Reading Guide

1. Identify characteristics of the Progressive Movement evident during John Collier’s early life.

2. How did Collier’s belief in community as an agent of reform lead to his adoption of cultural pluralism?

3. Name two personal characteristics of John Collier that would eventually pose problems in his ability to be a successful reformer.

4. Why did Collier move to California in 1919? Identify the post-war political phenomenon that cost him his job. Defend your decision.

5. Describe the concept of “Red Atlantis” Collier discovered at Taos pueblo. How did it impact his reform efforts on behalf of American Indians?

6. What were the beliefs of the American Indian Defense Association? As executive director of the organization, name John Collier’s actions that promoted these beliefs.
7. Name and describe the legislative actions taken by the federal government during Collier’s “Indian New Deal.”

8. Describe Collier’s education efforts as Indian Commissioner.

9. Identify three direct actions taken by John Collier on behalf of the American Indian population.


11. Why did the Indian Congresses, that were called to support Collier’s proposal, reject it?

12. Determine five ways in which the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) was different from the proposed Wheeler-Howard bill. What caused these differences?
13. What were the benefits of tribal approval of the IRA?

14. Discuss the many reasons for tribal rejections of the IRA.

15. Why did only half of the tribes that approved the IRA actually write a constitution?

16. Explain the reasons for John Collier’s ineffectiveness as Indian Commissioner that led to his resignation on January 22, 1945. Determine if any of these reason were predictable based on his early development as a Progressive reformer.

17. Why is Collier’s life work respected despite his difficulties as Indian Commissioner during the New Deal?

18. Does John Collier’s Indian New Deal represent continuity or change in federal government Indian policy?