

## 1920's – Great Depression DBQ

Life in America changed greatly throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Using the information, we learned about these time periods in class and the background information you may already have (English ABC programs). Write an essay, using detailed evidence answering the prompt below:

**Explain the *changes* that occurred in America between the 1920s and 1930s, describe the *impacts* these events had on the citizens.**

Be sure to answer **BOTH** parts of the quest and use the rubric on the back of this page to check if you are on track.

# 1920's – Great Depression DBQ Rubric

Criteria	10	8	7	5	3
Answering the Question	Every piece of the question is answered in full, with detail	Every part of the question is answered but not with detail	Most of the question is answered but missing pieces	Only some of the question was answered	Question was not answered
Thesis / Claim	Thesis responds in a complete, complex sentence and suggests an opinion with reasons	Thesis responds in a complete sentence and states an opinion	Thesis responds in a basic sentence and the student opinion is not clear	Thesis is not in a complete sentence is no opinion is mentioned	No thesis is given
Evidence	Student uses 5 specific pieces of evidence from the "Great Depression Documents," classroom notes, or other class materials	Student uses 4 specific pieces of evidence from the "Great Depression Documents," classroom notes, or other class materials	Student uses 3 specific pieces of evidence from the "Great Depression Documents," classroom notes, or other class materials	Student uses 2 specific pieces of evidence from the "Great Depression Documents," classroom notes, or other class materials	Student uses 1 or less specific piece of evidence from the "Great Depression Documents," classroom notes, or other class materials
Citations	All citations are accurate and correct: Author(s), text title(s)	Most citations are accurate and correct: Author(s), text title(s)	Some citations are accurate and correct: Author(s), text title(s)	Few citations are accurate and correct: Author(s), text title(s)	No citations
Commentary / Reasoning	Student writes 2-3 sentences to explain what each piece of evidence means and how it supports their thesis, with details and personal thought	Student writes 1 sentence to explain what each piece of evidence means and how it supports their thesis	Student writes some explanation of what each piece of evidence means OR how it supports their thesis (not both)	Student does not explain enough to make it clear what the evidence means or supports	No commentary given
Structure	Essay has a clear <u>introduction</u> (with thesis), <u>body paragraphs</u> (with topic sentence, evidence and commentary), and a clear <u>conclusion</u> (with thesis re-stated)	Essay has an <u>introduction</u> (with thesis), <u>body paragraphs</u> (with topic sentence, evidence and commentary), and a <u>conclusion</u> (with thesis re-stated)	Essay has an introduction paragraph, body paragraphs, and conclusion paragraph, but is missing many key details within them	Essay has separate paragraphs but is not clear as to what each paragraph is	Essay has one large paragraph

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Score: \_\_\_\_\_ /60

### Document 1

. . . This is not an issue as to whether the people are going hungry or cold in the United States. It is solely a question of the best method by which hunger and cold can be prevented. It is a question as to whether the American people on the one hand will maintain the spirit of charity and of mutual self-help through voluntary giving and the responsibility of local government as distinguished on the other hand from appropriations out of the Federal Treasury for such purposes. My own conviction is strongly that if we break down this sense of responsibility, of individual generosity to individual, and mutual self-help in the country in times of national difficulty and if we start appropriations of this character we have not only impaired something infinitely valuable in the life of the American people but have struck at the roots of self-government. Once this has happened it is not the cost of a few score millions, but we are faced with the abyss of reliance [trap of relying] in [the] future upon Government charity in some form or other. The money involved is indeed the least of the costs to American ideals and American institutions. . . .

Source: President Herbert Hoover, Press Statement, February 3, 1931

1. According to this document, how did President Hoover hope the American people would respond to the problems of the Depression?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Pd: \_\_\_\_\_

Define:

Black Tuesday	
Breadline	
Buying on margin	
Overproduction	
Under consumption	
Shantytown / Shacktown	
Hawley-Smoot Tariff Act	

**Historical Context:** After the crash of the stock market in 1929, the Great Depression began – through there were also other contributing causes. The Depression brought devastation to the economy of the United States and resulted in severe problems and hardships for the American people. Throughout the 1930s, the American people and the government dealt with the Depression in various ways.

**Task:** Using information from the documents and your knowledge of United States History, answer the questions that follow each document.

**Directions:** Analyze the documents and answer the short-answer questions that follow each document in the space provided.

## Document 2

. . . Kentucky coal miners suffered perhaps the most. In Harlan County there were whole towns whose people had not a cent of income. They lived on dandelions and blackberries. The women washed clothes in soapweed suds. Dysentery bloated the stomachs of starving babies. Children were reported so famished they were chewing up their own hands. Miners tried to plant vegetables, but they were often so hungry that they ate them before they were ripe. On her first trip to the mountains, Eleanor Roosevelt saw a little boy trying to hide his pet rabbit. "He thinks we are not going to eat it," his sister told her, "but we are." In West Virginia, miners mobbed company stores demanding food. Mountain people, with no means to leave their homes, sometimes had to burn their last chairs and tables to keep warm. Local charity could not help in a place where everyone was destitute. . . . "No one has starved," Hoover boasted. To prove it, he announced a decline in the death rate. It was heartening, but puzzling, too. Even the social workers could not see how the unemployed kept body and soul together, and the more they studied, the more the wonder grew. Savings, if any, went first. Then insurance was cashed. Then people borrowed from family and friends. They stopped paying rent. When evicted, they moved in with relatives. They ran up bills. It was surprising how much credit could be wangled. In 1932, about 400 families on relief in Philadelphia had managed to contract an average debt of \$160, a tribute to the hearts if not the business heads of landlords and merchants. But in the end they had to eat "tight." . . . A teacher in a mountain school told a little girl who looked sick but said she was hungry to go home and eat something. "I can't," the youngster said. "It's my sister's turn to eat." In Chicago, teachers were ordered to ask what a child had had to eat before punishing him. Many of them were getting nothing but potatoes, a diet that kept their weight up, but left them listless, crotchety [cranky], and sleepy. . . .

Source: Caroline Bird, *The Invisible Scar*, David McKay Company

2. State two ways the families described in this passage dealt with the problems of the Depression.

Document 3



H. W. Felchner, New York City, February, 1932

3. Based on the photograph, state one effect the Great Depression had on many Americans.

#### **Document 4**

. . . Brigades of Bonus Marchers converged on Washington [in 1932]. Congress had voted the bonus money, but for later. Some of these men might have been hustlers and perhaps there were a few Communists among them, but most were ex-soldiers who had served the nation [in World War I], frightened men with hungry families. The ragged hordes blocked traffic, clung like swarming bees to the steps of the Capitol. They needed their money now. They built a shacktown on the edge of Washington. Many had brought their wives and children. Contemporary reports mention the orderliness and discipline of these soldiers of misfortune. . . .

Source: John Steinbeck, "Living With Hard Times," Esquire

**4. Based on this document, state the reason the Bonus Marchers went to Washington.**

**Document 5**

... Working women at first lost their jobs at a faster rate than men — then reentered the workforce more rapidly. In the early years of the Depression, many employers, including the federal government, tried to spread what employment they had to heads of households. That meant firing any married woman identified as a family's "secondary" wage-earner. But the gender segregation in employment patterns that was already well established before the Depression also worked to women's advantage. Heavy industry suffered the worst unemployment, but relatively few women stoked blast furnaces in the steel mills or drilled rivets on assembly lines or swung hammers in the building trades. The teaching profession, however, in which women were highly concentrated and indeed constituted a hefty majority of employees, suffered pay cuts but only minimal job losses. And the underlying trends of the economy meant that what new jobs did become available in the 1930s, such as telephone switchboard operation and clerical work, were peculiarly suited to women. . . .

Source: David M. Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*, Oxford University Press

**5. Based on this document, state two ways women in the labor force were affected by the Great Depression.**



## Document 7

... Suddenly the papers were filled with accounts of highway picketing by farmers around Sioux City. A Farmers' Holiday Association had been organized by one Milo Reno, and the farmers were to refuse to bring food to market for thirty days or "until the cost of production had been obtained." . . . The strike around Sioux City soon ceased to be a local matter. It jumped the Missouri River and crossed the Big Sioux. Roads were picketed in South Dakota and Nebraska as well as in Iowa. Soon Minnesota followed suit, and her farmers picketed her roads. North Dakota organized. Down in Georgia farmers dumped milk on the highway. For a few days the milk supply of New York City was menaced. Farmers in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, organized, and potato farmers in Long Island raised the price of potatoes by a "holiday." This banding together of farmers for mutual protection is going on everywhere, but the center of this disturbance is still Iowa and the neighboring States. The Milk Producers' Association joined forces with the Farmers' Holiday. All the roads leading to Sioux City were picketed. Trucks by hundreds were turned back. Farmers by hundreds lined the roads. They blockaded the roads with spiked telegraph poles and logs. They took away a sheriff's badge and his gun and threw them in a cornfield. Gallons of milk ran down roadway ditches. Gallons of confiscated milk were distributed free on the streets of Sioux City. . . .

Source: Mary Heaton Vorse, "Rebellion in the Cornbelt," Harper's Magazine, December 1932

**7. Based on this document, state two actions taken by farmers to deal with their economic situation during the Great Depression.**

## Document 6

. . . For black people, the New Deal was psychologically encouraging (Mrs. Roosevelt was sympathetic; some blacks got posts in the administration), but most blacks were ignored by the New Deal programs. As tenant farmers, as farm laborers, as migrants, as domestic workers, they didn't qualify for unemployment insurance, minimum wages, social security, or farm subsidies. Roosevelt, careful not to offend southern white politicians whose political support he needed, did not push a bill against lynching. Blacks and whites were segregated in the armed forces. And black workers were discriminated against in getting jobs. They were the last hired, the first fired. Only when A. Philip Randolph, head of the Sleeping-Car Porters Union, threatened a massive march on Washington in 1941 would Roosevelt agree to sign an executive order establishing a Fair Employment Practices Committee. But the FEPC had no enforcement powers and changed little. . . .

Source: Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, HarperCollins Publishers

**6a. Based on this document, state one reason many African Americans did not benefit from New Deal programs.**

**6b. According to this document, how did the government respond to the threat from the Sleeping-Car Porters Union?**