

Group Members:

Period/Date:

Dust Bowl – Stations Activity

Station 1 – Movietone News Clips

Answer the following questions after viewing the Movietone News clips from 1934.

1. How did the United States government respond to the extreme drought in the Midwest?
2. What was the general attitude of the farmers toward both the ecological conditions, and the government's response to the crisis?

Station 2 – Map and Causes

Read the excerpt about the Dust Bowl and answer the following questions.

1. What were the causes (both natural and human-made) of the Dust Bowl?
2. What were the effects of the massive dust storms on humans, farmland, and machinery?
3. Which states lost population during the 1930's? In which direction did most people fleeing the Dust Bowl move?

Station 3 – *The Grapes of Wrath* Video Clips

Watch the video clips from the film 'The Grapes of Wrath' and answer the following questions.

1. What happens to Muley's family? What explanation does the man from the bank give?
2. How were farm owners taking advantage of workers when they reached California? According to the film, how did they deal with those who questioned their practices?

Station 4 – Primary Source Document

Read the account by Henry Koczur (age 16) about "riding the rails" during the Great Depression, and answer the following questions.

1. Henry Koczur refers to a "bull" in this document. What/who do you think this is?
2. What happens to Koczur in his first encounter with the "bull"? How are things different the second time they meet?

Station 5 – Dust Bowl Photography

View the video presentation on Dorothea Lange's Dust Bowl-era photography and answer the following questions.

1. Dorothea Lange worked for the Farm Security Administration. Is it surprising to see such "honest" images being promoted by the federal government? Explain.
2. The song in the video ("California Stars") was written by Woody Guthrie, who worked with and lived among Dust Bowl migrants. How does the message of the song match the imagery of Dorothea Lange's photographs?

Station 6 – Song Analysis Activity

Read the lyrics to "God Bless America" and "This Land is Your Land" and answer the following questions.

1. Which song seems to more accurately reflect the mood of America during the Dust Bowl and Great Depression era? Explain.
2. Woody Guthrie's song has generated a fair amount of controversy – particularly due to the content of some of the song's later verses. Why do you think these verses are controversial? Would you consider Guthrie to be a "radical", as many have claimed him to be? Explain.

Station 7 – Reflection Questions

Answer the following questions after completing the first six stations.

1. Do you believe that life improved for migrants once they reached California? Explain why or why not, using evidence from the first six stations.
2. Do you believe that the government should have done more to help "Dust Bowl refugees"? Should the federal government have provided direct aid, regulated farming in non-affected regions, or put displaced mid-westerners to work in other parts of the country? Explain.

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