

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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MISSION 5: "Up from the Dust"

President Roosevelt Outlines the New Deal

In his first 100 days as President, Franklin Roosevelt pushed 15 major bills through Congress aimed at bringing America out of the Great Depression. His administration created economic reform programs such as the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Agricultural Adjustment Act. Together, these and other relief programs were called The New Deal. In the following transcript from a nationally broadcasted radio address—one of many “fireside chats” he would give during his presidency—Roosevelt outlines The New Deal to the American people.

The legislation which has been passed or is in the process of enactment can properly be considered as part of a well-grounded plan.

First, we are giving opportunity of employment to one-quarter of a million of the unemployed, especially the young men who have dependents, to go into the forestry and flood-prevention work. This is a big task because it means feeding, clothing and caring for nearly twice as many men as we have in the regular army itself. In creating this civilian conservation corps we are killing two birds with one stone. We are clearly enhancing the value of our natural resources, and we are relieving an appreciable amount of actual distress. This great group of men has entered upon its work on a purely voluntary basis; no military training is involved and we are conserving not only our natural resources, but our human resources. One of the great values to this work is the fact that it is direct and requires the intervention of very little machinery...

Next, the Congress is about to pass legislation that will greatly ease the mortgage distress among the farmers and the home owners of the Nation, by providing for the easing of the burden of debt now bearing so heavily upon millions of our people.

Our next step in seeking immediate relief is a grant of half a billion dollars to help the States, counties and municipalities in their duty to care for those who need direct and immediate relief.

The Congress also passed legislation authorizing the sale of beer in such States as desired it. This has already resulted in considerable reemployment and incidentally has provided much needed tax revenue.

We are planning to ask the Congress for legislation to enable the Government to undertake public works, thus stimulating directly and indirectly the employment of many others in well-considered projects.



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Further legislation has been taken up which goes much more fundamentally into our economic problems. The Farm Relief Bill seeks by the use of several methods, alone or together, to bring about an increased return to farmers for their major farm products, seeking at the same time to prevent in the days to come disastrous overproduction which so often in the past has kept farm commodity prices far below a reasonable return. This measure provides wide powers for emergencies. The extent of its use will depend entirely upon what the future has in store.

Well-considered and conservative measures will likewise be proposed which will attempt to give to the industrial workers of the country a more fair wage return, prevent cut-throat competition and unduly long hours for labor, and at the same time encourage each industry to prevent overproduction...

Source: Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "Outlining the New Deal Program," Sunday, May 7, 1933,
Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum.
<http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/050733.html>