

Overview

While Kansas' population has grown, the population density has shifted from rural areas to urban. In this lesson students will read three newspaper articles describing recent situations faced by rural Kansans and their reactions and solutions to these situations. Students will use graphic organizers to collect information from the articles. The lesson is designed to take two class periods.

Standards

Current standards can be found on kshs.org.

Objectives

Content:

- Students will analyze newspaper articles to identify problems modern-day Kansans face with rural depopulation.

Skills:

- Students will read primary source documents and extrapolate problem/solution relationships created by rural depopulation.
- Students will locate towns on a Kansas map.

Essential Questions

- How does rural depopulation affect a community?

Activities

This activity uses the following *Read Kansas!* cards:

- **Where do people in Kansas live?**
- **Evidence Card 1: Groceries in Gove County**
- **Evidence Card 2: School District Consolidation**
- **Evidence Card 3: Pharmacy Problems**

Day 1

1. Introduce the topic of the population shift in Kansas beginning in the 1890s from rural to urban.
2. Hand out one copy of the **Where Do People in Kansas Live?** *Read Kansas!* card to each student to read about rural depopulation in the state. Examine the maps showing the decline of Kansas' rural population between 1890 and 2010. Have students scan the maps and ask them which areas have seen the most population changes. Focus the conversation on the population shift from rural areas to urban ones. If you wish to analyze the maps in more detail, refer to For the Teacher for actual population figures corresponding to the color key for the two maps.
3. Hand each student one of the three evidence cards. Each card features a recent news article about a town in Kansas that has faced problems linked to rural depopulation. Have students read through the article once to identify the community's problems, then read it again, looking for the solutions to the problems. Students should complete the **Rural Depopulation: Tough Problems, Creative Solutions** graphic organizer on their own while reading the article. This graphic organizer is the assessment piece for the lesson.
4. Collect the graphic organizers.

Day 2

1. Return the graphic organizers to the students. Reorganize the class into groups of three, with one student per evidence card in every group. Have students take turns explaining their articles to each other and how people in the article sought ways to solve their problems.
2. On a large map of Kansas locate each of the towns discussed in the articles. Alternatively, have students locate the towns in the articles on their own paper maps, or on an online map.
3. Have students discuss each problem addressed in the articles and how it was "solved."
4. Ask students what other issues rural Kansans face. Topics for discussion could include political redistricting debates, mass transportation, social issues from the growth of commercial farming (loss of the family farm), immigration, etc. Classes should discuss experiences in their own communities; those similar and different to the stories in the news articles.

Extended Activity Option

1. Conduct a debate over the three issues addressed in the articles (cooperative businesses, school consolidation, and health care).
2. Use online sources to flesh out arguments. Some possible sources:
 - *More Kansas Profiles* at the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development: huckboyd.ksu.edu
 - Kansas Rural Center: kansasruralcenter.org
 - University of Kansas Medical Center Rural Health Education and Services: ruralhealth.kumc.edu
 - Kansas Sampler Foundation: kansassampler.org

Assessment

- Evaluate the student's ability to complete the graphic organizer used to identify problems faced by rural Kansans.
- Evaluate the student's ability to locate Kansas towns using a map.

For the Teacher

The lesson can be used in conjunction with pages 276-77 of *The Kansas Journey*. Other primary sources related to the topic of rural depopulation are available at kansasmemory.org.

The color key used on the 1890 and 2010 census maps illustrates population totals by county, but it is based on different scales because of the larger population in 2010. The population ranges for individual counties are listed below, with their corresponding colors:

	Yellow	Pink	Blue	Green	Orange
1890	724-4,999	5,000-9,999	10,000-19,999	20,000-29,999	30,000-54,407
2010	1,247-9,999	10,000-49,999	50,000-99,999	100,000-199,999	200,000- 544,179

The materials in this packet may be reproduced for classroom use only. Reproduction of these materials for any other use is prohibited without written permission of the Kansas Historical Society.

Resources for this lesson are from:

- Kansas Historical Society collections
- *Topeka Capital-Journal*
- *Wichita Eagle*
- Institute on Rural Development, Kansas State University

Name _____

Rural Depopulation: Tough Problems, Creative Solutions

Problem	Solution