

## New Deal and Social Security Document Based Question Activity

### **CLASS SET - DO NOT WRITE ON THIS PACKET**

#### **Document A - New Georgia Encyclopedia - Roosevelt's New Deal**

After Franklin D. Roosevelt at Warm Springs he was stricken with polio, Roosevelt began visiting the therapeutic waters of Warm Springs in the mid-1920s to strengthen his paralyzed legs. He established the Warm Springs Foundation (later the Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation), and he became actively involved in the local community. Through Warm Springs, Roosevelt began to study the connections between Georgia's difficult agricultural conditions and its social and educational problems. His New Deal programs, begun immediately upon his inauguration in 1933 and aimed first at economic recovery, would ultimately address the nation's and Georgia's social conditions as well. By the time Roosevelt came to office, Georgia's farmers, in desperate straits from years of depression and low cotton prices, were echoing the demands of the 1890s Populists for government intervention in agricultural affairs. A New Deal relief worker along the Georgia coast reported, "The school teachers, ministers, relief officials, and recipients alike stated that... if emergency aid had not been provided a revolution would have resulted." Within a year 20 percent of Georgia's urban residents were receiving some kind of federal relief, as were more than 15 percent of those living in the Piedmont region and along the coast. During the early years of the depression, before Roosevelt took office, churches, the Salvation Army, and a few local governments offered limited assistance to the poor. State aid was negligible. Between 1933 and 1940, however, the New Deal brought \$250 million to Georgia and established a series of agencies that offered a broad range of public works programs, including the construction of libraries, roads, schools, parks, hospitals, airports, and public housing projects. As a way of raising long-depressed cotton prices, the Agricultural Adjustment Act, established during Roosevelt's first 100 days in office, paid farmers to plant less cotton as a means of restricting the supply and driving up the price. The Bankhead Cotton Control Act of 1934 controlled cotton production even more tightly. In 1929, at the start of the depression, farmers had received twelve cents a pound for cotton. By 1932 cotton had fallen to five cents a pound. By setting quotas to limit the acreage of farmland planted with cotton, the price quickly returned to twelve cents, and by 1936 it had reached fifteen cents a pound. Prices fell again before new programs late in the 1930s helped rescue the growers. Roosevelt's intention was to turn Georgia's struggling, debt-ridden tenant farmers and sharecroppers into self-supporting small farmers. In economic terms, however, the small landowner actually gained less from the federal programs than did planters who owned larger and more mechanized farms. New Deal programs also provided work relief for Georgia's rural poor through the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Civilian Conservation Corps, and the National Youth Administration (NYA). Greene County, in Georgia's Piedmont region, became an experimental site for the Unified Farm Program, where federal, state, and local officials worked to provide farmers with loans to move to improved farms and homes. Such programs helped only a fraction of the state's poor and landless, but to the state's rural population—its African American and white farmers and sharecroppers—for whom the federal government had been a distant entity, the New Deal became a source of recovery they could see in their own communities. The New Deal

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inaugurated the first urban public housing, called Techwood Homes, including the first federal slum clearance project, undertaken in Atlanta in 1935. Critics claimed New Deal initiatives destroyed southern institutions through unwarranted and unconstitutional federal imposition upon state jurisdiction, particularly in the social arena and in cultural life. Wealthy landowners complained that New Deal support for improved pay would lead to labor shortages, because tenant farmers, wage hands, and sharecroppers would refuse to work for local planters if they could earn the higher wages paid by the federal government. Urban projects also led to protests against government interference in local communities.

### **Document B - New Georgia Encyclopedia - Talmadge's Opposition**

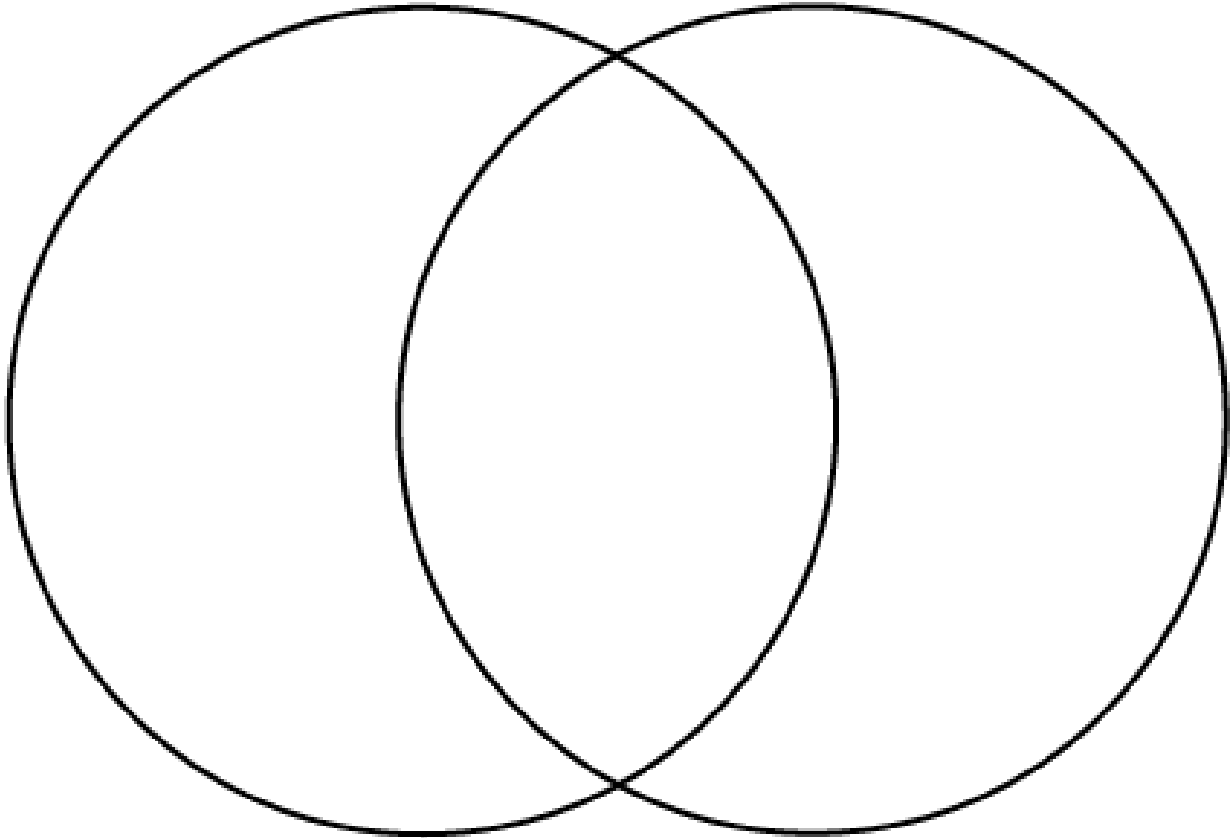
Roosevelt's new federal programs required the cooperation of state governments and were, therefore, slowed considerably by Eugene Talmadge, elected governor of Georgia in 1932. Having earned the trust of farmers as state agriculture commissioner and his claim to be "a real dirt farmer" himself, Talmadge consciously courted rural voters through lively political rallies in the state's small towns and countryside. His white-supremacist, pro-evangelical, and anti-corporate tirades had great grassroots appeal and earned him the long-term loyalty of his largely rural constituency. In Talmadge the New Deal found one of its most vigorous opponents. "Despite his popularity with the rural people, Talmadge had little insight into the problems facing Georgia farmers," historian William F. Holmes writes. "He believed that by hard work and thrift alone a person could master his own fate; he opposed programs calling for greater government spending and economic regulation. Such views, especially during the Great Depression, ignored the plight of tenant farmers as well as many landowners." In Talmadge's two terms as governor (1933-37), Georgia state government subverted many of the early New Deal programs. Conflicts developed immediately concerning federal relief programs. Talmadge wanted the labor paid on public works projects to be set in accord with Georgia's prevailing low wages, or even lower, so workers would have incentive to return to work for private employers. Appealing to white supremacy, he criticized New Deal programs that paid black workers as much as whites. To Talmadge, the New Deal was "a combination of 'wet nursin,' frenzied finance and plain damn foolishness." He courted the rural poor but allied himself with conservative business interests by opposing government regulation, welfare spending, and the interests of organized labor. After his reelection in 1934, Talmadge intensified his attacks on Roosevelt and warned of "Communist" tendencies in the New Deal. In spite of Talmadge's popularity, opposition coalesced after Talmadge vetoed measures that would have enabled Georgia to participate in the newly created Social Security Administration. In Georgia's 1936 Democratic primary, opposition to the New Deal became a key issue. By state law Talmadge could not run for a third term as governor, so he entered the U.S. Senate race against incumbent Richard B. Russell Jr., a firm New Deal supporter. Talmadge endorsed Charles D. Redwine, president of the state senate, to succeed him as governor. House Speaker E. D. Rivers was the most avid pro-New Deal gubernatorial candidate. The electorate polarized into two camps, but the New Dealers, Russell and Rivers, each polled about 60 percent, demonstrating Georgians' desire to benefit from the federal funds flowing toward health facilities, highway construction, and rural electrification.

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**Roosevelt vs. Talmadge - New Deal Venn Diagram**

*Complete the venn diagram comparing and contrasting the ideas of Franklin D. Roosevelt and Eugene Talmadge, and their beliefs regarding the New Deal.*



Mazzari, Louis. "New Deal." *New Georgia Encyclopedia*. N.p., 14 May 2004. Web. 05 Jan. 2015.

**Document C - The Townsend Plan**

*The Townsend Plan*  
*...in Brief*

Have the National Government enact legislation to the effect that all citizens of the United States — man or woman — over the age of 60 years may retire on a pension of \$200 per month on the following conditions:

1. That they engage in no further labor, business or profession for gain.
2. That their past life is free from habitual criminality.
3. That they take oath to, and actually do spend, within the confines of the United States, the entire amount of their pension within thirty days after receiving same.

Have the National Government create the revolving fund by levying a general sales tax; have the rate just high enough to produce the amount necessary to keep the Old Age Revolving Pensions Fund adequate to pay the monthly pensions.

Have the act so drawn that such sales tax can only be used for the Old Age Revolving Pensions Fund.

OLD AGE REVOLVING PENSIONS, INC.  
148 American Avenue Long Beach, California

LONG BEACH CITY Ptg. Co., 242 E. 9th, L. B. COPYRIGHT 1934, F. E. TOWNSEND

**Document D - Retirement Benefits - Social Security Administration**

When you work and pay Social Security taxes, you earn “credits” toward Social Security benefits. The number of credits you need to get retirement benefits depends on when you were born. If you were born in 1929 or later, you need 40 credits (10 years of work). If you stop working before you have enough credits to qualify for benefits, the credits will remain on your Social Security record. If you return to work later on, you can add more credits so that you qualify. We cannot pay any retirement benefits until you have the required number of credits. Your benefit payment is based on how much you earned during your working career. Higher

