



The Great Depression

YOUR ASSIGNMENT: Imagine you are living in the United States in 1933. Write a letter to a family member who is still living in Europe about your experiences living through the Great Depression in the United States.

CONTEXT: The Great Depression began with the stock market crash in October, 1929. By 1933, the value of the stock market had sunk to only 10% of what it had been. About 11,000 banks failed. Back then there was no government guarantee that people would not lose money they had deposited in banks, so between the stock market failure and the bank crashes, many people were left penniless. About 300,000 businesses went out of business. Many people lost their jobs. When people were unable to pay their rents or mortgages, they lost their homes. From 1929 to 1933, the unemployment rate rose from 3% to 25%. Family incomes declined by almost half.

BEFORE YOU START YOUR RESEARCH: What questions do you have about the Great Depression?

YOUR PERSPECTIVE: One of the goals of your research should be to determine who you want to “be” as you write your letter. How old are you? Are you male or female? Do you have a family or are you single? Were you born in the United States or did you recently immigrate here? If you immigrated, did you travel alone? What is your economic position? How has your life changed over the past several years?

Do some general research about the Great Depression. Below, list half a dozen perspectives that you could take when you write your letter.

Name _____ **Grade 11 Research Projects**

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

SOURCES: Lists at least three credible sources that you used to conduct this initial research.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

DIGGING DEEPER: Choose one of the perspectives that you identified above, and conduct further research particular to understanding that perspective on the Great Depression. Did your research bring to mind any new questions, or point you in a direction that you had not originally anticipated? Your letter should include the following information:

- What the scene looks like; where do you live? what kind of building do you live in? Who do you live with?
- What your daily life has been like (food, shelter, clothing, who you are with, what you have seen, whether or not you have work and what kind of work it is, or if you don't have work, how you have gone about looking for it, what successes you have had, etc.)
- What you have been doing with your time
- What problems you have had

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- The biggest problem you are facing right now
- What you are hearing in the news and from people around you
- Anything else of interest

SOURCES: Lists at least three credible sources that you used to conduct this deeper research.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

FORMAT: Use a friendly letter format. Be sure to include a date, a heading, an edited body, and a closing signed by your letter-writer.