

PrepUS History
Unit 7 - Changing America
America: The Story of Us
“Bust”

Introduction

In October 1929, Wall Street crashes; the American Dream is in doubt as economic turmoil ensues. The crash coincides with the start of the Great Depression. Unemployment rises sharply and as confidence in U.S. banks disintegrates, bank closures sweep the nation. On the Great Plains, economic difficulties are compounded by natural disaster.

Years of intensive plowing and severe drought dry out the land. Vast dust storms fill the skies and drive people west during the Dust Bowl. Inaugurated in the depths of the Depression in 1933, new President Franklin D. Roosevelt starts to turn things around. The New Deal and public works projects help save America from despair and destitution.

The construction of the Hoover Dam and Mount Rushmore employ thousands of people and signal recovery and hope for the future. However, world conflict is brewing in Europe – brought home to Americans by the symbolic boxing match between Joe Louis and Max Schmeling. World War II looms on the horizon as the Nazi Party gains power.

Part I

Read through the question in each box before watching the film. Then watch the film and write notes that may help you answer each question in the box labeled “notes.”

Question	Notes that will help you answer the question
1. What was the “bank run” of 1930 and what are some of the reasons it happened?	
2. What were the effects of the bank crisis in the U.S. on international politics?	
3. What were some of the innovations that made the construction of the Hoover Dam possible?	

4. How did the construction of the Hoover Dam and Mount Rushmore affect the U.S. economy?	
5. What caused the Dust Bowl? Looking back now, do you think it could have been prevented?	
6. Why were the boxing matches between Joe Louis and Max Schmeling such big stories?	

Part II

Now that you have finished watching the entire film, use the notes you took to fully answer the questions in complete sentences on another sheet of paper.