

Out of the Darkness

The Tennessee Valley Authority and the Great Depression

Introduction

The purpose of these lessons is to introduce students to the role that the creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) played in the economic development of the South during the Depression. The length of these lessons can be adjusted to meet your time constraints. Student access to a computer lab with Internet connectivity is recommended but not required. Another option is for the teacher to conduct the lessons in a classroom with one computer with Internet connectivity and an LCD projector.



Alabama Curriculum Standards

These lessons help fulfill the following **Alabama Teaching Standards** for:

United States: *Industrial Revolution to the Present*

E	G	H	CG
✓	✓	✓	✓

[Sixth Grade] 5. Explain causes and effects of the Great Depression on the people of the United States.

- Describing the importance of the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt as President of the United States, including the New Deal alphabet agencies
- Locating on a map river systems utilized by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

E	G	H	CG
✓		✓	✓

[Eleventh Grade] 6. Describe social and economic conditions from the 1920s through the Great Depression regarding factors leading to a deepening crisis, including the collapse of the farming economy and the stock market crash of 1929.

- Analyzing the Great Depression for its impact on the American family

E	G	H	CG
✓	✓	✓	✓

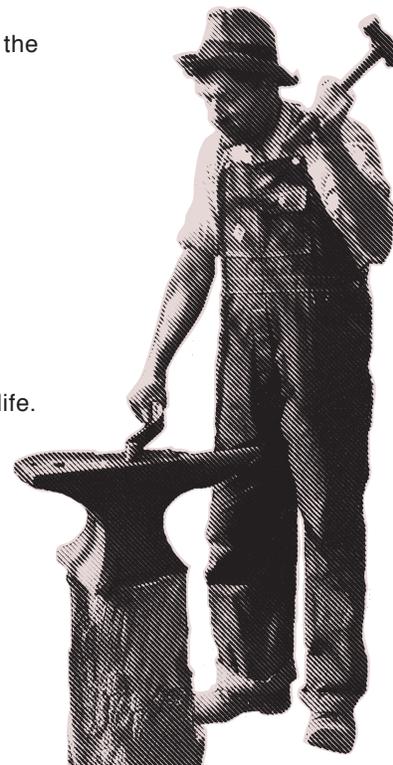
[Eleventh Grade] 7. Explain strengths and weaknesses of the New Deal in managing problems of the Great Depression through relief, recovery, and reform programs, including the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA).

E	G	H	CG
	✓	✓	✓

[Eleventh Grade] 15. Describe changing social and cultural conditions in the United States during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.

Objectives

- Students will identify New Deal Programs/Initiatives (TVA).
- Students will analyze how World War II affected the American economy.
- Students will recognize the effects of the New Deal and World War II on the Tennessee Valley.
- Students will explore how World War II had an impact on everyday American life.
- Students will assess the lasting impact of the New Deal policies.



ALABAMA SOCIAL STUDIES LESSON #1

Out of the Darkness

Mini lessons that meet Alabama Curriculum Standards and can be taught using Currents of Change online resources.

If you want to teach this....

Industrial Revolution to Present: Economics, Geography, History, Civics & Government

- **[Sixth Grade] 5.** Explain causes and effects of the Great Depression on the people of the United States.
 - Describing the importance of the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt as President of the United States, including the New Deal alphabet agencies
- **[Eleventh Grade] 6.** Describe social and economic conditions from the 1920s through the Great Depression regarding factors leading to a deepening crisis, including the collapse of the farming economy and the stock market crash of 1929.
 - Analyzing the Great Depression for its impact on the American family
- **[Eleventh Grade] 7.** Explain strengths and weaknesses of the New Deal in managing problems of the Great Depression through relief, recovery, and reform programs, including the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA).

Try this...

Locate and choose photo images of families and individuals of ethnic diversity engaged in varied activities. Engage in Socratic Seminar to compare and contrast images while making inferences of conditions and lifestyles depicted.

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Try this...

Go to the *US Annual GDP 1910-1960* graph located in *Lesson One: Out of the Darkness*. Engage in Socratic Seminar to determine relation of GDP increase to FDR's "Alphabet Soup" programs of government spending. Continue Socratic Seminar to compare/contrast FDR's Depression Era government spending to current government financial/economic programs and plans of the current administration.

If you want to teach this....

Industrial Revolution to Present: Geography, History, Civics & Government

- **[Eleventh Grade] 15.** Describe changing social and cultural conditions in the United States during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.

Try this...

Using images of people, conditions, and artifacts located in *Lesson One: Out of the Darkness* and locating comparable images of the same time period and from other areas of the United States that show increased socio-economic conditions, technology, and examples of consumerism, have students generate comparison statements of the conditions of the Tennessee Valley and much of the remaining United States. Continue discussion by having students make inferences of socio-economic and consumer changes TVA made possible in the Tennessee Valley area.

If you want to teach this....

Industrial Revolution to Present: Economics, Geography, History, Civics & Government

- **[Eleventh Grade] 7.** Explain strengths and weaknesses of the New Deal in managing problems of the Great Depression through relief, recovery, and reform programs, including the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA).

Try this...

Go to the *Unemployment* graph resource located in *Lesson One: Out of the Darkness*. Locate current unemployment rates. Engage students in comparing/contrasting Depression Era unemployment rates to current unemployment rates by graphing research results.

If you want to teach this....

Industrial Revolution to Present: Economics, Geography, History, Civics & Government

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- **[Eleventh Grade] 6.** Describe social and economic conditions from the 1920s through the Great Depression regarding factors leading to a deepening crisis, including the collapse of the farming economy and the stock market crash of 1929.
- **[Eleventh Grade] 7.** Explain strengths and weaknesses of the New Deal in managing problems of the Great Depression through relief, recovery, and reform programs, including the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA).

Try this...

This is a primary objective most suitable for the content and resources of *Currents of Change*. The following are starters to generate instruction ideas:

1. Photo analysis comparing images of people before electricity, during TVA construction, and after the introduction of electricity to the valley.
2. View select video clip(s) and/or images. Students will work in predetermined groups to generate brief observation lists in response to questions such as:
 - a. How did TVA contribute to the WWII effort?
 - b. What changes in consumerism did TVA make possible in the Tennessee Valley area?
 - c. List technology used in Tennessee Valley homes prior to TVA; and technology use made possible after TVA.
 - d. With construction of the various dams, what geographical changes did TVA make to the region?
 - e. How did geographical changes made by the TVA dams change the lives and lifestyles of the Tennessee Valley people? (loss of farms/small communities; increase in recreational facilities; industrialization; increased river traffic, both recreational & industrial; population shifts—away from the area and to the area; etc).
3. Divide students into groups. Each group will view one of the two video clips, *Bill Willis: Electricity's Impact* or *Carlock Stooksbury: Life Before Electricity* in the Norris Area, both found in *Lesson One: Out of the Darkness*. Have students record key statements made by Mr. Willis about conditions prior to TVA electricity and after. Each group will present group results to the whole class. Discussion should include similarities and differences observed in both clips.
4. View *Norris Dam* video clip. Have students record several key statements from observations. Engage students in Socratic Seminar to discuss video clip contents in relation to social, socio-economic, and community changes resulting from the construction of Norris Dam. Also taking note of TVA and Roosevelt connections. Teacher should facilitate discussion to include both positive and negative changes.
5. Use any of the various videos in *Lesson One: Out of the Darkness* to guide students in the creation of graphic organizers, Socratic Seminar discussion topics, and essay topics.
6. Print a copy of *Eminent Domain*, found in *Lesson One: Out of the Darkness*, and provide it to the students. After reading, either independent or orally, engage in Socratic Seminar, discussing the "right or wrong" of eminent domain. Further the discussion by debating the relevance and impact of eminent domain in communities today.
7. Use the resource, *Make Your Own News Story*, to create a summation article. Consider a cross-curriculum collaboration with a teacher from the English department.

Introductory Activity

1. Using a TV and DVD player (or) computer with DVD player and an LCD projector, show the 26-minute video *Built for the People – The Story of the TVA* (available on the DVD or currentsofchange.net).
2. Use the following questions to lead the class in a follow-up discussion:
 - a. TVA was signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and is said to have “taken the South ‘out of the darkness.’” What does this mean? How did TVA take the South out of the darkness?
 - b. Would life today be different without the creation of TVA? How? In what ways has TVA changed life in the Tennessee Valley?
 - c. Do you think the traditions and sacrifices of past generations are reflected in TVA’s work today?



Discovery Activity

Exploring the CurrentsOfChange.net Website

Note: This class can be conducted in a student computer lab with Internet connectivity where each student has access to his or her own computer. Another option would be for the teacher to lead the class through the exercise using the website and handouts in a classroom using a single computer with Internet connectivity and an LCD projector.

1. Distribute a handout to each student. Students will write answers on notebook paper (see back for handout).
2. Direct students to the website: currentsofchange.net.
3. Ask students to use the tools and resources provided by the website to respond to the handout questions (for a 100-point grade).
4. As the students complete the activity, be available to answer any questions they might have.

Extension Activities

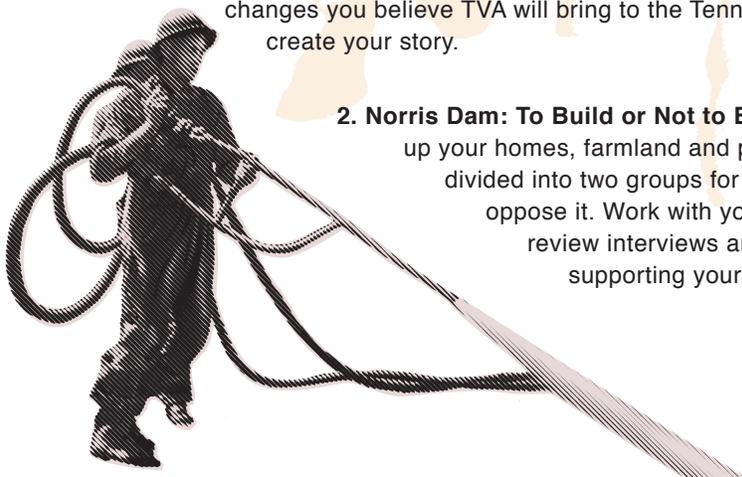
Digging Deeper

Assign students one of the extension activities for this lesson, or provide a list of all Extension Activities (provided on currentsofchange.net/teachers) and let students work in groups to decide which extension activity they would like to complete.

Answers to the Extension Activities will vary based on student interest and the amount of research they conduct. This is different from the Student Handout answers, which are very specific and are included in this folder.

Background information for the Extension Activities has been included on our website, currentsofchange.net/teachers.

1. **TVA – The Beginning.** Pretend you are a news reporter assigned to cover the announcement of the creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority. Go to the website to watch the video of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s historic speech launching the TVA and to read an excerpt from the speech. Write a short article announcing that the TVA Act has been signed into law. In your article, use information from the documentary and Roosevelt’s speech to highlight at least three changes you believe TVA will bring to the Tennessee Valley. Use the website template and photo archive to create your story.
2. **Norris Dam: To Build or Not to Build?** Imagine you and your classmates have been asked to give up your homes, farmland and property so that TVA can build Norris Dam. Your class will be divided into two groups for a debate. One group will support Norris Dam, and the other will oppose it. Work with your group to prepare for the debate by visiting the website to review interviews and footage about Norris Dam, then create a list of arguments supporting your position.





3. Tennessee Valley Stories. The interviews and stories in the film demonstrate the personal impact of the TVA on the lives of the people of the Tennessee Valley. Choose an older friend or family member to interview about their experience growing up in the Tennessee Valley and the impact of TVA. To prepare for the interview, visit the website to review the personal stories and excerpts from the film, then create your own set of questions. You may write out the interview or film it.

Option: Instead of interviewing a friend or family member, select a person featured in one of the photographs on the website. Write what you imagine their story to be: Who are they? Where do they live? How did their life change as a result of the TVA?

4. The Norris Dam Bill. Nebraska Senator George Norris was instrumental in passing this bill, which permitted the building of Norris Dam. Watch the video reenactment of Senator Norris's speech, which you'll find on the website, to discover reasons why he supported the building of the dam. Then pretend to be Senator Norris and write a speech arguing for the passing of the bill in the Senate. Be prepared to give the speech to your class.

5. The Greater Good? Eminent domain is a law that allows the government to purchase privately owned land from landowners in order to meet a public need. Your class will be divided into two groups for a debate. One group will support eminent domain, and one group will oppose it. Prepare for the debate by reviewing the "Eminent Domain" page on the website and by watching the videos called, *Tellico Dam Controversy (Snail Darter)* and *Norris Dam (Extended Version)*, then generate a list of specific examples from the video *Built for the People—The Story of the TVA*, to help support your position.

6. Electricity's Impact. Watch the video interviews with Leo Cobb on the website, then think about what electricity has meant to Leo and his family. Now choose a photograph, object or artifact that best represents the significance of electricity and its effect on society and the Great Depression. Create a short presentation about the image or artifact to share with your class.



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Name _____ Date _____ Class _____

Directions: Use the information, tools and resources provided online at currentsofchange.net to answer the following questions. Use complete sentences to respond to the short-answer questions.

1. Which President authorized the creation of TVA? If you had been president, would you have authorized the creation of TVA? Why or why not?
2. What year did the President sign the legislation creating TVA?
a) 1909 b) 1929 c) 1933 d) 1945
3. What was the name of the first dam TVA built?
a) Norris Dam b) Wilson Dam c) Douglas Dam
4. Before dams were constructed, large natural disasters would hit the Tennessee Valley each year that would destroy homes and farmland. What were these natural disasters, and how did the dams help?
5. Why did one Tennessee Valley resident once say, "I never even knew when the Depression had come"?
a) They did not have a TV to watch the event
b) Newspapers did not report it
c) They were already too poor to notice the change
d) The Depression was an easy time
6. What name did some Southerners give electricity when it was first introduced?
7. Approximately how many people were moved from their land so that TVA could construct Norris Dam?
8. During the building of the Norris Dam, approximately how many graves did TVA relocate?
a) 100 b) 500 c) 1,000 d) 5,000
9. Imagine you are living in the early 1930s. President Roosevelt has just signed a bill into law creating the Tennessee Valley Authority. You know TVA will bring many changes to your area, but it will also bring economic help. Do you support or oppose these changes? Does this scenario relate to anything happening in our current economy? Use specific examples from the film to back up your response.
10. Look at the chart on currentsofchange.net, which shows the USA GDP (Gross Domestic Product) from 1910-1960. What trend do you see occurring from 1929-1939? Why do you think we see this trend?
11. Look at the chart on currentsofchange.net, which shows the unemployment rate in the U.S. from 1910-1960. What trend do you see occurring from 1929-1939? What events contributed to these changes in the unemployment rate?