

**OUSD History/Social Studies –  
Preparing for the 11<sup>th</sup> grade U.S. History Assessment  
A Focus on Understanding and Evaluating President Lyndon Johnson’s “Great Society”**

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**Part I – Reading History: Working With a Source Document and Informational Chart**

**Background**

In May, 1964 President Johnson (LBJ) summed up his vision for America in a phrase: the “Great Society.” The President declared that “the Great Society demands an end to poverty and racial injustice.” But, he said that was just the beginning. Johnson envisioned a legislative program that would create not only a higher standard of living and equal opportunity but also promote a richer quality of life.

LBJ set lofty goals for his nation and himself. Like his idol Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR), he wanted to change America. During the years 1965 and 1966, the Johnson administration introduced a series of bills to Congress. By the time Johnson left the White House in 1969, Congress had passed 206 of his bills. For most of them, the President personally led the battle to get them passed.

The following sources provide information about the problems President Johnson wanted to solve and laws he supported to try and solve those problems. Complete each of the activities connected to each source.

**Activities 1 - Read the following primary source document, an excerpt from a speech by President Lyndon Johnson, and answer the questions that follow.**

The information below provides information about the document. Noticing and considering this information when reading and trying to understand a document is called **“sourcing of the document.”**

- Who wrote it? - *President Lyndon B. Johnson, a President who idolized FDR and wanted to use government programs to help Americans*
- Who was the audience? - *The American people*
- When was it written? - *1964*
- What was going at the time? - *The Civil Rights movement and the early years of the War in Vietnam*

**Primary Source - Excerpts from President Lyndon B. Johnson's “Great Society” Speech - May, 1964**

***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.***

*... 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.*

*... In the remainder of this century urban population will double, city land will double, and we will have to build homes, 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.*

*...Our society will never be great until our cities are great.*

*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... Green fields and dense forests are disappearing...*

*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, 8 million adult Americans, more than the entire population of Michigan, have not finished five 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...*

*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.*

**Understanding the readings – Gathering Information from the background and a primary source document: answer the following questions**

1. According to President Johnson, why, in 1964, were we not yet a “Great Society?”
  - (1) Not enough people graduated from college
  - (2) Most Americans were poor.
  - (3) Three places in our society, the cities, the countryside, and the classrooms, faced problems that need to be solved.
  - (4) He believed that achieving a “Great Society” was not possible.
  
2. With which of the following position’s on today’s society would President likely agree?
  - (1) We have achieved a “Great Society.”
  - (2) If we are to achieve a “Great Society,” we have to make progress in making sure that all Americans share in the wealth our society produces.
  - (3) People living in poverty should next not expect any help in trying to improve their economic situation.
  - (4) A person’s educational level is not connected to their economic success.
  
3. Which of the following statements best connects Johnson’s “Great Society” to President Franklin Roosevelt’s “New Deal?”
  - (1) The Great Society was created to solve problems created by the New Deal.
  - (2) The Great Society sought, like to the New Deal, to improve the lives of Americans facing economic hardships.
  - (3) The Great Society had no connection to the New Deal.
  - (4) The Great Society and New Deal were both ideas of the Republican Party.

**Understanding the readings – Speculating on what policies and laws President Johnson might propose to achieve his “Great Society.”**

1. President Johnson argued that a focus on cities, the countryside, and classrooms was necessary for building a “Great Society” in the United States. For each of these areas what were the main problems Johnson discussed?

Please respond to this question by filling out the following chart.

<b>Area of Concern</b>	<b>Main Problems</b>
<b>Cities (urban areas)</b>	
<b>Countryside</b>	
<b>Classrooms</b>	

2. President Johnson also argued that a Great Society “rests on abundance and liberty for all. It demands an end to poverty and racial injustice.”

Suggest two laws or policies the President might propose to “end poverty and racial injustice.” For each suggestion explain how it would help achieve this goal.

A. Suggested law or policy and explanation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B. Suggested law or policy and explanation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Speculate on what challenges President Johnson might have faced in the 1960s in achieving his goal of ending poverty and racial injustice?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Activity 2 - Reading an informational chart: Connecting ideas and actions** - Below is a chart that summarizes a number of the laws President Johnson proposed and got passed by Congress between 1964 -1967. Examine the laws and their purpose, and complete the chart that follows. The chart asks you to connect a specific piece of legislation to a specific goal mentioned by President Johnson in the previous activity.

<b>Great Society Legislation, 1964-1967</b>	
<b>Legislation</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Economic Opportunity Act, 1964	Created to combat causes of poverty such as illiteracy. Set up community action programs to give the poor a voice in implementing housing, health, and education policies.
Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), 1964	Sent volunteers to help people in poor communities.
Medicare, 1965	Provided hospital and low-cost medical insurance for most Americans age 65 and older.
Medicaid, 1965	Provided low-cost health insurance for poor Americans of any age who could not afford private health insurance.
Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965	Provided education aid to states based on the number of students from low-income homes.
Voting Rights Act of 1965	Outlawed literacy tests and provided for federal supervision of elections in states where less than 50% of eligible voters could vote.
The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), 1965	Established to oversee the nation's housing needs and to develop and rehabilitate urban communities. HUD also provided money for rent supplements and low-income housing.
The Higher Education Act, 1965	Provided scholarships and low-interest loans for college students.
The National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities, 1965	Offered grants to artists and scholars.
Water Quality Act, 1965; Clean Water Restoration Act, 1966	Brought about water and air quality standards and provided money for environmental research.
Air Quality Act, 1967	Set guidelines for pollution levels and increased the federal government's power to enforce clean-air standards.

Source: America: Pathways to the Present, Prentice Hall, 2005. p. 745

1. From the above chart, select three pieces of legislation and explain how each might help solve a problem or support a Great Society goal President Johnson articulated in the excerpt from his speech that you read previously.

<b>Legislation and year passed</b>	<b>Which Great Society goal of President Johnson does this law support? Explain.</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	

## Part II - Reading and Writing History: Working With Charts, Tables, and Graphs

Graphs, tables, and charts are used every day in newspapers, magazines, classrooms, and job training programs. They are useful tools for writers because they are able to communicate a large amount of information within a brief document. Unlike a written piece of text, graphs and charts provide information without an explanation about what the information means. It is up to the reader of the charts or graphs to explain what is there and what it means. When you encounter a table, graph or chart you must be able to first state what information is there, and second, to draw some conclusions about the information.

Below are four steps for working with tables, charts and graphs.<sup>1</sup> The diagram on the next page illustrates how to use these steps when reading a table. Examine the diagram to make sure you understand how to do steps 1 and 2. Completing steps 1 and 2 correctly is essential for being able to use the information in a graph or chart to support of a specific argument or idea. Below the chart are examples of numbers 3 and 4, showing how you might write, developing statements and questions, about the information'

### Steps for Working With Charts, Tables, and Graphs

1. Read the outside of the graphic – source of information, title, and labels for rows and columns - this will ensure you know the purpose of the graphic and the quantities being illustrated. For example, be sure to note what quantities the data in a table represent. If the information on the outside of the table says "in thousands," then a number of 100 in one of the columns and rows inside the table would represent a value of 100 thousand (100,000). Additionally, it is crucial to know whether the numbers represent an amount or a percentage.
2. Read the inside of the graphic to gather data from a specific row or column. Be sure to note, using information from outside the graphic, whether the number included must be multiplied by some number found outside the graphic to get its real value.
3. Develop particular statements about the connections between the data contained in the rows and columns.
4. Develop questions about the connections between the data contained in the rows and columns.

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<sup>1</sup> from James A. DuPlass, "Charts, Tables, Graphs, and Diagrams: An Approach for Social Studies Teachers," *The Social Studies*, January/February, 1996.

and Center to Support Teaching and Learning, Syracuse University, <http://cstl.syr.edu/>

## How to Read a Graph or Chart – Outside and Inside the Line

### Example - Percent of Total Population Below Poverty Level (1960 – 1972)

1. This is what is meant by the "outside" of the chart. We can see that this table has information on the number of people living in poverty between the years of 1960 and 1972 (rows), and what percent of the total population this number represents.

1. Reading again on the "outside" of the chart, we can also see that to get an accurate total from the numbers in the chart we will have to multiply each number by one million.

Year	Persons Below the Poverty Level (by # and percent of population)	
	Number (in millions)	Percent of Total Population
1960	39.9	22.2
1966	28.5	14.7
1968	25.4	12.8
1969	24.1	12.1
1970	25.4	12.6
1971	25.6	12.5
1972	24.5	11.9

Source - U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1979, p. 462

2. "Inside" the chart we get the actual data (columns) on numbers of persons below the poverty level for each year and the percent of the total population these yearly numbers represent.

1. Source of data

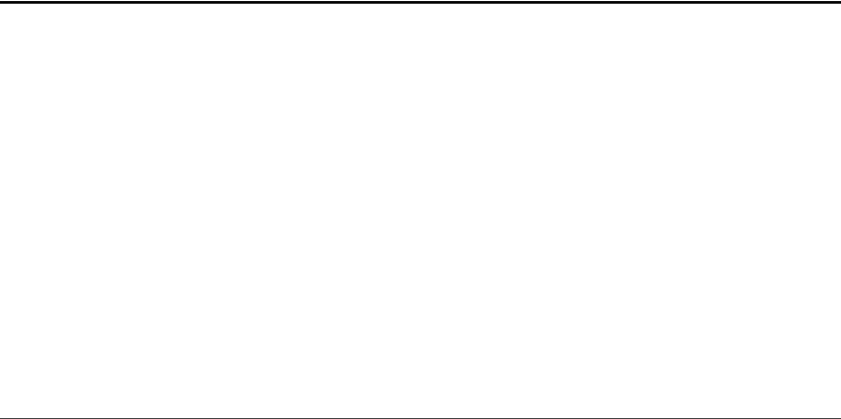
3. Two possible statements about poverty levels that connect rows and columns.
  - *In 1968, according to the 1979 U.S. Census Statistical Abstract, twenty-five million people in the United States lived below the poverty level, this represented 12.8% of the total population.*
  - *Between 1968 and 1972, according to the 1979 U.S. Census Statistical Abstract, the percent of people in the United States living below the poverty level decreased from 22.2% to 11.9%.*
  
4. A possible question about the data –
  - *Did all racial, gender, ethnic, and age groups benefit equally from this reduction in poverty?*

**Activity 1 – Using charts and graphs to better understand the impact of Great Society programs. Answer parts 1, 2, and 3.**

Part I - Answer the questions and complete the statements that follow each of the graphs or charts.

**Graph A - United States Government Dollars to Public Education, 1959-1972**

**- respond to #s 1-3**



Source - "America: Pathways to the Present, " Prentice Hall, 2005

- 1) How much money did the United States government spend on public education in school year 1967-1968? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Write a complete sentence that describes changes in the amount of money spent by the United States government on public education between 1959 and 1972.

***Sample response – Between 1959 and 1972 United States government spending on public education grew from one-half billion dollars per year to almost four and one-half billion dollars per year.***

- 3) A question raised by this data is... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Chart B -Characteristics and percent of persons 65 years and older below poverty level (1959 – 1975)**

- respond to #s 4 - 8

Characteristic	Percent Below Poverty Level		
	1959	1970	1975
<b>All persons, 65 and over</b>	35.2	24.6	15.3
- White	33.1	22.6	13.4
- Black	62.5	47.7	36.3
- Spanish Origin	Not Recorded	Not Recorded	32.6
- Male	59.0	38.9	27.8
- Female	63.3	49.8	31.9

Source - U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1979, p. 46

- 4) What percent of males, over the age of 65, lived below the poverty level in 1959? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 5) What percent of females, over the age of 65, lived below the poverty level in 1959? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 6) Write a complete sentence describes changes in the population of whites, 65 and over, living in poverty between 1959 and 1975. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 7) Write a complete sentence describes changes in the population of blacks, 65 and over, living in poverty between 1959 and 1975. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 8) A question raised by this data is... \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Chart C - U.S. Government Spending (in millions of dollars) on Food and Nutrition Assistance to Individuals (1962-1972) - respond to #s 9 - 11**

	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972
<b>Total Food and Nutrition Assistance – Includes Food Stamp Program, Child nutrition and special milk programs</b>	275	284	308	299	363	418	505	587	960	2,179	3,128

Source – U.S. Government Budget for Fiscal Year, 2007, historical table, pages 212 - 215

- 9) How much money did the U.S. government spend on food and nutrition assistance to individuals in 1967? \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) Write a complete sentence describes changes in the amount of money spent on food and nutrition assistance by the United States government between 1962 and 1972. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 11) A question raised by this data is... \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Chart D - U.S. Government Spending (in millions of dollars) on Defense (1962 – 1972) - respond to #s 12 - 14**

	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972
<b>National Defense</b>	52,345	53,400	54,757	50,620	58,111	71,417	81,926	82,497	81,692	78,872	79,147

Source – U.S. Government Budget for Fiscal Year, 1997, historical table, pages 45-46

- 12) How much money did the United States government spend on national defense in 1967? \_\_\_\_\_
- 13) Write a complete sentence describes changes in the amount of money spent on national defense by the United States government between 1962 and 1972. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

14) A question raised by this data is... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Activity 2 – Complete the lesson by putting together what you in Parts I & II. The question below asks you to connect President Johnson’s “Great Society” goals (covered on day 1) and data you just examined and analyzed. Read over the question, decide on your tentative evaluation, and write an explanation of how you came to this conclusion.**

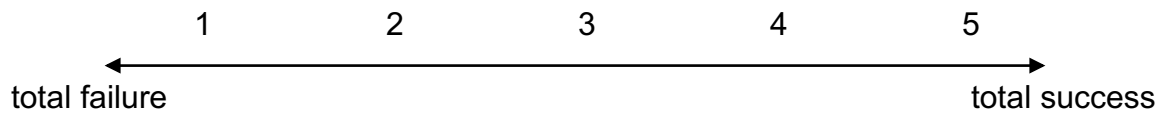
Evaluation Question

The charts above provide only a series of “snapshots” about the impact of Great Society programs, there is much more data that could be analyzed.

**Question:**

**Based on this limited amount of data how successful were these Great Society programs and policies in achieving President Johnson’s goals?**

Use the scale below to record your evaluation. A “5” means that programs were totally successful, and a “1” means that the programs were a total failure. In making your evaluation, be sure to consider both President Johnson's and your ideas of what makes a society great.



Use the space below to explain your evaluation. Use statistics from the charts and graphs to support your explanation.

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**Activity 3 - One final question** – Now that you have made your tentative evaluation it is important to consider the amount and quality of data you were provided. Understanding what information is useful and what else you might need to know before feeling confident about an evaluation or conclusion is an important skill to develop in order to better understand specific test questions and possible answers. Consider these ideas as you respond to the following question.

You have examined and analyzed a limited amount of information and data on President Johnson’s “Great Society.” If you were to make a more informed evaluation of its success, or lack of success, what other documents of information would you like to have? What questions still need to be answered and why would those answers be important to have?

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### Part III. Analyzing a Political Cartoon

#### Opening - The Historical Context and the Skill of Reading Political Cartoons

In parts I & II of this lesson you read a source and worked with charts and graphs connected to the policies of President Johnson's Great Society programs of the 1960s. The political cartoon below was drawn in 1963, just before many of the Great Society policies were made into law. Your task in this activity is to read a political cartoon in order to 1) understand what the cartoonist is saying about a specific historical figure and issue, and 2) what the cartoon tells us about the time during which it was drawn. But before beginning work on the cartoon it will be helpful to review how to best read and understand these documents.

#### Working with Political Cartoons<sup>2</sup>

Political cartoons are a way of making political a commentary in a short amount of time and space. They usually include both words and pictures and often use humor to poke fun at politicians, policies, or situations. The cartoonists use caricatures [representations of individuals in which their features are often exaggerated], symbols, and exaggeration to point out problems or issues they want to address.

The cartoons can usually be found on the editorial page of your daily newspaper, and like the writer of an editorial, the cartoonist is trying to make a point. Because the cartoonist is trying to make a point about a particular individual or event it is important, when looking at the cartoon, to consider the cartoonist's perspectives. When and where was the cartoon published? Who is portrayed favorable, and who is not?

Examining cartoons produced during an historic period makes it even more difficult to successfully interpret the cartoonist's point because we may not be so familiar the some of the people or symbols used in the drawing. This is why it is so important to have some background knowledge about its focus and time period.

This means that correctly understanding the point of a political cartoon often requires knowledge of the time period in which it was created. For example, understanding the cartoon below requires some knowledge of who "L.B.J." is and why the "military" and "arms" caricatures are so big.

In summary, when you look at political cartoon you will want to ask yourself the following questions

1. What to already know about this time period, person, issue? What more might I need to know?
2. What is happening? Who is the main character? What issues are being portrayed?
3. How is the main character related to the issues being portrayed?
4. What is the cartoon's caption? What is the cartoonist trying to say? What does the cartoon mean?

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<sup>2</sup> Charles Hou, "Decoding Political Cartoons," Library and Archives of Canada, Learning Centre, <http://collectionscanada.ca/education/008-3050-e.html>

Ingrid Porter and Julie Weiss, "Analyzing Political Cartoons," Newsweek Education Program, <http://www.newsweekeducation.com/extras/policartoons.php>

Utah Education Network, "Political Cartoons," [www.uen.org/Lessonplan/preview.cgi?LPid=560](http://www.uen.org/Lessonplan/preview.cgi?LPid=560)

Reads "Health, Education, and Welfare"



"Kindly move over a little, gentlemen."  
Washington Post, 1963

1. When was the cartoon published?
2. Describe what is happening in the cartoon.
3. Who in the cartoon is portrayed favorably and who is not? How do you know?
2. According to the cartoonist, where does President Johnson propose to get the money to fund Great Society programs and support "health, education, and welfare?"
3. Based on your reading of this cartoon, do you think the cartoonist was supportive of President Johnson's goals? Or was the cartoonist opposed? Explain your analysis.