

## Huey P. Long's Political Legacy

This sample task contains a set of primary and authentic sources about the political legacy of Huey P. Long.

### Alignment

The questions in this task align to the following social studies grade-level expectations.

- 8.2.5 Analyze causes and effects of major events and evaluate their impact on the growth and development of Louisiana
- 8.2.7 Explain major social, political, and economic changes that affected Louisiana during the Progressive, Great Depression, and Huey Long eras

### Contents

This sample task contains the following sections:

- [Primary and Authentic Sources](#)
- [Assessment Items](#)
- [Extended-Response Task](#)
- [Scoring Rubric](#)
- [Scoring Notes](#)
- [Printable Student Version](#)

### Task Directions

- Teachers may choose to use or modify this sample as part of an instructional lesson or as a formative or summative assessment.
- Teachers should provide students access to the printable student version of the task items, which excludes GLE alignment, answer keys, and scoring information.
- Students should then read or review the sources and answer the questions.
- For additional specifications about the task, please see the [Assessment Guidance](#) for grade 8.

### Primary and Authentic Sources

Read and study Sources 1 through 4 about Huey P. Long's political career. As you read, you may take notes in the space next to the sources or on page 5 in this answer document. Then use the sources to answer questions 1 through 5.

**Source 1:** Senator Huey P. Long, Statement of the Share Our Wealth Movement, May 23, 1935. In Congressional Record, 74th Cong., 1st sess., Vol. 79, 8040-43.

Here is the whole sum and substance of the share-our-wealth movement:

1. Every family to be furnished by the Government a homestead allowance, free of debt, of not less than one-third the average family wealth of the country, which means, at the lowest, that every family shall have the reasonable comforts of life up to a value of from \$5,000 to \$6,000. No person to have a fortune of more than 100 to 300 times the average family fortune, which means that the limit to fortunes is between \$1,500,000 and \$5,000,000, with annual capital levy taxes imposed on all above \$1,000,000.
2. The yearly income of every family shall be not less than one-third of the average family income, which means that, according to the estimates of the statisticians of the United States Government and Wall Street, no family's annual income would be less than from \$2,000 to \$2,500. No yearly income shall be allowed to any person larger than from 100 to 300 times the size of the average family income, which means that no person would be allowed to earn in any year more than from \$600,000 to \$1,800,000, all to be subject to present income-tax laws.
3. To limit or regulate the hours of work to such an extent as to prevent overproduction; the most modern and efficient machinery would be encouraged, so that as much would be produced as possible so as to satisfy all demands of the people, but to also allow the maximum time to the workers for recreation, convenience, education, and luxuries of life.
4. An old-age pension to the persons over 60.
5. To balance agricultural production with what can be consumed according to the laws of God, which includes the preserving and storage of surplus commodities to be paid for and held by the Government for the emergencies when such are needed. Please bear in mind, however, that when the people of America have had money to buy things they needed, we have never had a surplus of any commodity. This plan of God does not call for destroying any of the things raised to eat or wear, nor does it countenance wholesale destruction of hogs, cattle, or milk.
6. To pay the veterans of our wars what we owe them and to care for their disabled.
7. Education and training for all children to be equal in opportunity in all schools, colleges, universities, and other institutions for training in the professions and vocations of life; to be regulated on the capacity of children to learn, and not on the ability of parents to pay the costs. Training for life's work to be as much universal and thorough for all walks in life as has been the training in the arts of killing.
8. The raising of revenue and taxes for the support of this program to come from the reduction of swollen fortunes from the top, as well as for the support of public works to give employment whenever there may be any slackening necessary in private enterprise.

**Source 2:** [Political cartoon from Huey P. Long's Louisiana Progress newspaper, 1930](#) (Right column, second image; click to enlarge)

**Source 3:** [Excerpt from Huey P. Long's obituary, New York Times, September 11, 1935](#) (Bottom of page, #4; shorten length by removing first paragraph)

**Source 4:** [Political cartoon depicting Huey P. Long, 1932](#)

**Source 5:** [Campaign poster, 1940](#) (Right column, second image; click to enlarge)

**Item 1: Multiple Choice**

Which statement best explains why Huey P. Long’s “Share Our Wealth” movement (Document 1) appealed to so many Americans during the 1930s?

- A. Many Americans were concerned about the budget deficit.
- B. Many Americans were concerned their taxes would increase.
- C. Many Americans were concerned about the state of the economy.
- D. Many Americans were concerned the government was too powerful.

**Item 2: Multiple Choice**

In Source 4, Huey P. Long is portrayed in the costume of Napoleon Bonaparte. Which statement **best** explains the cartoonist’s purpose in making this artistic choice?

- A. to describe Long as insane
- B. to characterize Long as a dictator
- C. to frighten citizens into obeying Long
- D. to applaud Long for his accomplishments

**Item 3: Multiple Choice**

In Document 3, the *New York Times* writes, “Senator Long’s career is also a reminder that material for the agitator and the demagogue is always ample in this country.”

Which statement **best** describes the connotation of the word “demagogue” as it is used in Document 3?

- A. a leader who preys on the ignorance of the lower classes
- B. a leader who misleads the citizenry about his presidential ambitions
- C. a leader who shifts his political positions to reflect the public’s wishes
- D. a leader who enacts policies to improve the lives of the common people

**Item 4: Multiple Choice**

Why was Huey P. Long’s administration considered a significant break from prior Louisiana governments?

- A. His administration openly courted fascist supporters.
- B. His administration was devoted to cleaning up corruption.
- C. His administration practiced economy to balance the budget.
- D. His administration vastly expanded the role of state government.

**Item 5: Extended Response**

Write a well-organized response on the lines provided on pages 6 and 7 in this answer document.

Evaluate Huey P. Long’s political legacy.

Consider the following questions when writing your response:

- Why was he a controversial political figure?
- What lasting changes did he create in Louisiana?

**As you write, follow the directions below.**

- Address all parts of the prompt.
- Include information and examples from your own knowledge of social studies.
- Use evidence from the sources to support your response.
- Follow the steps on the Checklist as you write your response.

Use page 5 in this answer document for notes and planning. Write your **final response** on pages 6 and 7 in this answer document.

**Remember: The prewriting activities on page 5 will not be scored. Only your response on pages 6 and 7 will be scored.**

**Scoring Rubric**

The response should be scored **holistically** on its adherence to two dimensions: Content and Claims. Each response should be given the score that corresponds to the set of bulleted descriptors that **best** describes the response.

<b>Dimension: Content</b>	
<b>Score</b>	<b>Description</b>
4	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflects <b>thorough</b> knowledge of Huey P. Long's political legacy by incorporating ample, focused factual information from prior knowledge and the sources;</li> <li>• Contains accurate understandings with no errors significant enough to detract from the overall content of the response;</li> <li>• Fully addresses all parts of the prompt.</li> </ul>
3	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflects <b>general</b> knowledge of Huey P. Long's political legacy by incorporating adequate factual information from prior knowledge and the sources;</li> <li>• Contains mostly accurate understandings with minimal errors that do not substantially detract from the overall content of the response;</li> <li>• Addresses all parts of the prompt.</li> </ul>
2	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflects <b>limited</b> knowledge of Huey P. Long's political legacy by incorporating some factual information from prior knowledge and the sources;</li> <li>• Contains some accurate understandings with a few errors that detract from the overall content of the response;</li> <li>• Addresses part of the prompt.</li> </ul>
1	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflects <b>minimal</b> knowledge of Huey P. Long's political legacy by incorporating little or no factual information from prior knowledge and the sources;</li> <li>• Contains few accurate understandings with several errors that detract from the overall content of the response;</li> <li>• Minimally addresses part of the prompt.</li> </ul>
0	<p>The student's response is blank, incorrect, or does not address the prompt.</p>

Dimension: Claims	
Score	Description
4	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops a <b>valid</b> claim that effectively expresses a solid understanding of the topic;</li> <li>• Thoroughly supports the claim with well-chosen evidence from the sources;</li> <li>• Provides a logically organized, cohesive, and in-depth explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.</li> </ul>
3	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops a <b>relevant</b> claim that expresses a general understanding of the topic;</li> <li>• Supports the claim with sufficient evidence from the sources;</li> <li>• Provides an organized explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.</li> </ul>
2	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presents an <b>inadequate</b> claim which expresses a limited understanding of the topic.</li> <li>• Includes insufficient support for the claim but does use some evidence from the sources;</li> <li>• Provides a weak explanation of the connections, patterns, and trends among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.</li> </ul>
1	<p>The student's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not develop a claim but provides evidence that relates to the topic; <b>OR</b> develops a substantially flawed claim with little or no evidence from the sources;</li> <li>• Provides a vague, unclear, or illogical explanation of the connections among ideas, people, events, and/or contexts within or across time and place.</li> </ul>
0	<p>The student's response is blank, incorrect, or does not address the prompt.</p>

### Scoring Notes for Claims Rubric

A response that develops a **valid** claim expresses a **solid** understanding of the social studies topic. The response is supported by **ample and well-chosen** evidence from the sources. The explanation is logical, organized, and cohesive, as demonstrated by connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place. A **valid** claim shows a deep understanding of the complexity of social studies themes that is supported by convincing evidence. The analysis may include the ability to discuss cause-and-effect relationships; analyze the importance of and connection between source documents; classify patterns of continuity and change; evaluate differing perspectives; provide in-depth interpretations of historical events, etc.

A response that develops a **relevant** claim expresses a **general** understanding of the social studies topic. The response is supported by **sufficient** evidence from the sources. The explanation is organized and includes connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place but fails to reach the valid level. A **relevant** claim shows an accurate understanding of social studies themes but is less complex and includes more generalized evidence. The explanation may identify cause-and-effect relationships; describe patterns of continuity or change; recognize perspectives on a single topic or theme; identify the importance of or connection between source documents; provide general interpretations of historical events, etc.

A response that includes an **inadequate** claim expresses a **limited** understanding of the social studies topic and uses insufficient evidence from the sources to develop the claim. The explanation includes weak connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place. An **inadequate** claim shows some understanding of social studies themes but is limited in its analysis and evidence. The explanation may include insufficient understanding of cause and effect relationships; little recognition of patterns of continuity or change; limited knowledge of perspectives on a single topic or theme; misconceptions regarding the importance of or connections between source documents; limited interpretation of historical events, etc.

A response that develops a **substantially flawed** claim expresses **little** understanding of the social studies topic. The explanation, if present, may include vague or illogical connections, patterns, or trends among ideas, people, events, and contexts within or across time and place. It fails to reach the inadequate level for a variety of reasons. For example, the response may provide some evidence that relates to the topic, but is ineffective in supporting a claim, if one is made.

### Characteristics of a Strong Response

A strong response is logically organized into several paragraphs. Any errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or capitalization do not interfere with the ability of the reader to understand the ideas presented.

A strong response may develop one or more lines of reasoning to support the claim. Here are some examples.

- Huey P. Long was different from the politicians who preceded him. He was considered a man of the people and his grass roots campaign methods were successful. Long's opposed Standard Oil in his early career, and he continued to cross swords with the corporation while in office. Long's successful bridging of the North/South Louisiana cultural and religious divides in the 1928 gubernatorial election was unprecedented. While governor, Long had many achievements. He provided free textbooks to give all children access to a free education. Long increased taxes on large businesses, such as the oil companies, in order to fund improvement projects. He dramatically increased paved roads and built bridges over the Mississippi River.
- As U.S. Senator, Long was critical of the federal government for not doing enough to help people during the Great Depression. He developed his "Share our Wealth" program in which families would each be given a grant to purchase a home, car, and radio. He also promised guaranteed wages and a shorter work week. All

of this was to be paid for by the government taking excess fortunes of people amassing over \$3 million. Although his plan was impossible, he gained followers who supported his bid for presidency. His promises of “every man a king” made him popular among common people. Despite his growing popularity, Long had created bitter rivals. The state legislature’s failed impeachment attempt after Long’s proposed increase in the oil severance tax resulted in Long’s retaliation against his opponents afterward.

A strong response shows understanding of the topic by analyzing the required sources and including well-chosen evidence from the sources, such as:

- The “Share Our Wealth” program was designed to provide basic quality of living for all people. There was a minimum guaranteed wage, grants for purchasing what families needed, and was to be paid for by the wealthy. (Source 1)
- Huey Long wanted to provide free textbooks for schools so that all children had an equal shot at education. (Source 2)
- The establishment of the *Louisiana Progress* (later renamed *American Progress*) newspaper allowed for the publishing of the Long machine’s propaganda. (Source 2)
- Long gained a reputation among his opponents as a demagogue and dictator who relied on intimidation to achieve his goals. (Source 3 and Source 4)
- Long’s preservation of his power in state government after being elected to the US Senate (Document 3)
- Earl Long attempted to continue Huey P. Long’s legacy despite their past differences. (Source 5)
- The Long political machine in Louisiana endured way beyond his death. (Document 5)

A strong response also includes important information beyond what is presented in the sources, such as:

- Describing information about Long’s political legacy in Louisiana. Long supported adult literacy programs. Long contributed to the expansion of Louisiana State University (increased funding, higher enrollment, lower tuition, scholarships, establishment of LSU medical school). Under Long’s leadership, there was unprecedented infrastructure construction (over 1,200 miles of paved roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, airport in New Orleans, new state capitol) and significant public health improvements (construction of Charity Hospital, reform of state mental institutions, free immunizations, medical and dental care for prison inmates). The Long Administration eliminated the poll tax, enacted homestead exemption, implemented the graduated income tax, enacted the Debt Moratorium Act to prevent foreclosures, and actively prevented bank closures. Long’s programs were paid for with taxes on business and industry as well as the general public. Although bond indebtedness increased, Long did not bankrupt the state as critics claimed he would.
- Describing information about Long’s political legacy on the national level. There was a national appeal for the “Share Our Wealth” movement (7.5 million members in 27,000 clubs by 1935). Long was a supporter of FDR then shifted to the left and became a vocal critic of the President. FDR’s retaliated by giving federal patronage to Long’s enemies and investigating Long and his allies for tax evasion. Long was open about his presidential ambitions and had gained a great deal of support before his assassination.
- Describing information about Long’s political tactics. Long was aggressive in the use of innovative campaign tactics (radio addresses and commercials, stumping tours with rural stops, sound trucks, circulars, scathing attacks of opponents). Long purged the state bureaucracy and used patronage and “deduct box” (forced political contributions from state employees) to promote his agenda. Long was known for his widespread intimidation of opponents. He withheld authorization for Army Air Corps base in Shreveport when Caddo Parish refused free textbooks. The Long Administration consolidated control of municipal agencies and boards, especially in New Orleans. Gerrymandering of election districts was used to favor Long candidates.

Long established the Bureau of Criminal Identification, a special police force answerable only to the governor. Long even attempted to censor the press (newspaper tax overturned by the US Supreme Court in *Grosjean v. American Press Co.* in 1936). Long refused to vacate the governor's seat after his election to the US Senate until an opponent was removed from lieutenant governorship. He continued control of state government during O. K. Allen's term in office.

**Printable  
Student Version**

**Note: Some sources are available only in digital format. A link is provided and will require the use of a computer to view the source.**

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**Use for notes and planning your response.**  
(This page will not be scored.)



