

WORKSHEET 12B

Lincoln, Nebraska
May 19, 1934

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
Washington D. C.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

In the President's inaugural address he made mention of The Forgotten Man, and I am wondering if the folks born in America some 60 or 70 years ago are this Forgotten Man. If we are this Forgotten Man then we are still Forgotten.

We have supported this nation in all ways. We in our younger days tried to do our duty without complaining. We have helped to pay pensions to veterans of some three wars. We have raised the present generation to honor and support our country.

And now this great calamity has come upon us due to no cause of our own, sweeping away our savings. We are left in a condition which is impossible to correct for at least two reasons:

First we have grown to what is termed Old Age. Second, when we try to improve our condition we are confronted on every hand with the younger generation taking our places.

Seemingly everybody has been assisted but we the Forgotten Man. Would it now be asking too much of our Government and the young generation to do by us as we have tried to do by them without complaint. Please do not send us to the poor farm but instead allow us the small pension of \$40. a month.

Don't think of us as old broken down citizens. For example, I am an architect 69 years old. I cannot get a job, even though I am qualified to superintend any class of construction but the young man has taken this position.

Mrs. Roosevelt, some evening very soon, as you are having dinner with the president, will you ask him to read this, and we American citizens will ever remember your kindness.

Yours truly,
R.A.

Adapted from Eleanor Roosevelt Papers, Box 600, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, NY.

EXERCISE

In the space below list the problems described in the letter, which were brought on by the Great Depression. For each problem listed on the left, place a "G" if you believe it was the government's responsibility or an "I" if it should have been the responsibility of the individual who wrote the letter.

Problems	Responsibility
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

WORKSHEET 12C

New York City
December 1935

Most honorable President:

I have never had a job. I am so discouraged. Employment agencies and would-be employers are all equally indifferent to me—a young woman college graduate without any job experience. They think that the few jobs that do exist should be saved for men who must support wives and children.

When I first graduated, I lived on a small inheritance. But by the summer of 1934, it was gone and I seemed as far as ever from any hope of getting a job. I wasn't able to pay the rent on my furnished room. I depended for food on occasional dinner invitations from friends. I didn't get many invitations because I was ashamed to tell friends just how desperate I was. Finally, my landlady threw me and my belongings out on the street.

For the last year I have alternated between sleeping in the waiting room of Grand Central Station (homeless women often sleep in the big stations, pretending to be waiting for a morning train) and at all the YWCAs in town.

Although I am now in my third year of unemployment, I still have hope. I am not completely discouraged. Mr. President, I want to start looking for a job again. Only I'll have to have something to wear first. No one will hire me looking the way I do. My one dress has been cleaned and mended until there is nothing left of it. I have no hat and there large holes in my shoes. Can you help me please?

Very sincerely,
Vera

Adapted from Ruth L. Porterfield, "Women Available," in *The American Mercury*, April 1935, pp. 473-475. Reprinted by permission of *Mercury*, P.O. Box 1306, Torrance, CA 90505.

EXERCISE

In the space below list the problems described in the letter, which were brought on by the Great Depression. For each problem listed on the left, place a "G" if you believe it was the government's responsibility or an "I" if it should have been the responsibility of the individual who wrote the letter.

Problems	Responsibility
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

WORKSHEET 12D

Marion, Ark.
Feb. 3, 1935

Pres. Roosevelt
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir,

We are suffering very badly. The drought cut off the corn. They took all the cotton and won't give us black folks a day's work. At the Marion Court, Mrs. Miller and Mrs. Nomen aren't doing anything for us and are just robbing the government's money.

Mr. Avery Kooser won't furnish black people anything until the end of the month and then but a little something to eat. It doesn't matter how large a family you have. Each family gets two sacks of flour, one sack of meal and 8 lbs. of lard. He doesn't even give us a rag of clothes. That's what's happening to the money the government is giving Mr. Kooser.

You ought to send a man around to one of his farms to see how Mr. Kooser give us black folks but five dollars each. He then makes us sign a paper that we received our fair share. Those that won't sign, he says, must move. Some of us have worked on the Kooser place for 10 to 17 years, and all over 300 dollars in debt. Please don't send this letter back here, if they see it they'll kill us.

Anonymous

Adapted from Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), Central Files, Box 4, United States National Archives.

EXERCISE

In the space below list the problems described in the letter, which were brought on by the Great Depression. For each problem listed on the left, place a "G" if you believe it was the government's responsibility or an "I" if it should have been the responsibility of the individual who wrote the letter.

Problems	Responsibility
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

WORKSHEET 12E

Salinas, California
May, 1939

Dear Mr. President,

The Depression has struck those of us who are Mexican-Americans very hard. When this country needed us to work the farms in California, no one was interested in seeing our immigration papers. Now, with so many people out of work and the Government worried about spending too much on relief, they are taking an active role to send our people back to Mexico. After many of us already have American born children who attend the public schools, speak English as well as Spanish, listen to radio programs, play baseball and indeed are as American as any of our neighbor's children. These children are United States citizens by birth; in deporting their parents the government is violating the children's rights.

We hear very few Americans speaking out in defense of the constitutional rights of their fellow citizens. It seems that a majority supports the movement to send us back to Mexico.

Over the last ten years, about half of the three million Mexican-Americans in the United States have gone to Mexico. Many have left out of fear. Others were forced to leave.

Adapted from *The Hispanics in the United States: A History*, L. H. Gann and Peter J. Duignan (Stanford, CA.: Westview Press: London and Hoover Institution On War, Revolution and Peace, 1986) pp. 48-55.

EXERCISE

In the space below list the problems described in the letter, which were brought on by the Great Depression. For each problem listed on the left, place a "G" if you believe it was the government's responsibility or an "I" if it should have been the responsibility of the individual who wrote the letter.

Problems	Responsibility
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

WORKSHEET 12F

The Tuscarora, a Native American group, had been living in Niagara County, New York, for more than 200 years when the Great Depression struck in the 1930s. Many had made their living as farmers and found it very difficult to survive during the hard times. In the following reading, Chief Clinton Rickard recalls how the Depression affected the Tuscarora way of life.

Dear President and Mrs. Roosevelt,

During this time of depression, we have had great difficulty in finding the money to buy seeds, horses, mules, or other necessities required for our farming. Because we are unable to farm, we cannot support ourselves. Our hunting no longer provides enough food to support all of us during the year. We look for wage work off the reservation but are discriminated against because of our race. The white people are taken care of first, and those of our men who were fortunate enough to find work were usually soon fired to give the job to a white man. Even a recent European immigrant is usually kept over us who are original [native] Americans. When we apply for government relief we are turned away with the comment that our reservation is not in the relief district. White men better off than our people can more easily get work.

Adapted from *Fighting Tuscarora*, Graymont Rickard, ed. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1973). Reprinted by permission.

EXERCISE

In the space below list the problems described in the letter, which were brought on by the Great Depression. For each problem listed on the left, place a "G" if you believe it was the government's responsibility or an "I" if it should have been the responsibility of the individual who wrote the letter.

Problems	Responsibility
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	