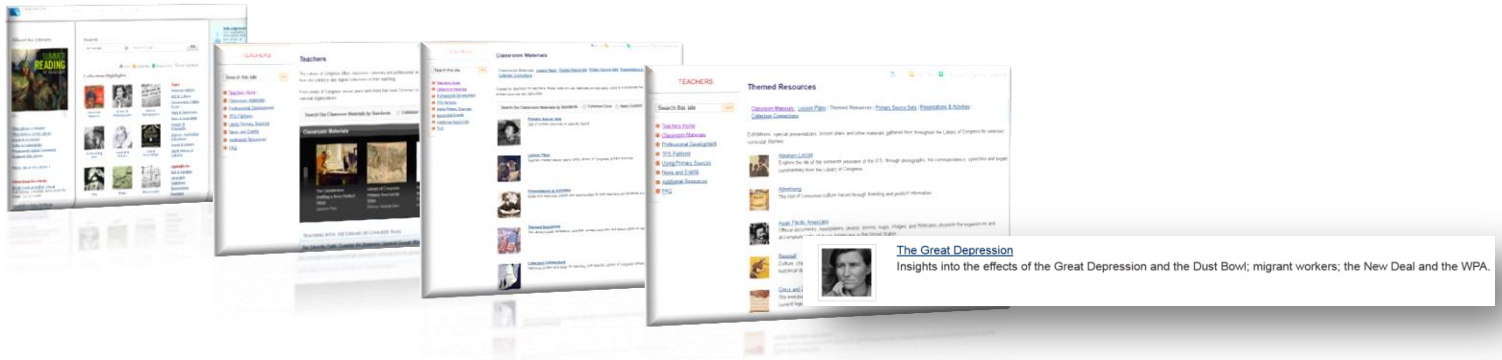


Great Depression Teacher Resources

The Library of Congress Teacher Resources Page offers a multitude of classroom materials for teaching about the Great Depression.

Start at www.loc.gov → “Especially for Teachers” → “Classroom Materials” → “Themed Resources” → Scroll down to find “The Great Depression”




Try a search term in the search box or choose from “Primary Source Sets,” “Lesson Plans,” “Exhibitions and Presentations,” “Collection Connections,” or “For Students”

TEACHERS

- Teachers Home
- Classroom Materials
- Professional Development
- TPS Partners
- Using Primary Sources
- News and Events
- Additional Resources
- FAQ

The Great Depression



[Detail] [Destitute Pea Pickers in California](#)

Themed Resources Home | [Primary Source Sets](#) | [Lesson Plans](#) | [Exhibitions and Presentations](#) | [Collection Connections](#) | [Search Terms](#) | [For Students](#)

Study the effects of the Great Depression and World War II on specific groups such as African Americans, women and children by studying images, maps, documents and life histories. Trace the history of labor unions. Access photographs taken by Works Progress Administration photographers and read expert commentary on Dorothea Lange's famous "Migrant Mother" picture.

Search terms--These terms may be useful when searching for items related to this theme in the digital collections.

- Business panics
- CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps)
- Depressions
- Dust Bowl era
- Federal Art Project
- Federal Theater Project
- Federal Writer's Project
- Food relief
- Farm Security Administration
- Great Depression
- Hoover, Herbert
- Hooverville
- Lange, Dorothea
- Migrant Laborers
- Names of FSA photographers
- National Industrial Recovery Act
- New Deal
- OWI (Office of War Information)
- Poverty
- RA (Resettlement Administration)
- Roosevelt, Franklin Delano
- Stock Market Crash, 1929
- TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority)
- Unemployed
- Unemployment

Primary Source Sets-- Specific artifacts (images, manuscripts, maps, sound files) with analysis tools help students think like historians about a particular historical event or phenomenon.

- [Dust Bowl Migration](#) Photographs, recorded music, and song lyrics document the daily ordeals of rural migrant families from the Great Plains during a decade marked by both the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression.
 - [The New Deal](#) Photographs, posters, oral histories, and music recount how Federal programs sought to end the Great Depression.
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Lesson Plans--Use these lesson plans, created by teachers for teachers, to explore the Great Depression

- [New Deal Programs: Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?](#) (Grades 9-12) Students investigate people who experienced the Great Depression and received relief from the New Deal.
 - [Found Poetry with Primary Sources: The Great Depression](#) (Grades 6-12) Students create poetry based on the language found in Depression Era oral histories.
 - [The Grapes of Wrath: Voices from the Great Depression](#) (Grades 9-12) Students create a scrapbook from the point of view of a migrant worker.
 - [Personal Stories and Primary Sources: Conversations with Elders](#) (Grades 6-12) Students use primary sources and an interview with grandparent or significant elder, to provide a human face for life in the twentieth century. Lesson III focuses on Gees Bend, Alabama during the Great Depression.
 - [The Great Depression and the 1990's](#) (Grades 9-12) Students gain a better understanding of why the government takes care of its people and how welfare programs started.
 - [Immigration and Migration: Today and During the Great Depression](#) (Grades 6-12) Students compare the immigration/migration experiences of their families to those of people living through the Great Depression.
 - [Migration during the Great Depression: Living History](#) (Grades 3-8) Students create an archival collection of oral histories, telling the stories of individuals in their community. Students will become acquainted with New Deal programs and the experiences of Depression-era Americans.
 - [To Kill a Mockingbird: A Historical Perspective](#) (Grades 6-12) Students are guided on a journey through the Depression Era South in the 1930s.
 - [Out of the Dust: Visions of Dust Bowl History](#) (Grades 3-8) Students gain an understanding of Dust Bowl history through the eyes of a child, using Karen Hesse's *Out of the Dust*.
 - [American Lives in Two Centuries: What Is an American?](#) (Grades 9-12) Students look at Depression era life histories to view the changing lifestyle of the average American.
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Exhibitions & Presentations--Multimedia resources from the Library of Congress that support instruction about the Great Depression. These resources include expert presentations, exhibitions, bibliographies, Webcasts, and other online materials.

- [15 Popular Requests from the FSA-OWI Collection](#) (Prints and Photographs) View 15 of the most frequently requested images from the FSA Collection. View an additional [15 staff selections](#).
- [African American Mosaic: WPA](#) (Exhibition) Learn how WPA helped black artists during the Great Depression.
- [African American Odyssey: The Depression, The New Deal, and World War II](#), (Exhibition) Learn about the effect of the Depression and World War II on African Americans.
- [American Memory Timeline: Great Depression and World War II, 1929-1945](#) (Presentation) These timeline articles are filled with primary source materials related to the Great Depression.
- [American Memory Timeline: Labor Unions During the Great Depression and New Deal](#) (Presentation) This timeline section focuses on the status of labor unions in the 1930s.
- [American Memory Timeline: Photographing People of the Great Depression](#) (Presentation) View a sampling of photographs by FSA photographers Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans.
- [Books and Beyond: Children of the Depression](#) (Webcast) Kathleen Thompson and Hilary Mac Austin discuss their book *Children of the Depression* which highlights FSA photographs from the LOC Collection.
- [Bound for Glory: 1939-1943](#) (Exhibition) Color images document the effects of the Depression on America's rural and small town populations, the nation's subsequent economic recovery and industrial growth, and the country's great mobilization for World War II.

- [Charles Todd's Scrapbook](#) (Document) Explore this online scrapbook filled with articles and ephemera relating to the migrant farm issue in California.
- [Children of the Great Depression](#) (Webcast) Authors Kathleen Thompson and Hilary Austin discuss their book illustrated with photographs of children taken during the Great Depression.
- [Documenting America: Photographic Series](#) (Presentation) This series of annotated portfolios highlights the work of 7 FSA photographers.
- [Dorothea Lange's "Migrant Mother" Photographs in the Farm Security Administration Collection: An Overview](#) (Prints and Photographs) Link to photographs from Lange's "Migrant Mother" series.
- [Ethnographic Experience: Sidney Robertson Cowell in Northern California, The](#) - (Presentation) From 1938 to 1940 Sidney Robertson directed a California Work Projects Administration project designed to survey musical traditions in Northern California.
- [Exploring Contexts: Migrant Mother](#) (Presentation) Read about the context in which Lange's famous photographs were taken.
- [Found Poetry and the American Life Histories Collection](#) (Article) Middle school teachers find the interviews in the American Life Histories to be rich resources for creating found poetry.
- [Immigration: Mexican – Depression and the Struggle for Survival](#) (Presentation) The Great Depression hit Mexican immigrants especially hard.
- [Life of the People: Realist Prints and Drawings from the Ben and Beatrice Goldstein Collection, 1912-1948](#) - (Exhibition) The *City Life* and *Capital and Labor* sections of this exhibit contain drawings depicting the 1920s and 1930s.
- [Lyrical Legacy: 400 Years of American Song and Poetry](#) (Presentation) Explore eighteen songs and poems representing each of the nine eras of American history. The song - "Sunny California" - and poem - "Textile Life" - document the hardships of life during the Depression.
- [The Migrant Experience](#) (Presentation) Read about the complex set of economic and ecological forces that brought migrant workers to California during the Depression.
- [New Deal Stage: Four Illustrated Articles](#) (Presentation) Learn about the Federal Theatre Project - an effort of the administration of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to provide work for unemployed theater professionals during the Great Depression.
- [New Deal Web Guide](#) (Library of Congress Bibliography) Link to selected Library of Congress resources documenting the New Deal era.
- [Photographers of the FSA: Selected Portraits](#) (Presentation) This sampler of portraits depicts photographers who worked for the Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information.
- [Posters from the WPA: Collection Highlights](#) (Presentation) These posters, selected by Library staff, demonstrate the breadth and depth of the collection and the styles and content used by the WPA to advertise varied programs and campaigns.
- [Posters from the WPA: Tony Velonis](#) (Presentation) Link to a 1994 interview with WPA Silkscreen Artist Tony Velonis.
- [Scoring with Voices from the Dust Bowl](#) (Article) Students use American roots music to score a retelling of Cinderella set in a migrant labor camp in 1940.
- [Voices from the Thirties: Life Histories from the Federal Writer's Project](#) (Presentation) Learn about the formation and history of this WPA program.

Collection Connections--Historical context and ideas for integrating individual digital collections of primary sources into instruction.

- [America from the Great Depression to World War II: Black and White Photographs from the FSA and OWI, ca. 1935-1945](#) (Summary and Teaching Resources)
- [America from the Great Depression to World War II: Color Photographs from the FSA and OWI, ca. 1935-1945](#) (Summary and Teaching Resources)
- [American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940](#) (Summary and Teaching Resources) This collection contains 2900 biographical interviews obtained during the Depression years of 1936-1940.
- [Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project 1936-1938](#) (Summary and Teaching Resources) This collection contains more than 2,300 first-person accounts of slavery and 500 black-and-white photographs of former slaves collected as part of the Federal Writers
- [Built in America: Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, 1933-Present](#) (Summary and Teaching Resources) Search this collection using the term "Civilian Conservation Corps" to locate examples of projects undertaken between 1933 and 1942.

- [By the People, For the People: Posters from the WPA, 1936-1943](#) (Summary and Teaching Resources) Works in this collection represent many programs from President Franklin D. Roosevelt.
- [California Gold: Northern California Folk Music from the Thirties. Collected by Sidney Robertson Cowell](#) (Summary and Teaching Resources) This New Deal project contains more than 35 hours of recorded folk music.
- [Florida Folklife from the WPA Collections, 1937-1942](#) (Summary and Teaching Resources) Completed as part of the Florida Works Project Administration program, this collection documents the music, history and culture of Florida.
- [The New Deal Stage: Selections from the Federal Theatre Project, 1935-1939](#) (Summary and Teaching Resources) The Federal Theatre Project was one of five arts-related projects established during the first term of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt under the Works Progress Administration (WPA).
- [Prosperity and Thrift: The Coolidge Era and the Consumer Economy, 1921-1929](#) (Summary and Teaching Resources) Explore the time period leading up to the Great Depression.
- [Voices from the Dust Bowl: the Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin Migrant Worker Collection, 1940-1941](#) (Summary and Teaching Resources) This collection documents the everyday life of residents of Farm Security Administration migrant work camps in central California in 1940 and 1941.
- [Washington as It Was: Photographs by Theodor Horydczak, 1923-1959](#) (Summary and Teaching Resources) In 1932, Horydczak photographed veterans of World War I who demonstrated in Washington in hopes of receiving financial assistance from the government.

For Students--Online activities and background information from the Library of Congress to help students learn more about The Great Depression.

- [American Treasures: America Eats](#) (Exhibition) View Federal Writer's Project photographs of this 1930s project
- [American Treasures: Federal Theater](#) (Exhibition) This WPA project was intended to provide employment for theater professionals during the Great Depression.
- [American Treasures: No Work](#) (Exhibition) This 1935 Blanche Grambs lithograph reflects the rawness of life during the Depression.
- [American Treasures: Our Good Earth](#) (Exhibition) John Steuart Curry, along with other American Regionalist artists, presented visions of America that found beauty and dignity in the lives of ordinary citizens.
- [American Treasures: The Bonus Army March](#) (Exhibition) World War I veterans marched on the Capitol in June 1932 to request early payment of cash bonuses due to them in 1945.
- [American Treasures: The Forgotten People](#) (Exhibition) Explore pages from FSA reports compiled by Dorothea Lange and Paul Taylor documenting migrant worker conditions in California.
- [American Treasures: The Grapes of Wrath](#) (Exhibition) Steinbeck's Pulitzer Prize winning novel traces one family's exodus from Oklahoma because of the Dust Bowl.
- [American Treasures: Tuberculosis Tests](#) (Exhibition) Elizabeth Olds created this lithograph as part of a series of prints about the Roosevelt administration's assistance to the unemployed during the Depression in Omaha.
- [Explore the States: Oklahoma Dust Bowl](#) (America's Library) Learn about the Oklahoma dust storms of the 1930s.
- [Explore the States: Tennessee](#) (America's Library) Read about the Tennessee Valley Authority - one of the most famous and successful projects begun by the federal government during the Great Depression.
- [Jump Back in Time: Depression and WWII](#) (America's Library) Read stories from this period in America's history.
- [Jump Back in Time: July 8, 1932](#) (America's Library) Learn about the stock market crash that triggered the Great Depression.
- [Meet Amazing Americans: Dorothea Lange](#) (America's Library) Read the life story of this photographer who became famous documenting the lives of migrant workers during the Great Depression.
- [Today in History \(April 8, 1935\) Works Progress Administration](#) (Today in History) Congress approved the Works Progress Administration (WPA).
- [Today in History \(July 16, 1936\) Let Us Now Praise Famous Men](#) (Today in History) Walker Evans and James Agee collaborated on this 1941 photojournalism project documenting the life of sharecropper families in Hale County, Alabama.
- [Today in History \(July 8, 1932\) The Depths of Depression](#) (Today in History) On this date, the stock market fell to its lowest point during the Great Depression.
- [Today in History \(June 16, 1933\) A New Deal](#) (Today in History) This date marked the end of the first hundred days of Franklin Roosevelt's presidency