

Objective

By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to analyze and understand the impact of the Great Depression on American society through reading and comprehension activities.

Materials and Prep

- Computer or tablet with internet access
- Printer (optional)
- Pen and paper
- Access to a library or online resources for additional reading materials

Activities

1. **Research and Reading:** Have the student research the causes and effects of the Great Depression. Encourage them to find reliable sources such as books, articles, or reputable websites. They can take notes on important points or create a mind map to organize their findings.
2. **Primary Source Analysis:** Provide the student with a primary source document related to the Great Depression, such as a letter or photograph. Ask them to analyze the source and write a short paragraph describing the emotions or experiences depicted. They can also compare and contrast the primary source with their research findings.
3. **Book Discussion:** Select a book set during the Great Depression, such as "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee or "Of Mice and Men" by John Steinbeck. Have the student read the book and prepare a list of discussion questions. Engage in a conversation about the themes, characters, and historical context of the book.
4. **Creative Writing:** Ask the student to imagine they are living during the Great Depression. Have them write a short story or journal entry from the perspective of a fictional character experiencing the challenges and hardships of that time period. Encourage them to incorporate historical details and emotions into their writing.

Talking Points

- **The Great Depression:** The Great Depression was a severe economic downturn that lasted from 1929 to the late 1930s. It was characterized by high unemployment rates, poverty, and a collapse of the stock market.
- **Causes:** The Great Depression was caused by a combination of factors, including the stock market crash, overproduction, and unequal distribution of wealth. These factors led to a decrease in consumer spending and a decline in industrial production.

- **Effects:** The Great Depression had a profound impact on American society. It resulted in widespread unemployment, homelessness, and poverty. Many people lost their life savings, and the government implemented various programs and policies to provide relief and stimulate the economy.
- **Primary Sources:** Primary sources are firsthand accounts or artifacts from a specific time period. They can include letters, photographs, diaries, or newspaper articles. Analyzing primary sources helps us gain a deeper understanding of historical events and the experiences of individuals during that time.
- **Themes in Literature:** Literature set during the Great Depression often explores themes of resilience, social inequality, and the human spirit. By reading books from this time period, we can gain insights into the challenges faced by individuals and communities during this difficult period in history.