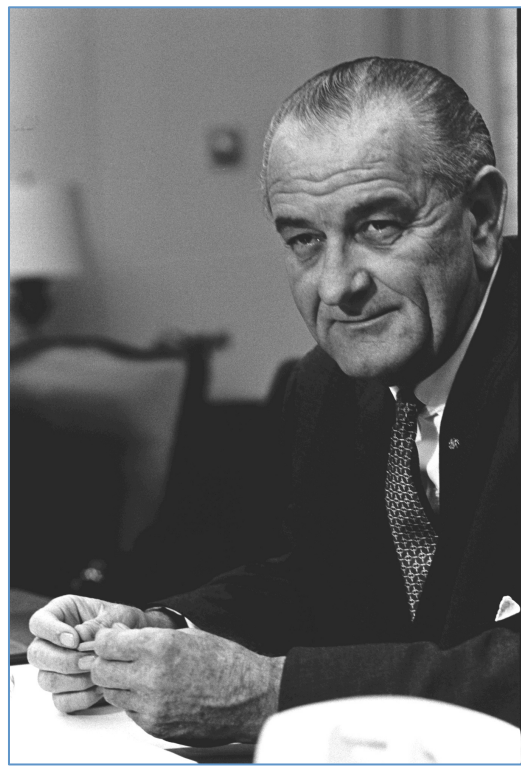


11th Grade Johnson/Reagan Inquiry

# How Should the President Foster Economic Opportunity?



Left: Photograph of Ronald Reagan. Courtesy of Ronald Reagan Library. Right: Photograph of Lyndon B. Johnson by Yoichi Okamoto. LBJ Library, public domain.

## Supporting Questions

1. What were Lyndon Johnson's and Ronald Reagan's visions for the American economy?
2. What policies did Johnson and Reagan advance in order to foster economic opportunity?
3. Did Johnson's economic policies foster economic opportunity?
4. Did Reagan's economic policies foster economic opportunity?



## 11th Grade Johnson/Reagan Inquiry

### How Should the President Foster Economic Opportunity?

<b>New York State Social Studies Framework Key Idea &amp; Practices</b>	<b>11.10 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE/DOMESTIC ISSUES (1945 – present):</b> Racial, gender, and socioeconomic inequalities were addressed by individuals, groups, and organizations. Varying political philosophies prompted debates over the role of the federal government in regulating the economy and providing a social safety net. <b>✓ Gathering, Using, and Interpreting Evidence</b> <b>✓ Comparison and Contextualization</b>
<b>Staging the Question</b>	View and discuss economic-themed campaign commercials from the 1964 and 1980 presidential campaigns provided by the Museum of the Moving Image’s Living Room Candidate resources.

Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3	Supporting Question 4
What were Lyndon Johnson’s and Ronald Reagan’s visions for the American economy?	What policies did Johnson and Reagan advance in order to foster economic opportunity?	Did Johnson’s economic policies foster economic opportunity?	Did Reagan’s economic policies foster economic opportunity?
<b>Formative Performance Task</b>	<b>Formative Performance Task</b>	<b>Formative Performance Task</b>	<b>Formative Performance Task</b>
Create a graphic organizer that compares and contrasts Johnson’s and Reagan’s visions for the economy.	Develop the graphic organizer to include economic policies advocated by Johnson and Reagan.	Participate in a Structured Academic Controversy about the short- and long-term impact of Johnson’s economic policies on economic opportunity.	Participate in a Structured Academic Controversy about the short- and long-term impact of Reagan’s economic policies on economic opportunity.
<b>Featured Sources</b>	<b>Featured Sources</b>	<b>Featured Sources</b>	<b>Featured Sources</b>
<b>Source A:</b> Excerpt from Johnson’s “Great Society” speech  <b>Source B:</b> Excerpt from Reagan’s first inaugural address	<b>Source A:</b> Excerpt from “Lyndon B. Johnson: Domestic Affairs”  <b>Source B:</b> Excerpt from “Ronald Reagan: Domestic Affairs”	<b>Source A:</b> Excerpt from “What Was Really Great About the Great Society?”  <b>Source B:</b> Excerpt from “The Slow Decline of America Since LBJ Launched the Great Society”	<b>Source A:</b> Excerpt from “The Real Reagan Economic Record”  <b>Source B:</b> Excerpt from “Reaganomics Killed America’s Middle Class”

<b>Summative Performance Task</b>	<b>ARGUMENT</b> How should the president create economic opportunity? Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, or essay) that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical sources while acknowledging competing views.  <b>EXTENSION</b> Write a letter to the current president advocating for or against an action the president claims will foster economic opportunity.
<b>Taking Informed Action</b>	<b>UNDERSTAND</b> Examine the economic position of our current president or of a presidential candidate. <b>ASSESS</b> Evaluate the extent to which that position fosters economic opportunity. <b>ACT</b> Convince a family member or friend who can vote why he or she should or should not support that economic position.

## Overview

### Inquiry Description

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The goal of this inquiry is help students understand the central debate about the government’s role in fostering economic opportunity over the past half century. As this is a historical inquiry, it focuses on the motivations, actions, and impacts of two particular US presidents: Lyndon Johnson and Ronald Reagan. Their economic programs stand in for the larger argument that persists today between liberal and conservative approaches to federal economic policy. Thus, the compelling question “How should the president foster economic opportunity?” is intentionally timeless to emphasize its relevance today. Students look at Johnson’s and Reagan’s visions for the economy, the policies they advanced to achieve their visions, and modern interpretations of each president’s legacy.

In addition to the Key Idea listed earlier, this inquiry highlights the following Conceptual Understanding:

- (11.10c) Varying political philosophies prompted debates over the role of the federal government in regulating the economy and providing a social safety net.

NOTE: This inquiry is expected to take four to seven 40-minute class periods. The inquiry time frame could expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences (i.e., supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources). Inquiries are not scripts, so teachers are encouraged to modify and adapt them to meet the needs and interests of their particular students. Resources can also be modified as necessary to meet individualized education programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans for students with disabilities.

### Structure of the Inquiry

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In addressing the compelling question “How should the president foster economic opportunity?” students work through a series of supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and featured sources in order to construct an argument with evidence and counterevidence from a variety of sources.

## Staging the Compelling Question

The compelling question could be staged by having students view economic-themed commercials from the 1964 and 1980 presidential campaigns provided by the Museum of the Moving Image’s Living Room Candidate resources. Specifically, students should view Johnson’s “Poverty” commercial (<http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1964>) and Reagan’s “Podium” commercial (<http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1980>). Teachers could use these resources to facilitate a discussion about the state of the economy during these periods as well as what these commercials convey about the beliefs and plans of the candidates. Teachers might also choose to have students view economic-themed commercials from other presidential campaigns to obtain a broader sense of the economic issues and arguments that have persisted over the past half century.

## Supporting Question 1

The first supporting question—“What were Lyndon Johnson’s and Ronald Reagan’s visions for the American economy?”—initiates the inquiry by directing students’ attention to the big picture. The featured sources reveal the presidents’ common desire to foster economic opportunity while emphasizing the conflicting ways in which Johnson and Reagan believed economic opportunity could be achieved. Johnson’s “Great Society” speech captures the liberal view of government as a prime actor in creating a more equal society for all. Reagan’s first inaugural address focuses on individuals’ abilities to be actors in a capitalistic economy, free of government interference and with minimal taxation. The formative performance task asks students to create the first part of a graphic organizer identifying the similarities and differences between the two presidents’ visions for the economy. Teachers can scaffold students’ reading by directing their attention to particular points of comparison (e.g., economic challenges of the time).

## Supporting Question 2

The second supporting question—“What policies did Johnson and Reagan advance in order to create economic opportunity?”—turns students’ attention to the actions each president took to fulfill his vision for the economy. As there are many such actions, students read descriptions of selected economic policies adapted from the Miller Center’s presidential reference resources. The formative performance task asks students to expand their initial graphic organizer to include examples of the steps each president took to foster economic opportunity. Teachers can scaffold students’ reading by providing a list of specific policies for each president for students to note as they read.

## Supporting Question 3

The third supporting question—“Did Johnson’s policies foster economic opportunity?”—has students engage with the legacies of the Johnson administration and its impact on today’s economy and political discourse. The featured sources offer modern political interpretations of Johnson’s policies from liberal and conservative perspectives. Students then participate in a Structured Academic Controversy where they take an initial side on the issue, look at the evidence supporting that side, and then come to a group consensus after looking at all the evidence (for guidelines on how to conduct a Structured Academic Controversy, see Appendix A). In each group of four, two students should argue that Johnson’s policies had a positive impact, and two should argue that Johnson’s policies had a negative impact. More information on a Structured Academic Controversy can be found in the appendix of the Teaching History website: <http://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/teaching-guides/21731>. During or after the discussion, students may choose to expand on their graphic organizers to further elaborate the similarities and differences between the two presidents.

## Supporting Question 4

The final supporting question—“Did Reagan’s policies foster economic opportunity?”—takes students through the same process as the third formative performance task but with a focus on Reagan. The featured sources offer modern political interpretations of Reagan’s economic policies from liberal and conservative perspectives, which students should draw on in order to participate in a second Structured Academic Controversy. With their involvement in two discussions, students should be well versed in the implications of each president’s approach to

economic opportunity. In addition, through the consensus-building process, students have had two opportunities to develop claims related to economic opportunity, which prepares them for the Summative Performance Task.

## Summative Performance Task

At this point in the inquiry, students have examined the visions, actions, and impacts of Johnson’s and Reagan’s economic policies. Students should be able to demonstrate the breadth of their understandings and their abilities to use evidence from multiple sources to support their distinct claims. In this task, students construct an evidence-based argument responding to the compelling question “How should the president foster economic opportunity?” It is important to note that students’ arguments could take a variety of forms, including a detailed outline, poster, or essay.

Students’ arguments likely will vary, but could include any of the following:

- The president should foster economic opportunity the way President Johnson did, by creating economic programs that give direct assistance to people who need it.
- The president should foster economic opportunity like President Reagan did, by creating conditions where individuals have the maximum freedom to pursue their own economic interest.
- The president should foster economic opportunity by finding a middle ground between Presidents Johnson and Reagan, where the government provides a minimum safety net while encouraging individuals to seek their own solutions to their problems.

Students could extend these arguments by writing a letter to the current president. Using their arguments as a foundation, students could propose how the current president should best address current economic issues.

Students have the opportunity to Take Informed Action by drawing on their knowledge of government’s role in fostering economic opportunity. They demonstrate that they *understand* by researching the economic positions of the current president or a presidential candidate. They show their ability to *assess* by evaluating the extent to which that position fosters economic opportunity. And they *act* by convincing a family member or friend who can vote why he or she should or should not support that candidate’s economic position.



## Staging the Compelling Question

**Featured Source****Source A:** Video bank: Lyndon Johnson and Ronald Reagan political commercials, 1964 and 1980

*NOTE: Lyndon Johnson: Lyndon Johnson's 1964 television commercial, "Poverty," is available at the Museum of the Moving Image's Living Room Candidate section: <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1964>.*

*NOTE: Ronald Reagan: Ronald Reagan's 1980 television commercial, "Podium" is available at the Museum of the Moving Image's Living Room Candidate section: <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1980>.*



## Supporting Question 1

### Featured Source

**Source A:** Lyndon B. Johnson, transcript of presidential speech at the University of Michigan about US domestic programs, “The Great Society” (excerpts), May 22, 1964

The challenge of the next half century is whether we have the wisdom to use that wealth to enrich and elevate our national life, and to advance the quality of our American civilization.

Your imagination and your initiative, and your indignation will determine whether we build a society where progress is the servant of our needs, or a society where old values and new visions are buried under unbridled growth. For in your time we have the opportunity to move not only toward the rich society and the powerful society, but upward to the Great Society.

The Great Society rests on abundance and liberty for all. It demands an end to poverty and racial injustice, to which we are totally committed in our time. But that is just the beginning.

The Great Society is a place where every child can find knowledge to enrich his mind and to enlarge his talents. It is a place where leisure is a welcome chance to build and reflect, not a feared cause of boredom and restlessness. It is a place where the city of man serves not only the needs of the body and the demands of commerce but the desire for beauty and the hunger for community.

It is a place where man can renew contact with nature. It is a place which honors creation for its own sake and for what it adds to the understanding of the race. It is a place where men are more concerned with the quality of their goals than the quantity of their goods.

But most of all, the Great Society is not a safe harbor, a resting place, a final objective, a finished work. It is a challenge constantly renewed, beckoning us toward a destiny where the meaning of our lives matches the marvelous products of our labor.

So I want to talk to you today about three places where we begin to build the Great Society: in our cities, in our countryside, and in our classrooms.

Many of you will live to see the day, perhaps 50 years from now, when there will be 400 million Americans, four-fifths of them in urban areas. In the remainder of this century urban population will double, city land will double, and we will have to build homes, and highways, and facilities equal to all those built since this country was first settled. So in the next 40 years we must rebuild the entire urban United States....

A second place where we begin to build the Great Society is in our countryside. We have always prided ourselves on being not only America the strong and America the free, but America the beautiful. Today that beauty is in danger. The water we drink, the food we eat, the very air that we breathe, are threatened with pollution. Our parks are overcrowded, our seashores overburdened. Green fields and dense forests are disappearing....

For once the battle is lost, once our natural splendor is destroyed, it can never be recaptured. And once man can no longer walk with beauty or wonder at nature his spirit will wither and his sustenance be wasted.

A third place to build the Great Society is in the classrooms of America. There your children's lives will be shaped. Our society will not be great until every young mind is set free to scan the farthest reaches of thought and imagination. We are still far from that goal.

Today, eight million adult Americans, more than the entire population of Michigan, have not finished five years of school. Nearly 20 million have not finished eight years of school. Nearly 54 million—more than one-quarter of all America—have not even finished high school.

Each year more than 100,000 high school graduates with proved ability do not enter college because they cannot afford it. And if we cannot educate today's youth, what will we do in 1970 when elementary school enrollment will be five million greater than 1960? And high school enrollment will rise by five million. And college enrollment will increase by more than three million.

In many places, classrooms are overcrowded and curricula are outdated. Most of our qualified teachers are underpaid, and many of our paid teachers are unqualified. So we must give every child a place to sit and a teacher to learn from. Poverty must not be a bar to learning, and learning must offer an escape from poverty.

But more classrooms and more teachers are not enough. We must seek an educational system which grows in excellence as it grows in size. And this means better training for our teachers. It means preparing youth to enjoy their hours of leisure, as well as their hours of labor. It means exploring new techniques of teaching, to find new ways to stimulate the love of learning and the capacity for creation.

Public domain. Available at the PBS website: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/primary-resources/lbj-michigan/>.



## Supporting Question 1

### Featured Source

**Source B:** Ronald Reagan, transcript of inaugural speech outlining economic positions, “First Inaugural Address” (excerpts), January 20, 1981

The business of our nation goes forward. These United States are confronted with an economic affliction of great proportions. We suffer from the longest and one of the worst sustained inflations in our national history. It distorts our economic decisions, penalizes thrift, and crushes the struggling young and the fixed-income elderly alike. It threatens to shatter the lives of millions of our people.

Idle industries have cast workers into unemployment, human misery, and personal indignity. Those who do work are denied a fair return for their labor by a tax system which penalizes successful achievement and keeps us from maintaining full productivity.

But great as our tax burden is, it has not kept pace with public spending. For decades we have piled deficit upon deficit, mortgaging our future and our children's future for the temporary convenience of the present. To continue this long trend is to guarantee tremendous social, cultural, political, and economic upheavals.

You and I, as individuals, can, by borrowing, live beyond our means, but for only a limited period of time. Why, then, should we think that collectively, as a nation, we're not bound by that same limitation? We must act today in order to preserve tomorrow. And let there be no misunderstanding: We are going to begin to act, beginning today.

The economic ills we suffer have come upon us over several decades. They will not go away in days, weeks, or months, but they will go away. They will go away because we as Americans have the capacity now, as we've had in the past, to do whatever needs to be done to preserve this last and greatest bastion of freedom.

In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem. From time to time we've been tempted to believe that society has become too complex to be managed by self-rule, that government by an elite group is superior to government for, by, and of the people. Well, if no one among us is capable of governing himself, then who among us has the capacity to govern someone else? All of us together, in and out of government, must bear the burden. The solutions we seek must be equitable, with no one group singled out to pay a higher price....

Well, this administration's objective will be a healthy, vigorous, growing economy that provides equal opportunities for all Americans, with no barriers born of bigotry or discrimination. Putting America back to work means putting all Americans back to work. Ending inflation means freeing all Americans from the terror of runaway living costs. All must share in the productive work of this “new beginning,” and all must share in the bounty of a revived economy. With the idealism and fair play which are the core of our system and our strength, we can have a strong and prosperous America, at peace with itself and the world....

In the days ahead I will propose removing the roadblocks that have slowed our economy and reduced productivity. Steps will be taken aimed at restoring the balance between the various levels of government. Progress may be slow, measured in inches and feet, not miles, but we will progress. It is time to reawaken this industrial giant, to get government back within its means, and to lighten our punitive tax burden. And these will be our first priorities, and on these principles there will be no compromise.

Public domain. Available at the American Presidency Project website: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=43130>.

## Supporting Question 2

### Featured Source

**Source A:** The Miller Center at the University of Virginia, description of President Lyndon Johnson’s economic policies and actions, “Lyndon B. Johnson: Domestic Affairs” (excerpts) *American President: A Reference Resource*, no date

The Lyndon Johnson presidency marked a vast expansion in the role of the national government in domestic affairs. Johnson laid out his vision of that role in a commencement speech at the University of Michigan on May 22, 1964. He called on the nation to move not only toward “the rich society and the powerful society, but upward to the Great Society,” which he defined as one that would “end poverty and racial injustice.” To that end, the national government would have to set policies, establish “floors” of minimum commitments for state governments to meet, and provide additional funding to meet these goals...

### The Great Society

Johnson labeled his ambitious domestic agenda “The Great Society.” The most dramatic parts of his program concerned bringing aid to underprivileged Americans, regulating natural resources, and protecting American consumers. There were environmental protection laws, landmark land conservation measures, the profoundly influential Immigration Act, bills establishing a National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, a Highway Safety Act, the Public Broadcasting Act, and a bill to provide consumers with some protection against shoddy goods and dangerous products.

To address issues of inequality in education, vast amounts of money were poured into colleges to fund certain students and projects and into federal aid for elementary and secondary education, especially to provide remedial services for poorer districts, a program that no President had been able to pass because of the disputes over aid to parochial schools. Johnson, a Protestant, managed to forge a compromise that did provide some federal funds to Catholic parochial schools. He signed the bill at the one-room schoolhouse that he had attended as a child near Stonewall, Texas. With him was Mrs. Kate Deadrich Loney, the teacher of the school in whose lap Johnson sat as a four-year-old.

To deal with escalating problems in urban areas, Johnson won passage of a bill establishing a Department of Housing and Urban Development and appointed Robert Weaver, the first African American in the cabinet, to head it. The department would coordinate vastly expanded slum clearance, public housing programs, and economic redevelopment within inner cities. LBJ also pushed through a “highway beautification” act in which Lady Bird had taken an interest. For the elderly, Johnson won passage of Medicare, a program providing federal funding of many health care expenses for senior citizens. The “medically indigent” of any age who could not afford access to health care would be covered under a related “Medicaid” program funded in part by the national government and run by states under their welfare programs.

### The War on Poverty

LBJ’s call on the nation to wage a war on poverty arose from the ongoing concern that America had not done enough to provide socioeconomic opportunities for the underclass. Statistics revealed that although the proportion of the population below the “poverty line” had dropped from 33 to 23 percent between 1947 and 1956, this rate of decline had not continued; between 1956 and 1962, it had dropped only another 2 percent. Additionally, during the Kennedy years, the actual number of families in poverty had risen. Most ominous of all, the number of children on welfare, which had increased from 1.6 million in 1950 to 2.4 million in 1960, was still going up. Part of the problem involved racial disparities: the unemployment rate among black youth approached 25 percent—less at that time than the rate for white youths—though it had been only 8 percent twenty years before.

To remedy this situation, President Kennedy commissioned a domestic program to alleviate the struggles of the poor. Assuming the presidency when Kennedy was assassinated, Johnson decided to continue the effort after he returned from the tragedy in Dallas. One of the most controversial parts of Johnson's domestic program involved this War on Poverty.

Within six months, the Johnson task forces had come up with plans for a “community action program” that would establish an agency—known as a “community action agency” or CAA—in each city and county to coordinate all federal and state programs designed to help the poor. Each CAA was required to have “maximum feasible participation” from residents of the communities being served. The CAAs in turn would supervise agencies providing social services, mental health services, health services, employment services, and so on. In 1964, Congress passed the Economic Opportunity Act, establishing the Office of Economic Opportunity to run this program. Republicans voted in opposition, claiming that the measure would create an administrative nightmare, and that Democrats had not been willing to compromise with them. Thus the War on Poverty began on a sour, partisan note....

Nevertheless, other War on Poverty initiatives have fared better. These include the Head Start program of early education for poor children; the Legal Services Corporation, providing legal aid to poor families; and various health care programs run out of neighborhood clinics and hospitals.

Overall government funding devoted to the poor increased greatly. Between 1965 and 1968, expenditures targeted at the poor doubled, from \$6 billion to \$12 billion, and then doubled again to \$24.5 billion by 1974.

Germany, Kent. “Lyndon Johnson: Domestic Affairs.” on American President, Miller Center at the University of Virginia, <http://millercenter.org/president/lbjohnson/essays/biography/4>.

## Supporting Question 2

### Featured Source

**Source B:** The Miller Center at the University of Virginia, description of President Ronald Reagan’s economic policies and actions, “Ronald Reagan: Domestic Affairs” (excerpts), *American President: A Reference Resource*, no date

Reagan came to the presidency in 1981 with a straightforward and well-articulated domestic agenda. He promised to cut taxes, curb government spending, and balance the federal budget or at least reduce the deficit. His well-crafted Inaugural Address identified the major themes the new President hoped would define his administration.

After noting the severity of the nation’s economic crisis, Reagan declared that “government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem.” He took pains to reassure Americans that he did not want to “do away with government.” Rather, he sought “to make it work—work with us, not over us; to stand by our side, not ride on our back.”...

### Reagan’s First Months: Triumphs and Near Tragedy

...Reagan’s economic program had two major components: tax reductions and budget cuts, which took center stage, and monetary policy, which was as important but held a lower profile. Within weeks of becoming President, Reagan asked Congress to cut marginal tax rates over the next three years by 30 percent and to trim the budget for the coming year by \$41 billion. He and his team confidently predicted that these actions would stimulate economic productivity....

Reagan’s advisers, believers in supply-side economics, responded that the economic recovery engendered by Reagan’s tax and budget cuts would expand the tax base and eventually achieve a balanced budget....

After compromises that slightly lessened the tax cuts and restored some of the proposed budget cuts, Congress quickly passed both bills. The heart of Reagan’s economic program was now in place. He had obtained a 25 percent reduction in taxes over three years. Supposedly, Congress had also made \$38 billion in budget cuts but these were more than offset by other spending increases stemming from the administration’s military spending and congressional pork-barrel projects.

Along with passage of his economic program, Reagan won an important victory in his first year when he challenged the nearly 12,000-member Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO). The controllers had called an illegal strike, threatening to bring the nation’s air traffic to a standstill. Even though PATCO had been one of the few labor unions to support him for President in 1980, Reagan fired the strikers when they defied a back-to-work order. This left traffic control of the nation’s skies in the hands of managerial staff, a few loyal controllers, and new hires. Some critics predicted a rash of dire accidents, but this did not happen and Reagan emerged from the controversy with the reputation of a strong leader who was able to make tough decisions. Firing the PATCO strikers also sent a clear message to corporate America, which was encouraged to bargain more firmly with organized labor and hold down wages that had skyrocketed in the inflationary decade of the 1970s.

### The Reagan Recession

...The President stopped talking about balancing the budget and in 1982 supported the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act (TEFRA), a measure presented as a tax reform bill that was also a tax increase. Congress passed TEFRA, and Reagan signed it into law. In 1984, he supported another tax increase, again packaged as reform....

## **The 1986 Tax Law**

The Reagan administration's most celebrated domestic achievement during its second term was the Tax Reform Act of 1986. Faced with ever-larger budget deficits and a growing national debt, the administration had raised taxes in 1982 and 1984 and won legislation in 1983 that restored financial solvency to the Social Security program. The federal budget still was not balanced, however, and Reagan's advisers contemplated other measures to increase revenues. In 1984, the Treasury Department began pulling together a proposal that would lower corporate and individual tax rates but broaden the federal government's tax base—and enlarge its revenues despite rate reductions—by closing loopholes that allowed individuals and corporations to avoid taxes and eliminating deductions that the government considered tax shelters. This plan emerged as the essence of Reagan's tax reform proposal, which he made public in May 1985 by calling for “fairness, growth, and simplicity” in the tax code....Finally, the tax reform proposal won public support, largely because dissatisfaction with inequities in the tax code had grown considerably since Reagan had come into office.

Reagan toured the country throughout 1985 and 1986 to build support for tax reform, which he touted as tax justice....

## **Reagan's Mixed Record on Deregulation**

Ronald Reagan took office in 1981 promising to curb the growth of government regulations, especially those that affected private industry and businesses. He believed that a web of regulation was strangling private enterprise in the United States and harming the nation's economy....

Despite Reagan's anti-regulatory rhetoric, the administration's success in eliminating and simplifying regulations was mixed. His success varied from agency to agency; in some of them, Reagan appointees managed to slow the promulgation of new regulations, while in others the bureaucracy held sway. One issue on which Reagan's action matched his rhetoric was the end of price controls on oil, which he ordered upon entering office. Prices fell immediately. Reagan also ordered the relaxation of regulations guiding corporate mergers, setting off a flurry of both hostile and friendly takeovers.

These actions had public support. But Reagan's decision to reverse regulations designed to limit air pollution, to protect the public from carcinogens and hazardous waste, and to oversee nuclear power plants generated a political backlash. As a result, most of the Nixon, Ford, and Carter-era regulations designed to protect the environment and American workers remain in place.

Cannon, Lou. “Ronald Reagan: Domestic Affairs.” on American President, Miller Center at the University of Virginia, <http://millercenter.org/president/reagan/essays/biography/4>.



## Supporting Question 3

### Featured Source

**Source A:** Joseph A. Califano Jr., article about President Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society, “What Was Really Great About the Great Society?” (excerpt), *Washington Monthly*, October 1999

*NOTE:* Teachers and students can read this source that presents a positive view of President Johnson’s Great Society program by clicking on this link: <http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/1999/9910.califano.html>.



## Supporting Question 3

### Featured Source

**Source B:** George Will, article about President Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society, “The Slow Decline of America Since LBJ Launched the Great Society,” *Washington Post*, May 16, 2014

This source is available online at: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/george-f-will-the-slow-decline-of-america-since-lbj-launched-the-great-society/2014/05/16/21f70a8c-dc5c-11e3-b745-87d39690c5c0\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.0864c49f729e](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/george-f-will-the-slow-decline-of-america-since-lbj-launched-the-great-society/2014/05/16/21f70a8c-dc5c-11e3-b745-87d39690c5c0_story.html?utm_term=.0864c49f729e)

## Supporting Question 4

### Featured Source

**Source A:** Peter B. Sperry, Heritage Foundation report about the impact of President Reagan’s economic policies, *The Real Reagan Economic Record: Responsible and Successful Fiscal Policy* (excerpts), March, 1, 2001

President Ronald Reagan’s record includes sweeping economic reforms and deep across-the-board tax cuts, market deregulation, and sound monetary policies to contain inflation. His policies resulted in the largest peacetime economic boom in American history and nearly 35 million more jobs. As the Joint Economic Committee reported in April 2000:

In 1981, newly elected President Ronald Reagan refocused fiscal policy on the long run. He proposed, and Congress passed, sharp cuts in marginal tax rates. The cuts increased incentives to work and stimulated growth. These were fundamental policy changes that provided the foundation for the Great Expansion that began in December 1982....

No matter how advocates of big government try to rewrite history, Ronald Reagan's record of fiscal responsibility continues to stand as the most successful economic policy of the 20th century. His tax reforms triggered an economic expansion that continues to this day. His investments in national security ended the Cold War and made possible the subsequent defense spending reductions that are largely responsible for the current federal surpluses. His efforts to restrain the expansion of federal government helped to limit the growth of domestic spending.

If Reagan's critics had been willing to work with him to limit domestic spending even further and to control the growth of entitlements, the budget would have been balanced five to ten years sooner and without the massive tax increase imposed in 1993. Today, Members of Congress from across the political spectrum should stand on the evidence and defend the Reagan record.

To the extent that President [George W.] Bush's proposals mirror those of Ronald Reagan, his plan should be a welcome strategy to lower the tax burden on Americans and to make the system more responsible. If the advocates of big government in Congress cooperate with President Bush rather than merely continuing to fund obsolete, wasteful, and redundant programs, there is no limit to the prosperity that Americans can generate.

© The Heritage Foundation. Used with permission. Available at <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2001/03/the-real-reagan-economic-record>.





## Supporting Question 4

### Featured Source

**Source B:** Thom Hartman, article about the impact of President Reagan’s economic policies, “Reaganomics Killed America’s Middle Class: This Country’s Fate Was Sealed When Our Government Slashed Taxes on the Rich Back in 1980” (excerpt), *Salon*, April 19, 2014

*NOTE: Teachers and students can read this source that presents a critical view of President Reagan’s economic policies by clicking on this link:*

[http://www.salon.com/2014/04/19/reaganomics\\_killed\\_americas\\_middle\\_class\\_partner/](http://www.salon.com/2014/04/19/reaganomics_killed_americas_middle_class_partner/).

## Appendix A

### Structured Academic Controversy (SAC) Guidelines

#### What is a Structured Academic Controversy?

A Structured Academic Controversy (SAC) is a discussion that moves students beyond either/or debates to a more nuanced historical synthesis.

#### Rationale

By the time students reach adolescence, many believe that every issue comes neatly packaged in a pro/con format, and that the goal of classroom discussion, rather than to understand your opponent, is to defeat him. The SAC method provides an alternative to the “debate mindset” by shifting the goal from winning classroom discussions to understanding alternative positions and formulating historical syntheses. The SAC’s structure demands students listen to each other in new ways and guides them into a world of complex and controversial ideas.

#### Description

The SAC was developed by cooperative learning researchers David and Roger Johnson of the University of Minnesota as a way to provide structure and focus to classroom discussions. Working in pairs and then coming together in four-person teams, students explore a question by reading about and then presenting contrasting positions. Afterwards, they engage in discussion to reach consensus.

#### Teacher Preparation

1. Choose a historical question that lends itself to contrasting viewpoints.
2. Find and select two or three documents (primary or secondary sources) that embody each side.
3. Consider timing, make copies of handouts, and plan grouping strategies. The time you will need for a SAC that uses about four documents will depend on the amount of experience your students have with the activity structure and the difficulty and familiarity of the documents. Plan on using about two class periods for your initial SAC.

#### In the Classroom

Modified and adapted countless times by researchers and teachers, the technique has five basic steps with procedures to display for students.

1. Organize students into four-person teams comprised of two dyads.
2. Each dyad reviews materials that represent different positions on a charged issue.
3. Dyads then come together as a four-person team and present their views to one another, one dyad acting as the presenters, the others as the listeners.
4. Rather than refuting the other position, the listening dyad repeats back to the presenters what they understood. Listeners do not become presenters until the original presenters are fully satisfied that they have been heard and understood.
5. After the sides switch, the dyads abandon their original assignments and work toward reaching consensus. If consensus proves unattainable, the team clarifies where their differences lie.

#### Common Pitfalls

Students’ debate framework starts early and runs deep. Even when told that they need to understand – not undermine – an opposing position, students will try to find holes in their opponent’s positions and aim to refute them. We recommend

- Introducing the idea of “active listening” to your students and having them practice it in dyads for a few minutes.
- Establishing the rule: Jot down notes when confused, do not interrupt the presenters.
- Making sure students can refer to the procedures throughout the activity by posting them or making handouts.

As students start to see other perspectives and nuance in the material, the absence of a certain answer may confuse them. We recommend reassuring students that uncertainty and complexity are expected during this activity. Encourage them to make notes that specify their confusion, new ideas, or questions.

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