

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Social Security Act of 1935

Another important law passed while Franklin Roosevelt was president was the Social Security Act of 1935. This act set up six specific programs and established methods of taxes to fund them.

Old-Age Benefits (later called Social Security) was funded by federal taxes deducted from workers. When workers retired at age 65, they became eligible to receive a monthly check. Benefits were extended to widows and dependent children of retired workers.

States taxed employers to fund the **Unemployment Compensation** program to provide income when people were out of work.

The other four programs were forms of welfare funded by grants from the federal government and administered by the states. They included **Old-Age Assistance, Aid to Dependent Children, Maternal and Child Welfare, and Aid to the Blind.**

Old-Age Assistance and Aid to the Blind programs were designed to supplement Old-Age Benefits or to provide benefits for those not eligible for Old-Age Benefits.

Maternal and Child Welfare provided health care to poor mothers and their children and was designed to protect and care for homeless, neglected, or disabled children.

Aid to Dependent Children helped support children living with only one parent or with relatives other than parents.

The first Social Security cards were issued in 1937 when the government began collecting Social Security taxes. Each person received a unique number used to keep track of earnings and taxes paid. Money was placed into a trust fund to be used to pay benefits, cover the costs of administering the program, and earn interest to build up the fund. To build up the fund, people who retired before 1940 received only one lump sum payment rather than monthly benefits.

1. Which program was funded by taxes on employers?

2. Which program was not administered by the states?

3. Which of these six programs do you think was the best? Why?

4. Do you think it's right for people working today to pay extra taxes to support workers who have retired? Why or why not?

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New Deal Programs

One popular New Deal program was the **Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)**. Established by Congress in 1933, the CCC provided needy young men with jobs in forests and national parks.

The program had two main purposes: employment and training for young men and conservation of natural resources including timber, soil, and water. Unemployed, unmarried men between the ages of 17 and 23 were eligible to join the CCC. They were paid \$30 a month and lived in work camps. About three million men were employed by the CCC.



Workers carved out roads and hiking trails, cleaned up beaches, and cleared camping sites to develop national parks. They laid down telephone lines and constructed fire observation towers. Reforestation projects included planting about two million trees from Texas to North Dakota.

The **Works Progress Administration (WPA)** began in 1935 when the president and Congress decided to shift federal relief funds to providing useful employment. By 1943, the program had provided jobs for nine million workers in road maintenance and construction of buildings and facilities. The **National Youth Administration (NYA)** program also provided four million part-time jobs.

Projects included the construction of schools, dormitories, hospitals, airports, docks, and ports plus slum clearance, flood control, and rural electrification. The WPA also provided jobs for artists (painting murals on public buildings), writers (conducting research projects), and actors and actresses (touring and performing in rural areas) through the Federal Writers, Theater, and Arts Program.

1. Why do you think the CCC was a very popular program? _____

2. How did the work done by members of the CCC help all Americans?

3. Do you think it is the government's obligation to provide work for people who are unemployed? Why or why not?

4. What do you think is better: providing jobs or providing welfare? Why?

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President Roosevelt



President Franklin D. Roosevelt

When Franklin D. Roosevelt took office on March 4, 1933, more than 13,000,000 people were out of work, banks had failed, and the country was in trouble.

Roosevelt immediately called a special session of Congress and pushed for needed legislation to deal with the banking crisis, economic issues, and changes to the liquor law.

Roosevelt's domestic New Deal programs introduced reforms that involved the government directly in national and economic affairs. During the first hundred days of his administration, he passed many new programs including the Economy Act, which reduced government salaries and pensions. A new law made low alcohol beer legal, even though Prohibition was still in effect.

No session of Congress had ever produced so much important legislation. Roosevelt's success was partly due to widespread desperation and partly to his ability as a strong leader.

Roosevelt and his advisors felt it was important that people see him as a strong leader. To minimize his disability, he was seated first at dinners, and his wheelchair was removed before other guests arrived. The press cooperated by not reporting the extent of his physical problems and publishing pictures that showed him standing (which he could do for short periods of time or with the help of a couple of strong men) or seated only in regular chairs. Many people were unaware that he couldn't walk.

Previous presidents had relied heavily on advice from other politicians who belonged to the same political party. Understanding the enormity of the problems facing the nation, Roosevelt turned for advice to a group called the Brain Trust—faculty members from Columbia University and Harvard.

1. Do you think the press would conceal a disability for a president or major leader today? Why or why not?

2. Why do you think Roosevelt didn't want people to know the extent of his disability?

3. Do you think the Brain Trust was a good idea? Why or why not?
