

Unit Plan: The Great Depression

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Unit Overview & Rationale

This unit on the Great Depression is designed for a general seventh grade US History Part II class. In this unit, students will learn about the major historical concepts of the Great Depression, Dust Bowl, and New Deal. Students will explore both the immediate impact and the lasting significance of the Great Depression era on American history and society. Over the course of the unit, students will examine primary documents and work with multiple texts to develop an understanding of the causes of the Great Depression and the features and impact of the New Deal. Students will also engage in classroom activities to better understand the economics surrounding the 1929 stock market crash and bank failures of the United States. Through the examination of primary documents, students will also develop an empathetic understanding of the lives of Americans during this time period.

This unit is designed so that students both learn about the history of the Great Depression and develop essential critical thinking and analysis skills. Over the course of this unit, students will engage in inquiry, reflection, debate, and discussion to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Great Depression and the New Deal. Students will engage in a structured academic controversy regarding whether or not the New Deal was successful, and will then be asked to evaluate and revise its features in a culminating project-based assessment. This unit plan aligns with both the Virginia Standards of Learning and those established by the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS). The unit lessons, assignments, and activities challenge students to develop understandings beyond the classroom to the United States of today.

Though this unit is designed for a general seventh grade US History II class, it can also be adapted for multiple learners or classes. It follows a unit on the 1920s, and the introductory lesson establishes both connections and distinctions between the two seemingly disjointed eras. Furthermore, as the unit plan ventures into the economic reasons for the Depression, additional connections are established between the two time periods. This unit concludes with an examination of the New Deal and Franklin Delano Roosevelt's presidency, which students will continue learning about in the following unit on World War II on the homefront. This unit is designed for ten 60-minute class periods, over the course of two weeks. These class periods include both a day for students to work on their New Deal projects and take a unit exam consisting of a multiple-choice test and a short answer essay.

Student Learning Goals

- Students will be able to understand, identify, and explain economic causes that led to the Great Depression through in-class notes, materials, and activities.
- Students will understand the immediate impact and historical significance of the Great Depression on the American economy and society through an examination of primary and secondary sources, analysis, and discussion.
- Students will learn about the major components of the New Deal and Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency by examining key programs, events, and policies.
- Students will debate the success of the New Deal on addressing the problems of the Great Depression through a Structured Academic Controversy.

Essential Questions

1. What caused the Great Depression? (SOL USII.6d; Obj. 1)
2. Was the New Deal successful? (SOL USII.6d; Obj. 2, 3, 4)
3. What was the impact of the Great Depression? (SOL USII.6d; Obj. 5)

Objectives

1. Students will be able to explain and relate the economic reasons for the collapse of the U.S. stock market, the failure of U.S. banks, and an international economic depression to the onset of the Great Depression (SOL USII.6d; NCSS II, VII, IX; NCSS 1A).
2. Students will be able to describe the features and explain the impact of the major policies and programs of the New Deal and Franklin Delano Roosevelt's presidency (SOL USII.6d, NCSS I, III, VI; NCSS 2A, 2B).
3. Students will be able to take and defend a position on the success of the New Deal in a post-discussion reflection (SOL USII.6d, NCSS V, NCSS 2A, 2B).
4. Students will be able to evaluate the effectiveness of specific New Deal policies and programs in their own version of an economic stimulus program (SOL USII.6d, NCSS V, NCSS 2C).
5. Students will be able to understand and explain the impact of the Great Depression on American individuals and American society (SOL USII.6d, NCSS VII, IX; NCSS 1B).

Standards

NCSS Themes

In this unit, students will learn about the era of history surrounding the Great Depression. This unit will encompass several of the ten NCSS thematic standards listed below. In this unit, students will learn about the causes of the Great Depression, and how this economic depression affected the lives of individual Americans as well as American society (Culture; Time, Continuity, and Change; People, Places, and Environment; Individuals, Groups and Institutions). Students will learn basic economic factors which led to the Depression, and how both the national and international economies were affected as a result (Production, Distribution, and Consumption; Global Connections). Finally, students will learn how the American government responded to the Depression with the New Deal and other economic and social programs (Power, Authority, and Governance).

- **Theme I:** Culture
- **Theme II:** Time, Continuity, and Change
- **Theme III:** People, Places, and Environment
- **Theme V:** Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- **Theme VI:** Power, Authority, and Governance
- **Theme VIII:** Production, Distribution, and Consumption
- **Theme IX:** Global Connection

NCSS Standards

Standard 1: Students will understand the causes of the Great Depression and how it affected American society.

1A: The student understands the causes of the crash of 1929 and the Great Depression. The student is able to:

- Analyze the causes and consequences of the stock market crash of 1929.
- Evaluate the causes of the Great Depression.
- Explore the reasons for the deepening crisis of the Great Depression and evaluate the Hoover administration's responses.

1B: The student understands how American life changed during the 1930s.

- Explain the effects of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl on American farm owners, tenants, and sharecroppers.
- Analyze the impact of the Great Depression on industry and workers and explain the response of local and state officials in combating the resulting economic and social crises.
- Analyze the impact of the Great Depression on the American family and on ethnic and racial minorities.

Standard 2: Students will understand how the New Deal addressed the Great Depression, transformed American federalism, and initiated the welfare state.

2A: The student understands the New Deal and the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

- Contrast the background and leadership abilities of Franklin D. Roosevelt with those of Herbert Hoover.
- Analyze the links between the early New Deal and Progressivism.
- Explain renewed efforts to protect the environment during the Great Depression and evaluate their success in places such as the Dust Bowl and the Tennessee Valley.

2B: The student understands the impact of the New Deal on workers and the labor movement.

- Explain how New Deal legislation and policies affected American workers and the labor movement
- Explain the re-emergence of labor militancy and the struggle between craft and industrial unions.
- Evaluate labor union positions on minority and women workers.

2C: The student understands opposition to the New Deal, the alternative programs of its detractors, and the legacy of the New Deal.

- Identify the leading opponents of New Deal policies and assess their arguments.
- Evaluate the significance and legacy of the New Deal.

Content Outline

- I. Introduction to the Great Depression
 - A. Aftermath of the "Roarin' Twenties"
- II. Causes of the Great Depression
 - A. Stock Market Crash
 1. Black Tuesday
 2. Overspeculation
 3. Buying on the Margin

- B. Bank Failures
 - 1. Uninsured Deposits
- C. International Economic Depression
 - 1. Smoot-Hawley Tariff
- III. Life During the Great Depression
 - A. Unemployment and Homelessness
 - 1. Breadlines
 - 2. Hooverilles
 - B. Dust Bowl
- IV. Economic Response to the Great Depression
 - A. Liberal, Conservative, and Radical
 - B. Hoover vs. FDR
 - 1. Presidential Election
- V. The New Deal
 - A. “Alphabet” Programs and Welfare Policies
 - B. Banking Regulations and Acts
 - C. Criticisms of the New Deal
 - D. Impact of the New Deal

Unit Assessments

Diagnostic Assessment

- Students’ initial knowledge of content areas and specific topics will be assessed via a “Do Now!” warm-up question at the beginning of each class. Students will be given a few minutes to individually respond to the prompt on their own, and then the prompt will be discussed as whole class. Students’ responses to these questions will be collected and assessed at the end of each week.

Formative Assessments

- Students will be formatively assessed through their completion of warm-up questions, homework assignments, post-lesson writing prompts (such as the exit tickets required for SAC and inquiry lessons), and their participation in daily class discussions. All unit lessons end in either an in-class discussion or post-lesson reflection assignment. Students will be given time to complete these assignments in class or they will be assigned for homework. Students’ responses to these assignments will be collected and assessed to inform future teaching practices.

Summative Assessments

- Students will be summatively assessed through both a standard unit test and a final unit project. The unit test, which will include both select- and supply-response sections, will effectively assess the content knowledge and cognitive skills outlined in the unit objectives and state standards. For the final unit project, students must design their own New Deal to address the problems of the Great Depression. Students will use laptops in class to create a flyer outlining and explaining their plan to the American people. This project will assess students’ knowledge and comprehension of the programs of the New Deal, and their understanding of how these programs impacted America (SOL USII.6d, NCSS 2A-C, Objectives 2-4). Additionally, students also must

understand how the Great Depression initially impacted the lives of Americans, and how the programs aimed to alleviate the problems of the Depression.

Materials & Resources

| <i>Day</i> | <i>Materials/Resources Needed</i> |
|------------|---|
| 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● iPad cart (reserve in advance) ● 1920s vs. Great Depression photograph files ● Data retrieval chart ● Exit ticket prompt |
| 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Data retrieval packets ● Inquiry document set packets |
| 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cloze notes (Life During the Great Depression) ● <i>Story of US: BUST</i> video clip ● Video clip question worksheets |
| 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cloze notes (Economic Policies) ● Economic activity packets ● Laptop cart (reserve in advance) |
| 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● iPad cart (reserve in advance) ● Video of speeches from Hoover and FDR ● Data retrieval packets ● Exit ticket |
| 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cloze notes (Programs of the New Deal) ● Class set of textbooks ● Data retrieval packets |
| 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SAC document set packets ● Data retrieval packets ● Exit ticket |
| 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Laptop cart (reserve in advance) ● Project prompt worksheet |
| 9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Laptop cart (reserve in advance) ● Unit test study guide |
| 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unit test ● Qwizdom remotes (reserve in advance) |
| ALL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Powerpoint ● “Do Now!” worksheet |

Unit Calendar

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| <p>Day 1 <i>Introduction to the Great Depression</i></p> <p>iPad Lesson: Compare and contrast the 1920s and Great Depression</p> <p>Activity: Examine and analyze photographs from the 1920s and Great Depression (iPad lesson)</p> <p>Diagnostic Assessment: What do you know about the Great Depression?</p> <p>Objective: 1, 5</p> | <p>Day 2 <i>Causes of the Great Depression</i></p> <p>Inquiry Lesson: What caused the Great Depression?</p> <p>Activity: Examine newspapers, political cartoons, photographs</p> <p>Summative Assessment: Exit ticket</p> <p>Objective: 1</p> | <p>Day 3 <i>Life During the Great Depression/Dust Bowl</i></p> <p>Lecture: Dust Bowl, Great Depression (Cloze notes)</p> <p>Activity: Take notes during class lecture; answer questions during <i>Story of US: Bust</i> documentary clip</p> <p>Formative Assessment: Participation in class discussion</p> <p>Objective: 5</p> | <p>Day 4 <i>Economics & Initial Reaction to the Great Depression</i></p> <p>Lecture: Liberal, conservative, and radical policies (Cloze notes)</p> <p>Laptop Activity: Economic activity packets, political cartoon analysis</p> <p>Formative/Summative Assessments: class participation; completion of activities</p> <p>Objectives: 5</p> | <p>Day 5 <i>Hoover vs. FDR</i></p> <p>iPad Lesson: Compare and contrast economic policies of Hoover and FDR</p> <p>Activity: Examine and analyze speeches from FDR and Hoover</p> <p>Summative Assessment: Exit ticket</p> <p>Objectives: 2, 5</p> |
| <p>Day 6 <i>Programs of the New Deal</i></p> <p>Lecture: New Deal Programs and Policies (Cloze notes)</p> <p>Activity: Divide and conquer - New Deal programs research using textbooks</p> <p>Summative Assessment: Present New Deal programs</p> <p>Objective: 2</p> | <p>Day 7 <i>Impact of the New Deal</i></p> <p>SAC Lesson: Was the New Deal successful?</p> <p>Activity: Structured Academic Controversy</p> <p>Formative/Summative Assessments: class participation; exit ticket</p> <p>Objectives: 3, 4</p> | <p>Day 8 <i>Build Your Own New Deal Project</i></p> <p>Laptop Activity: Build Your Own New Deal in-class project</p> <p>Summative Assessment: Completion of project</p> <p>Objectives: 2, 3, 4</p> | <p>Day 9 <i>Review: Great Depression</i></p> <p>Laptop Activity: Finish Build Your Own New Deal Project; Quizlet review</p> <p>Activity: Review unit test study guide</p> <p>Formative/Summative Assessment: Completion of project; participation in review</p> <p>Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4</p> | <p>Day 10 GREAT DEPRESSION TEST</p> |

Differentiation

This unit plan was designed for multiple types of learners. Over the course of this unit, students interact with several different types of primary sources. However, these primary sources are mainly in the form of photographs, video, and excerpted texts. For higher level learners, these lessons can easily be modified to include additional text-based sources.

Instead of asking students to analyze a photograph from the Great Depression, students could read FDR's inaugural address instead. Overall, this unit plan utilizes multiple forms of assessment that include both informal and formal writing assignments, oral presentation, and discussion participation that appeal to a variety of learners. Similarly, this unit asks students to work both collaboratively and individually, allowing for students of different learning styles opportunities to excel. Finally, this unit plan was carefully designed to incorporate multiple levels of cognitive development, ranging from comprehension to analysis, in order to address the content material in depth.

Accomodation

Though initially designed for a general seventh grade class, simple modifications to individual lessons can be made to accommodate all learners. The teacher can work with paraprofessionals to adapt the unit for students with exceptionalities, and should always consult before teaching. This unit incorporates many alternatives to simple text-based assignments, and utilizes literacy strategies such as Cloze notes and data retrieval charts to accommodate exceptional students. Additionally, many lessons revolve around student partnerships and groups, which can allow for positive collaboration among different level learners. In these types of group activities, however, it is especially important for teachers to monitor students' participation to ensure true learning. Further, additional accommodations, such as extended time for assignments, additional assistance with reading, or adjusted seating assignments can utilized in order to adequately accommodate students.