

# Successes and Failures of the Tennessee Valley Authority

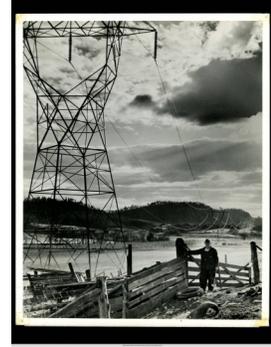
Lesson plans for primary sources at the Tennessee State Library & Archives

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**Grade Level:** 5th Grade

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Visit <http://sos.tn.gov/tsla/education> for additional lesson plans.



**Introduction:** The following lesson plan and resources are designed to cover part of the 5th grade content standards for the New Deal. It addresses the successes and failures of the Tennessee Valley Authority. This lesson plan does not address the causes and impact of the Great Depression, which will need to be covered prior to this lesson. It also does not cover all the New Deal policies, which will also need to be covered either before or after this lesson.

## Guiding Question(s):

- What was the purpose and goals of the Tennessee Valley Authority?
- How was the Tennessee Valley Authority successful?
- How did the Tennessee Valley Authority fail?

## Curriculum Standards:

**5.48** Describe the effects of the Great Depression on Tennessee and the impact of New Deal policies in the state (i.e., Tennessee Valley Authority and Civilian Conservation Corps). (C, E, G, H, P, T)

## Materials Needed:

- Primary sources from Tennessee State Library and Archives, National Archives, Teach Tennessee History, and Library of Congress. They are all linked within the activity.
- Secondary sources from Tennessee 4 Me.
- Collection analysis sheet (attached) and clipboards for each student.

## Background:

[The Great Depression](#) Source: [Tennessee4Me](#)

[Tennessee Valley Authority](#) Source: [Tennessee4Me](#)

## Lesson Activities:

### Activity 1: Establish the Purposes and Goals of the Tennessee Valley Authority

- The teacher will provide each group with a copy of the [primary source showing the general planning of the TVA](#) from the Library of Congress.
- Groups will use the primary source to create a chart of the purposes of the Tennessee Valley Authority and the TVA's goals in helping citizens recover from the Great Depression. Charts will be created in the students' interactive notebooks.
- Next, the teacher will provide each student with a copy of a secondary source from the Tennessee 4 Me entry about the [Tennessee Valley Authority](#).
- Groups will read the entry and add purposes and goals to their lists.
- The class will discuss the purposes and goals determined by using the primary and secondary sources.

### Activity 2: Gallery Walk to Determine the Successes and Failures of TVA

- The teacher will create gallery exhibits around the classroom. Each exhibit will consist of a collection of primary sources. The teacher will provide each student with an analysis sheet and clipboard. The analysis sheet will provide space for students to describe each collection, record their observations, and explain if each collection shows a success or failure or both.
- Each group will be given 10 minutes at each collection to discuss the primary sources and record their responses.
- **Collection 1:** [Barnyard at Night](#), [Inside Home at Night](#), [Woman Using Electric Vacuum](#), [Cows Milked Using Electricity](#), [Shearing Sheep with Electric Clippers](#), and [Farm Wife Uses Electric Kitchen](#).
- **Collection 2:** [Cherokee Dam Construction Workers](#), [Douglas Dam Construction Workers](#), [Pay Day at Douglas Dam](#), and [Workers Report for Duty at Douglas Dam](#).
- **Collection 3:** [Family Grave Removal Chart](#) and [Grave Removal Operations](#). The collection will include the quote by Nancy Longmire found at the top of the Grave Removal Operations source as a separate source in the collection.
- **Collection 4:** [Fishing at Norris Dam](#), [Motorboating on Norris Lake](#), and [Swimming at Norris Dam](#).
- **Collection 5:** [The Difficulties of Displacement](#), [Stooksbury Family Relocation](#), and [TVA is Taking Our Homes by Force](#). Due to time, the teacher may wish to use parts of the Difficulties of Displacement and Stooksbury Family Relocation.
- **Collection 6:** [Farmer Standing Next to TVA Lines](#), [TVA Land Purchasing Office](#), [Transmission Lines in a Cornfield](#), and [Political Cartoon](#).

## Lesson Activities Continued:

### Activity 3: Write a Business Letter

- The teacher will provide each student with the primary source photograph, [Isolated Mountain Farm in East Tennessee](#), and a writing prompt.
- **Writing Prompt:** Pretend you live in this isolated mountain home in East Tennessee in the 1930s. Write a business letter to Tennessee Governor Hill McAlister explaining the reasons why you want TVA to build the Cherokee Dam or reasons why you do not want TVA to build the Cherokee Dam. Use evidence from the gallery walk to support your reasons. Use correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar when writing your business letter.



**Above:** Tennessee Valley Authority Land Purchasing Office. *Department of Conservation Photograph Collection, Tennessee State Library and Archives*



**Left:** Farmer standing next to TVA power lines. *Library Photograph Collection, Tennessee State Library and Archives.*

	<b>Describe the Collection</b>	<b>Observations</b>	<b>Success, Failure, or Both? How do you know?</b>
<b>Collection 1</b>			
<b>Collection 2</b>			
<b>Collection 3</b>			
<b>Collection 4</b>			

<b>Collection 5</b>			
<b>Collection 6</b>			