A Changing Alliance

How economic crisis reshaped party support

USH.C.4.3.H "Explain how the Great Depression and the New Deal affected American politics by the emergence of the New Deal Coalition."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two Depression or New Deal developments that drew voters to Democrats, circle three voter groups in the coalition, and number two ways the coalition changed politics.

The Coalition Behind the New Deal

1 In 1932, a laid-off factory worker stood in a breadline while President Herbert Hoover, a Republican, sought reelection. The Great Depression had closed banks and businesses, leaving millions without jobs. Many voters blamed Hoover's limited federal response and looked to Democratic candidate Franklin D. Roosevelt for action. After winning, Roosevelt launched the New Deal, which expanded the federal government's role in relief, recovery, and reform. The crisis helped Democrats win voters who had previously supported Republicans, changing the balance of national politics.

2 New Deal programs gave different groups reasons to support Roosevelt's Democrats. The Works Progress Administration paid unemployed people to build roads, schools, and parks. The Social Security Act established old-age benefits and unemployment insurance. A labor law protected workers' right to organize unions and bargain collectively. Many industrial workers, union members, city residents, and immigrant families backed the party that supported these measures. Together with white Southern Democrats, these voters formed the New Deal Coalition, a broad alliance that helped Democrats win elections for decades.

3 The coalition also included growing numbers of Black voters in Northern cities, many of whom had long supported Republicans, the party of Abraham Lincoln. Federal jobs and relief encouraged some to shift toward Roosevelt, although discrimination still restricted their access. The alliance contained a deep conflict: many white Southern Democrats defended segregation, while Black voters sought civil rights. To keep Southern support, New Deal leaders often avoided challenging segregation directly. The coalition strengthened Democratic power, but its members did not agree on equal rights.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Depression help shift voters from Republicans to Democrats?

2. How did a New Deal labor law help bring union members into the Democratic coalition?

3. Why did some Black voters in Northern cities shift toward Democrats despite limits to New Deal relief?

4. How did the coalition's competing views on civil rights affect New Deal politics?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five-sentence newspaper analysis set in 1936 that predicts how Roosevelt's coalition might affect the election. Connect the Depression or New Deal to support from two groups, and explain one tension that could limit what the coalition achieves.

ANSWER KEY

A Changing Alliance

HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.4.3.H

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two Depression or New Deal developments that drew voters to Democrats, circle three voter groups in the coalition, and number two ways the coalition changed politics. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Depression help shift voters from Republicans to Democrats?	**Many voters blamed Hoover's limited response to the crisis and supported Roosevelt's promise of federal action.**
2	How did a New Deal labor law help bring union members into the Democratic coalition?	**It protected workers' right to organize and bargain collectively, giving union members a reason to back Roosevelt's party.**
3	Why did some Black voters in Northern cities shift toward Democrats despite limits to New Deal relief?	**Federal jobs and relief attracted some Black voters, though discrimination still restricted their access.**
4	How did the coalition's competing views on civil rights affect New Deal politics?	**To keep the support of white Southern Democrats, New Deal leaders often avoided directly challenging segregation.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Roosevelt's coalition may give Democrats a strong advantage in this election. Industrial workers have reason to support his party because a New Deal law protects their right to organize unions. Some Black voters in Northern cities may also back Roosevelt because federal jobs and relief offer help during the Depression. Yet many white Southern Democrats in the coalition defend segregation, while Black voters seek civil rights. To hold these groups together, Democratic leaders may avoid directly challenging segregation even if they win.

Accept other passage-supported groups and New Deal measures in the newspaper analysis. Students should explain both the coalition's electoral strength and a limit created by its internal conflict.