

Great Depression Unit

By: Amy Thornton and Gared Chismer

“Great Depression in the United States was the worst and longest economic collapse in the history of the modern industrial world, lasting from the end of 1929 until the early 1940s. Beginning in the United States, the Depression spread to most of the world’s industrialized countries, which in the 20th Century had become economically dependent on one another. The Great Depression saw rapid declines in the production and sale of goods and a sudden, severe rise in unemployment. Businesses and banks closed their doors; people lost their jobs, homes, and savings; and many depended on charity to survive. In 1933, at the worst point in the Depression, more than 15 million Americans (one-quarter of the nation’s workforce) were unemployed.”

~Encarta Encyclopedia Article

http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761584403/Great_Depression_in_the_United_States.html

In this four week unit, students will learn about the stock market crash of 1929, music during the Great Depression, the Dust Bowl, Hoovervilles, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and The New Deal. Each lesson’s content is described below.

Lesson 1- The Stock Market (Week 1)

In this lesson, students will be creating a stock market portfolio buying and tracking stocks on a daily basis. Students will also be researching the events leading up to, during, and after the stock market crash of 1929 by viewing and analyzing primary source materials from the Library of Congress.

Link to Stock Market Lesson Plan [Click Here](#)

Lesson 2- Music of the Great Depression (Week 2 Mon.-Thurs.)

During this lesson, students will be examining songs of the depression era to gain an understanding of the time period. Students will then have an opportunity to research a topic related to the Great Depression and write an original song to share with their classmates about the topic they selected.

Link to Music of the Great Depression Lesson Plan [Click Here](#)

Lesson 3- The Dust Bowl (Week 2-3 Fri.-Tues.) (Outside work required to complete this lesson)

In this lesson, students will be analyzing and describing how families responded to the recurring dust storms and the effect the storms had on Americans. Using a variety of resources from the Library of Congress, students will create a scrapbook documenting the migration of Americans from their current homes in the dust bowl region to their new homes out west.

Link to the Dust Bowl Lesson Plan [Click Here](#)

Resources:

[Harley Holladay](#)

[Dust Bowl Scrapbook Directions](#)

[Helpful Resources for Dust Bowl Scrapbook](#)

[Talking Dust Bowl Blues](#)

[Newspaper Analysis Worksheet](#)

[Photo Analysis Worksheet](#)

[Song Analysis Worksheet](#)

Lesson 4- Hooverville (Week 3 Wed.-Fri.)

For this lesson, students will research and analyze primary source materials to learn how Hoovervilles were created, the materials used, and who lived in the Hoovervilles. Students will have an opportunity to build a Hooverville using found materials, much like those built by people during the Great Depression.

Link to Hooverville Lesson [Click Here](#)

Resources:

[Hooverville PowerPoint](#)
[Excerpt from the Grapes of Wrath](#)

Lesson 5- Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the New Deal Plan (Week 4) (Outside work required to complete this lesson)

During this lesson, students will be able to describe who FDR was and the programs he put into place through the New Deal Plan to help Americans get out of the Depression. Students will view some of FDR's famous fireside chats and then develop their own fireside chat to share with the class.

Link to FDR and the New Deal Plan Lesson [Click Here](#)