**US History**

**Measurement Topic 5: The Great Depression and the New Deal**

**Level 2: Learn it, study it**, and then test it

Learning Target # 2: Know the effects on people of the Great Depression. Understand the Dust Bowl and discuss the impact the Dust Bowl Refugees had on California

**How did the Great Depression affect people?**

During the Great Depression, one out of every four people was unemployed, and homeless. 9,000 banks, 30,000 businesses had failed and closed. The American people were jobless, homeless and hungry.

To help with this situation charities set up soup kitchens and bread lines to help feed the poor people. Families or individual who could not pay their rent or home mortgages lost their homes. Some people who were afraid or too embarrassed did not move and their landlord or bank would take them to court for an eviction notice. These people were evicted, kicked out to the street, with everything they owned being thrown out on the street too. Homeless people had nowhere to go so they build **homeless towns called Hooverville’s**.

Other homeless people began wandering around the country by walking, hitchhiking or riding the “rails” (railroads) looking for work. These wanders were called Hobos. They would sleep were they could, eat when and where ever they could.

Farmers in the Midwest were hit the hardest. In the 1920’s when crop prices dropped many farmers left the fields uncultivated (didn’t plant anything) then in 1932 a severe drought hit the area (no rain for 5 years =dried up the soil). Nothing would grow on the land, leaving just dirt. Wind came through, and since many fields were uncultivated, held no crops and were unwatered, the wind was able to lift up all the soil creating blankets of dirt that was blown across the land. The dirt was so thick it made daylight seem like night. This became known as the **Dust Bowl. Drought, wind and poor farming techniques were the leading causes of the Dust Bowl.**  No matter how carefully famers sealed their homes, dust covered everything. Dirt would pile up like snow. Since the farmers did not have any crops to sell they had to give their farms back to the bank, or the banks came and took farms away.

Penniless farmers packed all their belongings and headed to California. Since many migrants were from Oklahoma, they became known as “okies”. Many farmers/migrants believed they would find a better life in **California because of all the agricultural jobs**. After struggling to make it to California, many found themselves turned away at its borders. California had been especially hostile to poor newcomers. In 1936, the Los Angeles police department established a border patrol, dubbed the "Bum Blockade," at major road and rail crossings for the purpose of turning back “okies”/migrants. California's Indigent Act, passed in 1933, made it a crime to bring “okies to California, People were arrest for trying to bring their relatives to California from Oklahoma.

Those who did cross over into California found that because there were too many workers, wages were set very low. California typically used Japanese, Chinese and Mexicans as farm labor, which led to many “okies” not being able to find work. Those who did find work, worked 16 hours a day, seven days a week, for starvation wages with which they could barely support themselves, let alone an entire family. Even with an entire family working, migrants could not support themselves on these low wages. Many set up camps along irrigation ditches in the farmers' fields. These "ditchbank" camps fostered poor sanitary conditions and created a public health problem. Poverty, malnutrition, and poor living and working conditions left many migrants vulnerable to an array of diseases. Injuries while working would not heal, would cause many times death. In an attempt to maintain a steady income, workers had to follow the harvest around the state. When potatoes were ready to be picked, the migrants needed to be where the potatoes were. The same principle applied to harvesting cotton, lemons, oranges, peas, and other crops.

California soon became overwhelmed with migrant workers (farmers from back east). These migrant workers were faced with hostility from those already living in California because of the competition for jobs. Schools became overcrowded, crime increased with people looking for food and money to support their families. California had to hire more sheriffs to protect people from the rising crime and also to patrol the borders to keep the “okies” out. Because so many new people came to California, taxes were raised. California was just not prepared to handle a 50% growth.

**Answer the following questions with COMPLETE SENTENCES.**

1. What happened to people as a result of the Great Depression? (DETAILS)
2. Why did farmers move to California? What made them move? What pulled them towards California?
3. What was the Dust Bowl?
4. How were “okies” treated as they traveled to California?
5. How were “okies” treated when they arrived to California?
6. What were the working conditions like for the workers in California?
7. How did Californians treat the “okies”? (Details)
8. What happened to California as a result of all the new people?

Write an essay explaining who migrated to California as a result of the Dust Bowl. Discuss why these people moved (what pushed them towards California/what pulled them towards California), how they were treated along the way, how native Californians treated them and the working conditions they encountered as California agricultural workers.

**Type essay for level 3, Type essay and add examples from movie for level 4)**

Introduction

Paragraph 1: Why did people/farmers/okies move? Why did they move to California?

Paragraph 2: How were the working conditions and treatment for the okies in California?

Paragraph 3: What happened to California as a result of all the new people?

Conclusion