



Great Depression

U.S. History Unit Companion

Directions

- Complete the Prepare section before you begin a unit.
- Complete the Lesson Summaries and Guided Notes section as you work through each lesson.
- Complete the Unit Review sections before you take the cumulative assessment.

NOTE: Your teacher may require that you complete and submit this unit companion.

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Prepare

Throughout the Great Depression unit, you will explore the following Essential Questions.

Unit Essential Questions

- What caused the Stock Market Crash of 1929?
- How did the Great Depression become a national and international crisis?
- How did Herbert Hoover's administration respond to the economic crisis?
- What types of relief efforts did the government and private agencies provide at the outset of the Great Depression?
- What human factors helped to create the Dust Bowl?
- How did the Dust Bowl affect farmers and their families?
- How did public opinion of Hoover's role in the Great Depression affect the presidential election of 1932?

You will learn about the following topics in the Great Depression unit:

- the causes of the Great Depression
- the initial response from the government to the Great Depression
- the impact of the Great Depression on farmers, workers, and African Americans
- the causes and effects of the Dust Bowl
- the effects of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff on the American economy and on Hoover's presidency

You will take a cumulative quiz and test over the content in this unit.



Lesson Summaries and Guided Notes

Each lesson is summarized on the following pages. Read the summary before a lesson to preview the most important information, including people, places, and events. Read the summary after a lesson to review the lesson content without rereading every word. As you complete each lesson, record information in the Guided Notes section. Some questions have been provided for you. You may also take notes on other important lesson information.

Causes of the Great Depression Summary

Herbert Hoover was elected president in 1928, promising humanitarian aid that would spread the economic prosperity of the Roaring Twenties to all Americans. Unfortunately, several dangerous economic practices were at work, including overproduction and the purchasing of stocks on speculation. The result was the Stock Market Crash of 1929, in which individual investors, banks, and corporations lost a significant amount of money. The effects of the crash quickly led to poverty and unemployment nationwide. The Great Depression became an international crisis, with countries worsening the problem through attempts to protect their own products.

Causes of the Great Depression Guided Notes	
Why was Herbert Hoover popular during his candidacy and early presidency? (slide 2)	Hoover’s party, the Republicans, had enjoyed two administrations characterized by economic prosperity. Hoover promised to continue this prosperity and spread wealth to all Americans through civil service reforms and humanitarian policies.
Watch the video “Overproduction Leads to Low Prices.” According to the video, what led to high poverty among farmers in the 1920s? (slide 2 video)	
What was Black Tuesday? What practices caused Black Tuesday to occur? (slide 4)	
What were three effects of the market crash? (slide 5)	
How did the policy of protectionism worsen the Great Depression worldwide? (slide 6)	

Responses to the Great Depression Summary

The country faced extreme economic hardship, but Herbert Hoover did not believe government aid was the solution to people’s financial troubles. He believed, instead, that Americans should be frugal and work harder to pull themselves out of poverty. He also provided funds to private agencies and the states to coordinate their relief efforts and encouraged business leaders not to lay off workers. Businesses had to cut wages instead, leading to many workers’ strikes. One of the most famous demonstrations was held by the Bonus Army, which set up camp in Washington, D.C. to demand early payment of bonuses for World War I veterans. When Hoover ordered the camps to be burned and violence ensued, already-low public approval of Hoover declined even further. Hoover did not win re-election in 1932 and is still regarded as one of the most unpopular and ineffective presidents in history.

Responses to the Great Depression Guided Note	
What was Herbert Hoover’s opinion of government aid during the Great Depression? (slide 2)	Herbert Hoover disliked the idea of government aid and thought it would weaken people’s drive to work hard. He supported the idea that people should spend less and work harder to help themselves out of economic hardship.
Describe Herbert Hoover’s concept of “rugged individualism.” (slide 2)	
How did Herbert Hoover suggest the business community support the economy? (slide 3)	
How did private charities provide relief during the early part of the Great Depression? (slide 4)	
Cite evidence of the public’s perception of Herbert Hoover in the early 1930s. (slide 5)	

Responses to the Great Depression Guided Note

What was the Bonus Army and what were they fighting for?
(slide 5)

How did Hoover's actions toward the Bonus Army worsen the public's perception of him? (Slide 5)

Effects of the Great Depression Summary

Throughout 1931 and 1932, tension and frustration grew among laborers and farmers, leading to frequent and sometimes violent strikes such as the Ford Hunger March which resulted in four deaths and many injuries. Hoover finally decided government intervention was necessary, but his efforts were not sufficient to solve the devastating economic hardships faced by so many Americans.

The Great Depression was especially hard on African Americans. African American farmers faced lower pay, layoffs, evictions, and lost land. In cities, white employees found ways to take African Americans' jobs. The Scottsboro Boys trial reflected racial tensions and the inequality and discrimination African Americans faced.

People sought escape from their problems through entertainment, enjoying movies that reflected the era's values of family and community. They also sought movies that offered pure escapism in the form of music and comedy.

Effects of the Great Depression Guided Notes	
What happened during the Ford Hunger March? (slide 2)	The Ford Hunger March was a labor strike in 1932, when workers protested widespread layoffs at the Ford Motor Company. In an attempt to march to the Ford plant in Dearborn, Michigan, they were met by violence from local police and firefighters. Four people were killed and labor relations in the U.S. became worse.
What were the goals of the Farm Holiday Association? (slide 2)	
Give two examples of Hoover's efforts at government relief. List the effects of each. (slide 3)	
Why did the Great Depression make living conditions even worse for African Americans than their white counterparts? (slide 4)	

Effects of the Great Depression Guided Notes

What was the outcome of the case of the Scottsboro Boys? (slide 5)	
How did the Scottsboro Boys trial reflect racial inequality and injustice in the 1930s? (slide 5)	
What values of the Great Depression era were reflected in the popular movies of the time? (slide 6)	

The Dust Bowl Summary

While people across America felt the devastating effects of the Great Depression, farmers in the middle of the country experienced particular conditions that worsened their plight. Many were in debt for land they purchased during the agricultural boom years of World War I. When agricultural prices plummeted, they could not afford to pay their loans. Environmental conditions made the situation in middle America worse. Farmers had engaged in unwise practices when farming their land, including stripping lands of native grasses. Now the land was stripped bare, and a major drought made it especially dry. The result was a series of devastating dust storms, aptly named the Dust Bowl, in which topsoil blew through the air, at great danger to people and animals across the country. When the thick black dust of a particularly bad “black blizzard” traveled from Oklahoma to Washington, D.C., lawmakers there finally took notice of the hardships in the Midwest. While many farmers tried to save their land, others fled the Dust Bowl of Oklahoma and Texas and migrated to California to try to find work harvesting crops. These migrants were referred to as “Okies.”

The Dust Bowl Guided Notes	
How did unwise practices in response to the agricultural prosperity during WWI set farmers up for disaster after the war? (slide 2)	During World War I, farmers enjoyed prosperity because the government was purchasing their products to feed the soldiers. Farmers wanted to maximize their profits by growing as much as they could, so they borrowed money to expand their farms. When the need for extra crops and prosperity in agriculture dwindled after the war, farmers found themselves struggling to repay loans.
How did farmers’ misuse of land and environmental conditions contribute to the Dust Bowl? (slide 3)	
What were “black blizzards”? (slide 4)	
How did bank closures contribute to farmers losing their land? (slide 5)	

Dust Bowl Guided Notes

Who were "Okies" and what actions did they take to find a better life during the Great Depression?
(slide 6)

Legacy of the Great Depression Summary

As the Great Depression worsened around the world, countries sought to protect their own products by placing high tariffs on products imported from other countries. In the United States, the most sweeping piece of protectionist legislation was the Smoot-Hawley Tariff, which imposed taxes on many imported goods. Ultimately, protectionist policies made the economic situation worse because international trade came to a virtual standstill and people could not get the materials they needed at reasonable prices.

Most people felt Herbert Hoover's response to the Great Depression was insufficient, and they blamed him for their problems. His hands-off philosophy may have been welcome in times of economic prosperity, but it made him incapable of stepping in when crisis hit. It's not surprising that he was not re-elected in 1932. Instead, Americans elected Democrat Franklin Delano Roosevelt, an optimistic candidate who promised government aid to struggling Americans. Roosevelt's election brought together new groups to form the core of the Democratic party. This new makeup of the Democratic party would be the legacy of the 1932 election, lasting for decades to come.

Legacy of the Great Depression Guided Notes	
Why did many Americans have a negative perception of President Herbert Hoover? (slide 2)	Americans were unhappy about Hoover's refusal to provide government aid directly to those who were struggling financially.
What was the Smoot-Hawley Tariff and how did it worsen economic conditions? (slide 3)	
Describe the reaction of citizens to Hoover on the campaign trail leading up to the election of 1932. (slide 4)	
How was Franklin Delano Roosevelt's election in 1932 a turning point for the Democratic party? (slide 5)	

Legacy of the Great Depression Guided Notes

Why was Herbert Hoover incapable of shifting into crisis mode when the prosperous 1920s deteriorated into the Great Depression of the 1930s?
(slide 6)



Unit Review – Key Words

Describe the following key words from the [Unit Name] unit. Your descriptions should be as detailed as possible. Include names, dates, and relevant facts related to each key word. Be sure to explain why each person or term is important.

Remember to download and save this PDF before writing.

Causes of the Great Depression

Key Word	Description
bank run	A bank run is the withdrawal by a large number of individuals or investors of money from a bank due to fears of the bank's instability. Bank runs ultimately increase the bank's likelihood of failure
Black Tuesday	
bread line	
business cycle	
depression	
expansion	
Herbert Hoover	
market correction	
Protectionism	
recession	
speculation	

Responses to the Great Depression

Key Word	Description
Bonus Army	The Bonus Army was a group of World War I veterans and others who marched to Washington, D.C. in 1932 to demand early cash payments on their war bonuses.
Hoovervilles	
rugged Individualism	

Effects of the Great Depression

Key Word	Description
Scottsboro Boys	Scottsboro Boys is a reference to a trial in Scottsboro, Alabama in 1931, where nine young African-American men were falsely accused of raping two white women, and after their trial, all but one were sentenced to death. The extreme injustice of the trial, particularly given the ages of the defendants and the inadequacy of the testimony against them, led to national and international attention.

The Dust Bowl

Key Word	Description
Dust Bowl	The Dust Bowl refers to the area in the middle of the country that had been severely over farmed in the 1920s and suffered from a terrible drought that coincided with the Great Depression. The name came from the “black blizzard” of topsoil and dust that blew through the area.
Grapes of Wrath	
Okies	
John Steinbeck	

Key Word	Description
tenant farmer	

Legacy of the Great Depression

Key Word	Description
Smoot-Hawley Tariff	<p>The Smoot-Hawley Tariff was the tariff approved by Hoover to raise the tax</p> <p style="text-align: center;">tariffs</p>
Mary McLeod Bethune	



Unit Review – Key Questions

Before the unit assessment, answer the following key questions. Each question contains a tip to help you locate the material in the course. You may want to add your own note in the first column about the location of the information. Write the answers in your own words, and test your memory of each answer by covering the answer column while quizzing yourself. Remember that some content may be presented in a multimedia presentation, graphic, or other resource. Refer to the transcripts or text versions for written versions of that content.

Key Question / Location	Answer in your own words
What factors led to the Stock Market Crash of 1929? (Causes of the Great Depression)	In the 1920s, the Federal Reserve set interest rates artificially low and loosened requirements for how much money banks had to keep on hand. As the money supply increased, more people began to invest, and many began to invest in risky schemes and to speculate on margin. However, dips in the market in 1929 caused investors to panic and sell stocks rapidly, leading to lower stock values. The stock values plummeted so quickly on October 29, 1929, that the market was said to have crashed.
What was Herbert Hoover's philosophy when it came to providing government aid to help struggling Americans? (Responses to the Great Depression)	
How was Hoover's concept of "rugged individualism" reflected in his economic policies? (Responses to the Great Depression)	
How did Hoover's response to the Bonus Army demonstrations weaken his presidency? (Responses to the Great Depression)	

Key Question / Location	Answer in your own words
<p>Why were African Americans' struggles during the Great Depression particularly challenging? (Effects of the Great Depression)</p>	
<p>How did the Scottsboro Boys trial reflect racial inequality and injustice in the 1930s? (Effects of the Great Depression)</p>	
<p>What role did popular entertainment play during the Great Depression? (Effects of the Great Depression)</p>	
<p>What factors led to the struggles of farmers during the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl? (The Dust Bowl)</p>	
<p>How did voter perceptions about Hoover lead to his defeat in the 1932 presidential election? (Legacy of the Great Depression)</p>	
<p>What was the Smoot-Hawley Tariff and how did it reflect the attitude of protectionism? (Legacy of the Great Depression)</p>	