

The Great Society

I want to talk to you today about three places where we begin to build the Great Society—in our cities, in our countryside, and in our classrooms.

Many of you will live to see the day, perhaps fifty years from now, when there will be 400 million Americans—four-fifths of them in urban areas. In the remainder of this century urban population will double, city land will double, and we will have to build homes, highways, and facilities equal to all those built since this country was first settled. So in the next forty years we must rebuild the entire urban United States. . . .

A second place where we begin to build the Great Society is in our countryside. We have always prided ourselves on being not only America the strong and America the free, but America the beautiful. Today that beauty is in danger. The water we drink, the food we eat, the very air that we breathe, are threatened with pollution. . . .

A third place to build the Great Society is in the classrooms of America. There your children's lives will be shaped. Our society will not be great until every young mind is set free to scan the farthest reaches of thought and imagination. . . .

In many places, classrooms are overcrowded and curricula are outdated. Most of our qualified teachers are underpaid and many of our paid teachers are unqualified. So we must give every child a place to sit and a teacher to learn from. Poverty must not be a bar to learning, and learning must offer an escape from poverty.

But more classrooms and more teachers are not enough. We must seek an educational system which grows in excellence as it grows in size. . . .

—President Lyndon Johnson, the University of Michigan, (May 22, 1964)

1. What is the main point that President Johnson makes about urban America?

- A Eighty percent of Americans will live in cities.
- B Cities are getting bigger.
- C We will need to rebuild our cities as they grow.
- D Cities are an important part of American society.

2. Building the Great Society in the countryside refers to

- A making life better for farmers.
- B keeping America beautiful and unpolluted.
- C revitalizing small towns.
- D All of the above

3. What is the main characteristic of the educational system in the Great Society?

- A excellence
- B quantity of teachers
- C new schools
- D better curriculum

4. What is the main idea of this passage?

- A American cities are decaying.
- B Water and air are becoming polluted.
- C There are not enough qualified teachers.
- D Urban renewal, the environment, and education are three key issues of the Great Society.

5. Where were the three places LBJ wanted to begin to build the Great Society?

-Which area do you think LBJ needed to focus on first?

Why?