



TCAP Lesson Plans for Grade 7

History

SPI #7.5.4 Analyze the causes and effects of change in a place over time from a written passage.

(From Wilma Dykeman's *Tennessee: A History*, pp 185-190):

Introduction:

When we speak of change over time, we often think of hundreds of years. But "over time" can mean a few decades of time, too. And the passage below describes in vivid language the dramatic change from pioneer Appalachian culture to modern Appalachian culture in the Tennessee River Valley over 50 years or so.

Passage:

"One of the most innovative catalysts for change in Tennessee was, of course, the Tennessee Valley Authority. The valley of the mighty Tennessee River was, in 1930, the most poverty-stricken major river basin in the United States. Annual personal income average \$317, 45 percent of the national average. Much of the valuable land was eroded or in a poor state of cultivation; floods ravaged many of the farms, towns, and cities along the Tennessee's course and farther downstream, . . . navigation on the river and its tributaries was erratic and diminishing; use of electric power was limited, nonexistent in many rural areas. . . ."

President Franklin Roosevelt authorized the Tennessee Valley Authority—"charged with the broadest duty of planning for the proper use, conservation, and development of the natural resources of the Tennessee River drainage basin and its adjoining territory for the general social and economic welfare of the Nation."

"Thus, in the 1930s, Tennessee frontiersmen exchanged the coonskin caps of the long hunters for the hard hats of the TVA. . . . A giant stairway of dams and reservoirs took

shape in the 40,000 square miles of the Tennessee River watershed. . . . Power began to flow up the hills and hollows, into the small towns and the huge industries that come because of the supply. . . . Navigation increased and brought renewed activity along a number of waterfronts, reaching a total of 29 million tons of freight in 1974. Land and forest use improved dramatically and included a vast fertilizer development, woods-products expansion, and recreational research and management. . . .

"As farms changed, machinery replaced men and animals. The mule—once balky symbol of all that was essential to cultivation of the land—virtually disappeared. And with the mule went swapping-days and blacksmith shops . . . , and a slower pace within the turning of the seasons. As people clustered closer in cities or suburbs, they often grew more distant in personal relationships. The family storyteller, local history buff, neighbor musician was replaced by the canned, everyday entertainment of radio and television. . . . Progress brought by mechanization was imposing its penalties of congestion and pollution as well as its benefits of relief from drudgery. . . .

"Suddenly, Tennessee began to realize that it was no longer a rural state of country folks living country ways. Just as the great livestock drives through the mountains from the nation's hog-and-hominy range of Tennessee to lowland markets in South Carolina and Georgia had been replaced long since by gleaming rails of steel and swaying boxcars, so, too, the colorful commerce and romance, mischief and mystery of the Natchez Trace . . . long ago supplanted by asphalt and concrete thoroughfares."

Points for interpretation and discussion:

- We tend to think of "progress" as a positive thing, since it usually means improvements in medicine, communications, sanitation and public health, information management (like computers), and greater speed and efficiency in the things we have to do (household appliances, faster cars, on-line banking). But the reading passage also describes the "not-so-positive" aspects to progress. What are some of those aspects described in the passage? Can you think of others? Is it always the "best thing" to be able to drive faster from one place to another? Discuss the ways that technological advances as different as computers and air conditioning have affected people's social lives.

What does the author mean by the "slower pace within the turning of the seasons"? Pioneers had schedules that often followed the seasons of the year—plowing, planting, harvesting—while today we have daily schedules—school followed by several after-school activities. Our parents stop to get some shopping done before they get home from work; and if there's no time left for cooking supper, we often eat out, and try to get back in time to get some homework done before bedtime. Do you ever wish you had the slower lifestyle of your great-great-grandparents?