The Teapot Dome Scandal

bit.ly/LbHTeapot Runtime: 10:32



Video Guides

Guide A: Best for checking understanding of key events and details. Includes answer key with video timestamps.

Guide B: Best for active note-taking and connecting evidence to the video's big ideas. Does not include answer key, as student responses will vary.

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The Teapot Dome Scandal

Guide A: Comprehension and Discussion Questions

https://bit.ly/LbHTeapotDome

Comprehension Questions

1) What was the Teapot Dome oil reserve intended for, and how did Secretary of the Interior Albert B. Fall abuse his position for personal gain?

2) How did Senators Thomas Walsh and other members of Congress investigate the scandal?

3) What roles did the media and congressional subpoenas play in uncovering the truth about the Teapot Dome scandal?

4) What were two major legal or political consequences of the Teapot Dome investigation?

Discussion Question

The takeaways from this investigation are:

1. The Teapot Dome scandal proved that members of Congress can, and should, work together across political divides to fight wrongdoing in government.
2. The Teapot Dome scandal is a reminder of the importance of vigilance and transparency in government.
3. The Teapot Dome scandal is a powerful example of how the Constitution system of checks and balances works to maintain integrity and accountability.

Which of these is the most important or lasting, and why? Do any of them still impact our lives today?

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The Teapot Dome Scandal ANSWER KEY

Guide A: Comprehension and Discussion Questions

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Comprehension Questions

1) What was the Teapot Dome oil reserve intended for, and how did Secretary of the Interior Albert B. Fall abuse his position for personal gain?

The Teapot Dome oil reserve was set aside to provide oil for the U.S. Navy during national emergencies. Fall transferred control of the reserves to his department and secretly leased them to private oil companies without competitive bidding. In return, he accepted bribes in the form of cash, bonds, and cattle. (2:20)

2) How did Senators Thomas Walsh and other members of Congress investigate the scandal?

Senators John Kendrick and Robert La Follette helped bring attention to the questionable oil leases, and La Follette urged an investigation led by Senator Thomas Walsh. Walsh examined thousands of pages of documents and pursued evidence despite being a relatively junior senator from the minority party. His work demonstrated that effective oversight depends on persistence and fact-finding, not simply political power. (3:38)

3) What roles did the media and congressional subpoenas play in uncovering the truth about the Teapot Dome scandal?

Newspapers investigated Fall's sudden increase in wealth and publicized suspicious details, helping generate public pressure for further investigation. Congress used subpoenas to compel witnesses to testify and produce documents. These tools helped investigators gather evidence, challenge official explanations, and establish a clearer picture of corruption. (6:18)

4) What were two major legal or political consequences of the Teapot Dome investigation?

Two major consequences were Fall becoming the first former U.S. cabinet member imprisoned for corruption committed in office and the Supreme Court's 1927 decision in McGrain v. Daugherty, which affirmed Congress's authority to compel testimony and obtain documents for legitimate investigations. The scandal demonstrated checks and balances because Congress investigated misconduct in the executive branch, while the judiciary upheld Congress's investigative authority. The investigation also contributed to reforms involving access to tax returns. (9:35)

Discussion Questions

The takeaways from this investigation are:

1. The Teapot Dome scandal proved that members of Congress can, and should, work together across political divides to fight wrongdoing in government.
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Guide B: Evidence Graphic Organizer

Directions: As you watch the video, record facts, examples, or statements that support each takeaway.

https://bit.ly/LbHTeapotDome

Takeaway	Fact, example, or statement to support it
The Teapot Dome scandal proved that members of Congress can, and should, work together across political divides to fight wrongdoing in government.	
The Teapot Dome scandal is a reminder of the importance of vigilance and transparency in government.	
The Teapot Dome scandal is a powerful example of how the Constitution system of checks and balances works to maintain integrity and accountability.	

Which takeaway was most compelling or convincing? Circle or highlight your answer. How does this investigation (and its consequences) still impact our lives today?

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