provide lasting jobs.**
2	How could public works create jobs beyond the construction sites, and why could they not quickly end unemployment?	**Projects bought materials from businesses, which could support additional jobs. They took time to start and employed only a fraction of unemployed workers.**
3	How did the shrinking money supply and Hoover's support for the gold standard make it harder to address unemployment?	**The shrinking money supply made credit scarcer, limiting businesses' ability to expand and hire. The gold standard limited responses to the crisis.**
4	What did Hoovervilles and the Bonus Army's march reveal about public reaction to Hoover's response? How did voters respond in 1932?	**The name Hoovervilles blamed Hoover for hardship. Veterans marched to demand early bonus payments, and the clearing of their camp deepened anger. Voters elected Roosevelt over Hoover.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Mr. Hoover, I recommend expanding federal public works more quickly and paying workers to repair roads and government buildings. Their wages could help families buy necessities, while purchases of materials could support other businesses. The Bonus Army might welcome a chance to earn wages, although jobs would not replace the early bonus payments its members demanded. This plan could cost more federal money and increase pressure on the budget you hope to protect. Local charities alone cannot meet the need when donations and tax revenue are falling. Public construction would offer more people paid work rather than only temporary help.

Accept recommendations other than expanded public works if the proposed effect on employment and the predicted reaction follow from the passage. Students should distinguish their prediction from a documented public reaction.