

Study Guide



Chapter 9, Section 2

For use with textbook pages 474–479

LIFE DURING THE DEPRESSION

CONTENT VOCABULARY

- bailiff** court official (page 475)
- shantytown** community formed on unused or public lands by newly homeless people (page 475)
- Hooverville** name given to shantytowns (page 475)
- hobo** an unemployed individual who wandered around the country (page 476)
- Dust Bowl** the dried-up lands of the Great Plains that resulted from a severe drought (page 476)
- soap opera** daytime radio shows that were sponsored by the makers of laundry soaps (page 478)

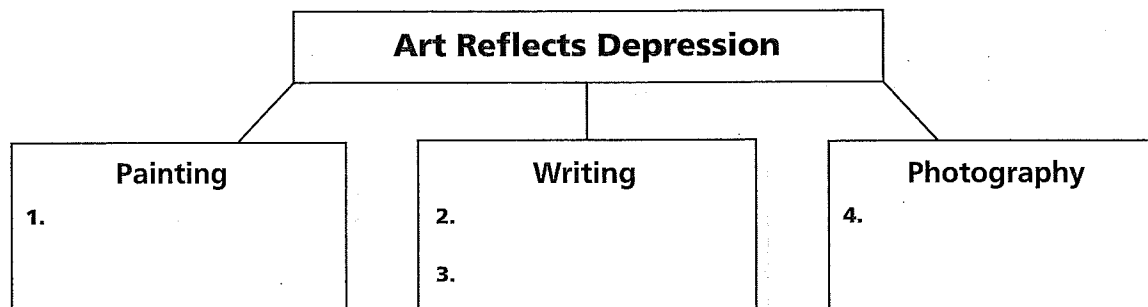
DRAWING FROM EXPERIENCE

What images come to mind when you hear the words *Great Depression*? Where do you think these images come from?

The last section explained the causes of the Great Depression. This section describes how the Great Depression affected Americans.

ORGANIZING YOUR THOUGHTS

Use the diagram below to help you take notes. Art during the 1930s reflected the Depression. Describe how it did so in the diagram.



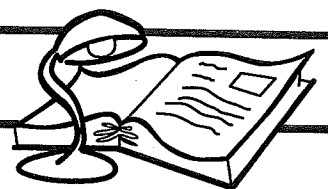
California History-Social Science Standards

11.6 Students analyze the different explanations for the Great Depression and how the New Deal fundamentally changed the role of the federal government.

Focuses on: 11.6.3

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READ TO LEARN

• The Depression Worsens (page 475)

The Depression grew worse during President Hoover's administration. Thousands of banks suspended operations. Thousands of companies went out of business. Millions of Americans were unemployed. Many of the unemployed went hungry. They joined bread lines with their old colleagues to receive a free handout of food. They lined up outside soup kitchens. These were private charities set up to give poor people a meal.

Many people could not afford to pay their rent or mortgage and lost their homes. Those who could not or would not move were given an eviction notice. Court officials called **bailiffs** threw them and their belongings in the street. Many of these homeless people put up shacks on unused or public lands, forming communities called **shantytowns** throughout the country. Many called the shantytowns **Hoovervilles**, because they blamed President Hoover for their problems.

Many homeless and unemployed people began to wander around the country. Known as **hobos**, they often sneaked rides on railroad cars to get from place to place.

In addition to the Depression, farmers soon faced a new problem. For a long time, farmers on the Great Plains had plowed the soil. They uprooted the grasses that held the soil's moisture and planted wheat. When crop prices decreased in the 1920s, however, Midwestern farmers left many of their fields unplanted. In 1932 the Great Plains experienced a severe drought. The unplanted soil turned to dust. Much of the Plains became a **Dust Bowl**. The winds blew the dry soil, blackening the sky for hundreds of miles. As the drought continued, the number of dust storms increased. Many families packed their belongings into old cars or trucks and headed west to California, to find better opportunities. There most remained homeless and in poverty.

5. Why did many farmers in the Great Plains leave their land in the 1930s and head west?

• Escaping the Depression (page 477)

Americans turned to entertainment to escape their situation, if only for a little while. Many went to the movies. Most often, Americans would see people on the screen who were happier and richer than they were. Comedies provided

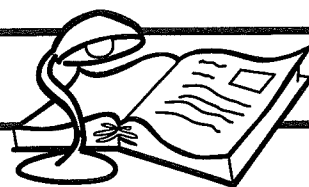
Academic Vocabulary

suspend: to temporarily stop an operation (p. 475)

colleague: a person who works in the same, or similar, profession (p. 478)

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people with a way to escape their daily fears. Many European actors, such as Marlene Dietrich and Greta Garbo, became superstars. Americans also enjoyed cartoons. Walt Disney produced the first feature-length animated film. Even films that focused on the serious side of life were generally optimistic.

Americans also listened to the radio. They listened to the news broadcasts. They also enjoyed different kinds of programs. One of the most popular heroes on the radio shows was the Lone Ranger. Short daytime dramas were also popular and provided people with escapes. Some of these dramas were sponsored by the makers of laundry soaps and were nicknamed **soap operas**. Talking about the lives of radio characters provided Americans with a common ground.

6. What part did movies and radio shows play in Americans' lives during the Great Depression?

• The Depression in Art (page 479)

Art and literature in the 1930s showed what life was like in the Depression. Painters such as Grant Wood showed traditional American values, particularly those of rural Americans in the Midwest and the South.

Novelists such as John Steinbeck wrote about the lives of people in the Depression. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, Steinbeck told the story of an Oklahoma farm family who fled the Dust Bowl to find a better life in California.

Some writers during the Depression influenced literary style. In a **technique** known as stream of consciousness, William Faulkner showed what his characters were thinking and feeling even before they spoke.

Magazines became popular during the Depression. Magazine photographers traveled throughout the nation taking pictures of life around them. Many of these photographs were printed in magazines, which became very successful.

7. What was the subject of John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*?

Academic Vocabulary

technique: a method of achieving a desired task (p. 479)