



March 12-14, 1998

"Brother, can you spare a dime?" The Great Depression, 1929-1941

Grade Level: Seventh and Eighth Grade

Presented by: Carla Dobbs, John Johnson Elementary, Bainbridge, Georgia

Length of Unit: Nine Lessons, Thirteen Weeks

I. ABSTRACT

During the Great Depression, the phrase "Brother, can you spare a dime," came to epitomize the indignity and hopelessness many Americans felt about unemployment and their inability to sustain themselves. Americans had suffered the stock market crash; the middle class had lost their jobs and homes; Farmers in Texas and Oklahoma had been forced to flee the Dust Bowl. And thousands of Americans were unemployed and homeless. But Americans did persevere. They did regain their dignity. And America did work its way out of the Depression.

Students will investigate the events which precipitated the Great Depression. By researching the lives of individuals who experienced this, the students will gain an appreciation for the hardships endured by a majority of Americans. Students will examine the initiatives and programs which made up Roosevelt's New Deal and the lasting legacy of these programs. And the students will study the art and literature which were commissioned as a part of the New Deal to determine how they reflect the mood of the period.

It is hoped that by the end of this unit the students will have gained an understanding of the root causes of the depression and an appreciation of the human spirit which can overcome even in the most trying of times.

II. OVERVIEW

A. Concepts: Changes in America during the 1930's resulting from severe economic hardship and widespread poverty.

B. Content from Core Knowledge Sequence: Factors leading to the Great Depression: Stock market crash of 1929, Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act, mass unemployment, and the Dust Bowl.

Factors which lead us out of the depression: President Roosevelt and the New Deal programs.

C. Skills: Students will acquire an understanding of the concepts listed above as well as an understanding of how Americans persevered and worked their way out of the greatest depression in the history of the United States.

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

A Burg, David F. The Great Depression An Eyewitness History. New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1996. ISBN 0-8160-3095-2.

- B. Sterling, Mary Ellen. Twentieth Century - The Thirties. Huntington Beach, Ca: Teacher Created Materials, Inc., 1996. ISBN 1-55734-025-8.
- C. Meltzer, Melton. Brother Can You Spare a Dime. New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1991. ISBN 0-8160-2372-7.
- D. Internet Addresses - For Teacher Resources:

1. **Social Studies Resources** - <http://www.teleport.com/~vincer/social.html>
1. **History/Social Studies Web Site for K-12 Teachers** - <http://execpc.com/~dboals/boals.html>

E. Timeline of Major Events During The 1930s:

1930

- The Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act was passed.
- The first bank panic occurred which resulted in a wave of bankruptcies.
- Sinclair Lewis was the first American writer to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature.
- The board game, Monopoly, was invented.
- The planet Pluto was discovered.

1931

- A second bank panic occurred.
- "The Star Spangled Banner" was adopted as the national anthem.
- The George Washington Bridge was completed in New York City.
- The Empire State Building was completed.
- Jane Adams became the first American woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize.
- Construction of the Hoover Dam began.

1932

- This year and the following were the worst years of the depression.
- Over thirteen million Americans had lost their jobs since 1929.
- Congress created the Reconstruction Finance Corporation.
- Franklin Roosevelt defeated Herbert Hoover and the Democrats gained control of Congress.
- General Douglas MacArthur broke up the Bonus March in Washington D.C.
- Los Angeles was the site of the Olympic Games.
- Amelia Earhart became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean.

1933

- Roosevelt was inaugurated and began the "First 100 Days" of intense legislation design to combat the effects of the depression.
- A third banking panic occurred in March. President Roosevelt closed all financial institutions to stop a run on the banks.

- Congress authorized the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the Farm Credit Administration (FCA), the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FEMA), the National Recovery Administration (NRA), the Public Works Administration (PWA), and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA).
- Congress passed the Emergency Banking Bill, the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933, the Farm Credit Act, the National Industrial Recovery Act, and the Truth in Securities Act.
- The Twentieth Amendment was passed outlining the terms of the presidency.
- The Twenty-first Amendment was passed repealing Prohibition.
- The Federal Housing Authority was created.
- President Roosevelt introduced his fireside chats.
- The film "King Kong" was released.
- Adolph Hitler became Chancellor of Germany.

1934

- Congress authorized the Federal Communications Commission, the National Mediation Board, and the Securities and Exchange Commission.
- The Dust Bowl began on the Great Plains.
- Shirley Temple made her film debut.

1935

- Congress authorized the creation of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the National Labor Relations Board, and the Rural Electrification Administration.
- Congress passed the National Labor Relations Act and the Social Security Act.
- George Gershwin's Opera "Porgy and Bess" opened.
- Jesse Owens set five world records in one hour.
- Swing music became popular.
- Charles Richter developed a scale to measure earthquakes.

1936

- President Roosevelt was elected to a second term.
- Congress passed the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act.
- Jesse Owens won four gold medals at the Olympics in Berlin.
- "Gone with the Wind" by Margaret Mitchell was published.
- Construction of the Hoover Dam was completed.

1937

- Amelia Earhart disappeared over the Pacific Ocean.
- The Golden Gate Bridge opened.
- The Hindenburg blimp exploded.
- "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" opened.
- Bugs Bunny made his debut.

1938

- Congress passed the Fair Labor Standards Act.
- Orson Welles caused a panic with his radio broadcast of "The War of the Worlds."
- Superman made his debut in comics.
- The March of Dimes was organized.
- Vitamin E was identified.

- Chlorophyll was discovered.

1939

- World War II began in Europe on September 1 with the invasion of Poland by Germany.
- John Steinbeck's "Grapes of Wrath" was published.
- The World's Fair opened in New York.
- "Gone with the Wind" made its movie debut.
- Grandma Moses' paintings were displayed in New York City.

IV. RESOURCES

A. Books

1. Dunnan, Nancy. The Stock Market Crash of 1929 (American Events). Silver Burdett, 1990. ISBN 0382099141.
2. Faber, Doris. Eleanor Roosevelt: First Lady of the World (Women of Our Time). Puffin, 1996. ISBN 0140321039.
3. Farrell, Jacqueline. The Great Depression World History Series. Lucent Books, 1997. ISBN P-56006-276-2.
4. Feinberg, Barbara Silberdich. Black Tuesday: The Stock Market Crash of 1929 (Spotlight on American History). Millbrook, 1997. ISBN 1562945742.
5. Freeman, David K. The Great Depression in American History. Enslow Publications, 1997. ISBN 0894908812.
6. Freeman, Russell. Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery. Clarion Books, 1997. ISBN 0395845203.
7. Gottfried, Ted. Eleanor Roosevelt: First Lady of the Twentieth Century. Franklin Watts, 1997. ISBN 0531114066.
8. Hastings, Robert. A Nickel's Worth of Skim Milk: A Boy's View of the Great Depression. Southern Illinois University Press, 1986. ISBN 0809313057.
9. Morris, Jeffrey. The FDR Way (Great Presidential Decisions). Lerner Publishing Company, 1996. ISBN 0822529297.
10. Norrell, Robert J. We Want Jobs!: A Story of the Great Depression (Stories of America). Raintree/Steck/Vaughn, 1992. ISBN 0811472299.
11. Osinski, Alice. Franklin D. Roosevelt: Thirty-second President of the United States (Encyclopedia of Presidents). Children's Press, 1997. ISBN 0516013955.
12. Sandak, Cass R. The Franklin Roosevelts (First Families). Crestwood Horse, 1992. ISBN 0896866394.
13. Stanley, Jerry. Children of the Dust Bowl. Crow Publishers, Inc., 1992. ISBN 0517880946.
14. Stein, R. Conrad. The Great Depression (Cornerstones of Freedom). Children's Press, 1994. ISBN 0516466682.
15. Stewart, Gail. The New Deal. New Discovery Publishing, 1993. ISBN 0027883698.
16. Terkel, Studs. Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression. Pantheon Books, 1986. ISBN 0394746910.
17. Watkins, T.H. The Great Depression: America in the 1930s. Little Brown, 1993. ISBN 0316924539.
18. Weidt, Maryann N. Stateswoman to the World: A Story About Eleanor Roosevelt. First Avenue Editors, 1992. ISBN 0876145624.
19. Wooden, Howard E. American Art of the Great Depression: Two Sides of the Coin. Wichita Art Museum, 1985. ISBN 0939324229.

20. Wormser, Richard. Growing Up in the Depression. Altheneum, 1995. ISBN 0689317115.
21. Stanley, Jerry. Children of the Dust Bowl: The True Story of the School at Weedpatch Camp. Crown Publishers, Inc. 1992. ISBN 0517880946.
22. Hirsch, E.D. What Your 6th Grader Needs to Know. Dell Publishing, 1993.
23. Harkin, Joy. War, Peace, and All That Jazz. Heath and Company, 1994. ISBN 0195077628.

B. Periodicals

1. *Cobblestone: Franklin D. Roosevelt 1882-1945*. Volume 12, Number 4, April 1995.
2. *Cobblestone: The Great Depression*. Volume 5, Number 3, March 1984.
3. *Cobblestone: The History of Labor*. Volume 13, Number 8, October 1992.
4. *Cobblestone: Making and Breaking the Soil*. Volume 4, Number 12, December 1983.

C. Videos

1. 1929-1941: The Great Depression. National Geographic Society, 1990.
2. The Great Depression and the New Deal. (D6778), Schlessinger Video Productions. 800-843-3620.
3. Roosevelt and the Fireside Chats. Learning Corporation of America, 1989.

D. Computer Software

1. American History CD. Multi-Educator.
2. Compton's Encyclopedia of American History. McGraw Hill.
3. Encarta. Microsoft Home.
4. Children's Writing and Publishing Center. Freemont, Ca.: The Learning Company, 1993.
5. Hyperstudio. El Cajon, Ca.: Roger Wagner Publishing Company, Inc., 1995.
6. KidPix. Novato, Ca.: Broderbund Software, Inc., 1996.

V. LESSONS

A. Lesson One: What was the Great Depression?

1. Objective/Goal:

- a. **Students will be able to state the definition of an economic depression.**
- b. **Students will be able to identify periods of recession and depression on an economic time line.**
- c. **Students will be able to state the unique characteristics of the Great Depression.**
- d. **Students will be able to construct a time line.**

2. Materials

- a. **Use appropriate books from bibliography**
- b. **Cobblestone March 1984 pp 6-7 and 16-18**
- c. **Video: 1929-1941: The Great Depression No. N51450**
- d. **Encarta**
- e. **Compton's Encyclopedia of American History**
- f. **Cobblestone: The Great Depression. March, 1984.**

- g. Butcher paper, markers, colored pencils, old magazines

3. Prior Knowledge for Students

- a. What Your 6th Grader Needs to Know, "The Great Depression"

4. Key Vocabulary: depression, The Great Depression, recession, economy.

5. Procedures/Activities

- a. In cooperative learning groups, students research the definition of economic recession and depression. Students construct a web to map their findings.
- b. Assign each group a specific year during the Great Depression (1929-1940). As they research their particular year, have them find or draw pictures relevant for that particular year for use in the time line.
- c. Have students create a mural depicting the Great Depression which exemplifies conditions.
- d. Have students brainstorm newspaper headlines which might have appeared during the Great Depression. Choose a headline and write a story to go with the headline.
- e. View video about the Great Depression from National Geographic. Discuss issues presented in the video and the impact of the Great Depression.
- f. Read pages 6-7 and 16-18 in Cobblestone March, 1984, for further understanding of the Great Depression.
- g. Have students do activities related to the Great Depression in Cobblestone.

B. Lesson Two: The Roaring Twenties

1. Objective/Goal:

- a. Students will be able to describe economic conditions during the twenties.
- b. Students will be able to describe the economic philosophy of laissez-faire.

2. Materials

- a. Use appropriate books from the bibliography
- b. Sterling, Mary Ellen. Twentieth Century - The Twenties. Hunting Beach, Ca: Teacher Creative Materials, Inc., 1996. TCM2024.
- c. Harkin, Joy. War, Peace, and All That Jazz. Lexington, Ma: D.C. Heath and Company, 1994.

3. Key Vocabulary: laissez faire economics, installment purchasing

4. Procedures/Activities

- a. Research life styles of the twenties.
- b. After researching the life styles of the twenties, develop theories about how these life styles precipitated the Great Depression.
- c. Use activities in the Teacher's Guide of War, Peace and All That Jazz.

C. Lesson Three: The Stock Market

1. Objective/Goal:

- a. Students will understand the purpose and function of the stock market.
- b. Students will understand how daily world events effect the stock market.
- c. Students will understand the law of supply and demand.
- d. Students will understand the reasons for the Stock Market Crash of 1929.

2. Materials

- a. Drazee, Diane. The Stock Market Game. San Luis Obispo, Ca: Dandy Lion Publications, 1997, ISBN: 1883055253.
- a. Harkin, Joy. War, Peace, and All That Jazz (Teaching Guide). Lexington, Ma: D.C. Heath and Company, 1994.

3. Prior Knowledge for Students

- a. Sixth Grade Unit on Capitalism: Roots and Branches.

4. Key Vocabulary: American Stock Exchange, assets, blue chip stocks, bonds, bull market, capital, capitalism, capital gains, common stock, corporation, diversify, dividend, Dow Jones Industrial Average, initial value, investment, investor, market value, mutual fund, NASDAQ, New York Stock Exchange, profit, securities, Securities and Exchange Commission, share, shareholder, speculation, stocks, stockbroker, stock exchange, stockholder, stock certificate, "Black Tuesday"

5. Procedures/Activities

- a. Invite a stock broker to explain the purpose and functions of the stock market
- b. Have students complete activities in the Stock Market Game, a Simulation of Stock Market Trading.
- c. Complete activities in War, Peace, and All That Jazz (teacher's guide) about the Stock Market Crash.
- d. Play electronic Stock Market Game (www.smg2000.org).
- e. Have students research the Stock Market Crash to find what caused the market to crash.

D. Lesson Four: Hoover and the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act

1. Objective/Goal:

- a. Students will understand Hoover's philosophy of government.
- b. Students will understand the purpose of and the affects of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act.

2. Materials

- a. Use appropriate books from the bibliography
- b. Encarta
- c. Compton's Encyclopedia of American History
- d. American History CD. Multi-Educator

3. Key Vocabulary: Hooverize, tariff

4. Procedures/Activities

- a. Research and identify legislation proposed and supported by Hoover. Draw inferences about Hoover's philosophy of government based upon his legislation.
- b. Have students do a report about how Hoover viewed the role of government.
- c. Research Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act and the reaction to this tariff by other countries.
- d. Research tariffs that exist today and compare/contrast them with Smoot-Hawley Tariff.

E. Lesson Five: Causes of Mass Unemployment

1. Objective/Goal:

- a. Students will understand the reasons farmers began growing more crops during World War I.
- b. Students will understand how the end of World War I caused farm prices to go down.
- c. Students will understand the effects of factory mechanization on employment.
- d. Students will be able to describe the effects of the economic problems of the 1930s on unemployment.

2. Materials

Appropriate materials in the bibliography.

3. Procedures/Activities

- a. Have students brainstorm the reasons more crops were grown during World War I.
- b. Have students brainstorm the reasons farmers had a surplus of crops after World War I and what might have been done with the surplus crops.
- c. Have students brainstorm which jobs may have been eliminated by mechanization, then research factory mechanization and how it has changed the work force.
- d. Have students chart the ripple effects of massive job loss.
- e. Have students debate whether young people of the 1990s face greater challenges than the young people of the 1930s.

F. Lesson Six: Results of Mass Unemployment

1. Objective/Goal:

- a. Students will be able to describe the events that led to the Bonus March.
- b. Students will be able to understand the economic conditions which created "Hooverilles."
- c. Students will be able to compare and contrast Hooverilles to the homeless of today.

2. Materials

- a. Depression Price Chart (see Appendix)

- b. Music and lyrics to "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?"
- c. Audio or video tape
- d. Tape recorder or video camera
- e. Hard Times by Studs Terkel

3. Key Vocabulary: Hooverhogs, Hooverilles, Hooverize, Hoover flag, Hoover blankets, Bonus, March, Oral history, Hoboes, Massacre, Soup kitchen

4. Procedures/Activities

- a. Compare life during the Great Depression with life today.
- b. Read examples of oral histories in Hard Times.
- c. Have students record an oral history by interviewing someone who lived during the Great Depression. Have the students write their impressions of the Great Depression based upon their interview.
- d. Have each student complete the Depression Price Chart (see Appendix).
- e. Compare the living conditions of rural and urban areas during the depression.
- f. Listen to the music and lyrics of "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" Have the students create new lyrics that might be sung about the Great Depression.
- g. Have students brainstorm solutions to homelessness. Have them support their ideas with information from other sources.
- h. Have students write and produce a radio broadcast about how poverty affects people's lives.
- i. Have students research the economic problems that led to the Bonus Army Crisis.

G. Lesson Seven: The Dust Bowl

1. Objective/Goal:

- a. Students will be able to identify the natural causes of the Dust Bowl.
- b. Students will be able to identify poor farming practices which led to soil erosion.
- c. Students will understand how cattle contributed to soil erosion.
- d. Students will be able to locate the Dust Bowl region on a map.

2. Materials

- a. Cobblestone: Making and Breaking the Soil. December, 1983.
- b. Map of the Dust Bowl.

3. Key Vocabulary: erosion, conservation, Dust Bowl, topsoil, vegetation, "black blizzards" panhandle, desertion

4. Procedures/Activities

- a. Invite a soil conservationist to talk about soil conservation.
- b. Locate the Dust Bowl on a map.
- c. Ask a meteorologist to explain weather patterns which cause extended periods of draught.

- d. Have students do soil conservation activities in Cobblestone.
- e. Have students illustrate the scientific causes of the draught which led to the creation of the Dust Bowl and the eventual desertion of the panhandle.

H. Lesson Eight: "Okie" Migration

1. Objective/Goal:

- a. Students will understand why the Okies migrated to California.
- b. Students will be able to chart the Oak migration on a map.
- c. Students will be able to describe the hardships faced by the Okays during their migration and after their arrival in California.
- d. Students will be able to describe the prejudice encountered by the Okies in California.
- e. Students will be able to identify the prejudices experienced by the Okies.

2. Materials

- a. Children of the Dust Bowl
- b. Map of the United States

3. Key Vocabulary: Okie, migration, Hooverhog, San Joaquin Valley

4. Procedures/Activities

- a. Use maps, atlas, and other reference books to plot the route you would take today to get from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to Bakersfield, California. What prior knowledge do you need to have a successful trip? Create an itinerary for the trip. Plan to travel 300 to 400 miles per day.
- b. Read Children of the Dust Bowl.
- c. Compare and contrast the education of the children at the Weedpatch School with the education of today.
- d. Find the San Joaquin Valley on a map of California. Compare the cities and towns there in the late 1930's with the present.
- e. Describe life in these labor camps.
- f. Find examples of prejudice against the Okies in Children of the Dust Bowl. Discuss what it means to be prejudice. Discuss other groups which are subject to prejudice today.

I. Lesson Nine: The New Deal

1. Objective/Goal:

- a. Students will be able to explain how the New Deal programs affected the lives of Americans during the depression.
- b. Students will be able to identify New Deal programs still in existence.

2. Materials

- a. Use appropriate materials in the bibliography.
- b. Depression and the New Deal video.

- c. Cobblestone: Franklin D. Roosevelt. April, 1995.
- d. Butcher paper, glue, old magazines.
- e. Cobblestone: The History of Labor. Oct., 1992.

3. Key Vocabulary

"Alphabet Soup Programs" was the term used to refer to the New Deal programs initiated by Roosevelt. These programs were usually referred to by their initials. The following made up the "Alphabet Soup": Agriculture Adjustment Act (AAA), Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), Farm Credit Administration (FCA), Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), National Recovery Administration (NRA), Public Works Administration (PWA), Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

4. Procedures/Activities

- a. Watch video "Depression and New Deal."
- b. Divide students into groups and assign a New Deal program to each group. Have the students research the program and find out if it still exists.
- c. Have students research how Roosevelt's New Deal changed the role of government, and how it came to the aid of individuals.
- d. Read about Roosevelt's "Tree Army" in Cobblestone and on the internet at <http://www.sos.state.mi.us/history/museum/techstuf/depressn/treearmy.html>.
- e. Compare and contrast living in rural and urban America after TVA.
- f. Have students investigate which New Deal programs have helped their community.
- g. Have students research their local newspaper for articles about their community's depression experience.
- h. Have students research labor unions and their influence on the work force of today. What influence did John L. Lewis have on the growth of labor unions?
- i. Have students read about the Memorial Day Massacre and what events led to this tragic event.
- j. Have students make a New Deal collage. Make a representation of all the New Deal programs using pictures. The meaning of the pictures should be clearly understood. Use old magazines and newspapers for pictures. Label each picture with the name of the agency or program and a description of the goal symbolized in the picture.
- k. After researching Roosevelt's New Deal programs, have the students respond to the following and cite specific examples: Do today's young people have a better chance of receiving help for their problems than young people of the 1930s?

VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITIES

These activities can be used as culminating activities after all lessons have been completed. These projects can be used according to individual interests and abilities.

- A. Prepare a 1930's scrapbook, displaying articles and pictures collected while researching the Great Depression. The scrapbook could also include written oral histories.

- B. Write and perform a play about events which happened in their community during the Great Depression.**
- C. Prepare a multi-media presentation about the Great Depression. The presentation should include text, visuals and music.**
- D. Read one of the following books: Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred Taylor; Where the Red Fern Grows by Wilson Rawls.**
- E. Study the art, music and literature of the 1930's.**

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