The Great Depression

The Human Toll
People Effected by The Depression
2.2.6: Use selected pieces of music, art, literature, or fashion to draw conclusions about the impact of the Great Depression on the daily lives of citizens.
Impact on the People

- 25% Unemployment
- People lost their homes - took to the streets
- People that still had jobs had their hours and wages cut
- People only bought necessities - further led to lay-offs
- “Runs” on banks
  - people fear losing money and take all their money out of banks
Unemployment

• Before the Great Depression the percentage of the nation (America) that was unemployed was 3.2%.
• By 1933, approximately 25% of the nation’s population was unemployed, which translates to 13 million people out of jobs.
• In the cities
  - Many people could not make their mortgage or rent payments and ended up being homeless.
  - Many families would have to scrounge around in garbage cans for food or beg on street corners from the wealthy people that passed by.
On the eve of the Depression in 1929, with unemployment at a healthy 3%, optimism was at an all time high. No one imagined the path that the United States would take; a path that would see the economy slump uncontrollably - taking unemployment to 24.9% and the number of unemployed from 1.5 million to a bewildering figure of 13 million.

The following figures are the percentages of unemployed workers in the United States from 1929 to 1943. The figures are from the United States Bureau Of The Census.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>3.2  %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>8.7  %</td>
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<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>15.9 %</td>
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<td>1932</td>
<td>23.6 %</td>
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<td>1933</td>
<td>24.9 %</td>
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<td>1934</td>
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<td>1935</td>
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<td>1936</td>
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<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>19.0 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>1939</td>
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<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>14.6 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>9.9   %</td>
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<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>4.7   %</td>
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<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>1.9   %</td>
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Unemployment Rate During the New Deal

Percentage of Jobless Nonfarm Workers, 1926–1947

- Stock market crash
- FDR’s first New Deal
- Supreme Court declares much of New Deal unconstitutional
- FDR “court packing” crisis; second New Deal
- Germany invades Poland, WWII begins
- U.S. creates “war economy”
- U.S. enters WWII
- End of WWII

Impact of Society

• There were some places where people could receive free food.
  - One place was known as a Soup Kitchen, the other was a bread line.

• People would try to make homes out of cardboard boxes, rusty car shells, crates, or piece together shacks.
  - These will become known as *shantytowns*, these sprang up in empty lots within cities and also just around cities.
Social & Psychological Effects

• People had become so demoralized by the experience that suicides increased 30% during 1928-1932.

• Many people did not go to see a doctor or a dentist because they didn’t have the money to spare. People had to make tough decisions as to how to spend their money. In most cases it came down to life and death.

• Women who didn’t work before took jobs to help support the family when the man was out of work.
Social & Psychological effects cont...

• Men that believed they had to provide for their family, would leave home to find work
  -In order to do this they would ride the rails across the country in search of jobs and send money back home when they were employed.

• Society recognized with various needs of one another and tried to help.
  -People would give blankets, food and even space in their home for families that were in need.
Families

• During the early years of the Great Depression families stuck together.
  -To entertain themselves they played board games like Monopoly.

• Women tried very hard to save money and keep a close eye on the family budget.
  -Women would go shopping together, buy large amounts of food and split the costs.
  -Many families would forego buying new clothes, instead they would patch up old clothes and hand them down to younger children.
People

- people undernourished
- schools closed
- Abandonment increases – Men leave families for work or shame
- Suicide rate increases sharply
- birthrate fell –
  - Men no longer the head of the household
- People looked to the government for help
Birth Rates in U.S.
Closeness in a Time of Need

• The Great Depression brought communities back together.
  - People would go out of their way for others.
  - The old habits of our nation had returned and would shape a new generation of people that lived through one of America’s hardest times.

• The Great Depression would also change people’s lifestyles from spending money freely to saving and thriftiness.
Economic Conditions get Worse

• One of the nation's worst natural disasters to hurt American society was the Dust Bowl, which lasted from 1933-1936.
  - The regions affected by the Dust Bowl were in the Mid-West region of the U.S.
  - States that were most affected were in N. Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, and Arkansas.

• What was the Dust Bowl?
The Dust Bowl

- The Dust Bowl was a three period of dry weather coupled with high winds blowing threw the mid-west.

- Since there was little to no rain the soil became very dry and unfertile, so growing crops became very hard.

- The wind would blew away all of the fertile top soil into the air causing massive air pollution.

- As described by many inhabitants the days seemed like nights because it was so dark.
Dust Bowl cont....

- The mid-west region however would not be the only region effected by the gusts of wind kicking up the soil.
  - Many states to the north-east were also effected by the large amounts of dust in the air and would cause breathing problems in various cities.
- This would be the catalyst for a great migration movement of people leaving the mid-west to go to the west coast states.
  - These people were known as Okies.
The Dust Bowl, 1933–1936

**Chicago, Nov. 1933**
Crowds at Chicago Exposition world’s fair are caught in 50-mph gale of dust.

**Boston, May 1934**
Midwestern dust and bacteria collect on airplanes at altitudes up to 20,000 ft in Boston.

**New York, May 12, 1934**
Huge dust storm cuts visibility and lowers humidity from normal 57% to 34%. Empire State Building's stone observation ledge are covered with white film of dust. Dust is reported on ships 500 miles out to sea.

**Nebraska, 1935–1937**
Over two years, federal workers help soil conservation by planting 360,000 trees and completing 62 dams, 517 ponds, and 500 acres of terracing.

**Beaver, Okla. March 24, 1936**
Grain-elevator operators estimate that 20% of wheat crop has been blown away by dust storm.

**Tucumcari, N. Mex. March 30, 1936**
Clouds of dust blown by 50-mph winds cause complete darkness.

**GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER REGION**
Which states were in the part of the Dust Bowl where damage was most severe? **MOVEMENT**
Why might most of the migrants who left the Dust Bowl have traveled west?
- Soup Kitchens
- Bread Lines
- Hoovervilles
- Dust Bowls
- Okies
- Bonus Army
In 1932, Americans elected a new president, Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Roosevelt introduced the New Deal, a massive package of economic and social programs.

- Stock market regulations
- Protection of bank deposits
- Aid to farmers
- Job creation
- Social Security pensions

The New Deal failed to end the Great Depression, but it did ease some of its effects.