Dust Bowl: An Environmental Disaster and its Impact

https://www.loc.gov/resource/ppmsca.31916/

Overview/Prior Knowledge

Prior to the Great Depression and Dust Bowl, farmers, represented by the Grange Movement and the Populist Party, had argued for government assistance in the area of crop prices and farm debt. With the combination of an economic depression and environmental disaster, the federal government began to take action to aid farmers in their plight during the 1930s.

Objectives

- Students will generate compelling questions about the causes of the Dust Bowl.
- Students will corroborate and reconcile information in various secondary and primary sources regarding the Dust Bowl.
- Students will create an argumentative essay about the environmental abuses that caused the Dust Bowl and how this impacted society and government policies.

Time Required

Two 90-Minute Lessons

Recommended Grade Range

11-12

Subject/Sub-Subject

United States History, English Language Arts, and Earth Science

Standards

Social Studies

US.6 1920s: Discuss the impact of social changes and the conflict between traditionalism and modernism in the 1920s.

> 9. Analyze the Great Depression for its impact on the American family, examples: Bonus Army, Hoovervilles, Dust Bowl, Dorthea Lange
> 10. Analyze conditions created by the Dust Bowl for their impact on migration patterns during the Great Depression.

US.7 Great Depression/New Deal: Analyze the causes and effects of the Great Depression and New Deal.

> 3. Analyze President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal as a response to the economic crisis of the Great Depression, including the effectiveness of New Deal programs in relieving suffering, achieving economic recovery, and promoting organized labor.
> 4. Evaluate the impact of Franklin D. Roosevelt on the presidency and the New Deal's impact on the expansion of federal power.

US.13 Demonstrate an understanding of domestic and international issues during the John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Richard M. Nixon administrations.

> 8. Analyze the persistence of poverty and how different analyses of this issue influence welfare reform, health insurance reform, and other social policies.
> 9. Explain how the federal, state, and local governments have responded to demographic and social changes such as population shifts to the suburbs, racial concentrations in the cities, Frostbelt-to-Sunbelt migration, international migration, decline of family farms, increases in out-of-wedlock births, and drug abuse.

English Language Arts

CCSS ELA WRITING STANDARDS:

> W.11-12.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
> W.11-12.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS ELA READING STANDARDS:

> RH.11-12.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
> RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

RH.11-12.3 Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RH.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).

RH.11-12.5 Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.

RH.11-12.6 Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.   Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

RH.11-12.8 Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

RH.11-12.9 Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

RH.11-12.10 By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 12–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Science

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE - EARTH AND SPACE SCIENCE

2. Develop an understanding of the relationship of ecological factors that affect an ecosystem.

3. Discuss the impact of human activities on the environment, conservation activities, and efforts to maintain and restore ecosystems.

a. Summarize the effects of human activities on resources in the local environments. (DOK 2) Sources, uses, quality, and conservation of water Renewable and nonrenewable resources Effects of pollution (e.g., water, noise, air, etc.) on the ecosystem

b. Research and evaluate the impacts of human activity and technology on the lithosphere, hydrosphere and atmosphere and develop a logical argument to support how communities restore ecosystems. (DOK 3)

c. Research and evaluate the use of renewable and nonrenewable resources and critique efforts to conserve natural resources and reduce global warming in the United States including (but not limited) to Mississippi. (DOK 3)

Library of Congress - Teaching with Primary Sources Skills:

- Model primary source analysis that includes observing, reflecting, and questioning
- Use primary sources that connect to the subject/topic under study
- Presents primary sources in a historically accurate context
- Provide for students of varying abilities, learning preferences and interests to learn with primary sources
- Require students to demonstrate knowledge or skills gained from the analysis of primary sources

Highlighted Strategies:

- Observation / Zoom-In
- Sourcing/Bias
- Contextualization
- Multiple Perspectives

Credits
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Materials
- Physical Geography Map of the United States (**Artifact 1**: https://www.eduplace.com/ss/maps/pdf/usphys.pdf).
- Samson, Fred B., et al, "Great Plains Ecosystems: Past" (**Artifact 2**: https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/d79c/19addc8ff79af6f5da54dc8026f89ddc346b.pdf)
- Guthrie, Woody, "Great Dust Storm Disaster" (**Artifact 3**: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvI7BmuUBXU)
- California State University, Bakersfield, "California Odyssey: The 1930s Migration to the Southern San Joaquin Valley" (**Artifact 4:** https://www.csub.edu/library/_files/DB_files/Combs206.pdf)
- Gavin, Christy., "A School of Their Own: Educating Okie Children in 1930s California" (**Artifact 5**: https://csub-dspace.calstate.edu/bitstream/handle/10211.3/46994/DBEducRevJuly13.pdf?sequence=1)

Procedures

Day One:

Warm Up
- Ask students, the following discussion questions:
    1. Have you ever moved a household?
    2. Was this move across town, across state, or across the country?
    3. What were the challenges or difficulties of this move?
- Then, shift the discussion by asking hypothetically: What would it be like to make this same move under great duress?
- Finally, add environmental factors to the discussion by asking: What would it be like to make this same move because of a natural disaster (e.g., flood, tornado, drought)?

Before
- The TTW will ask students to open textbooks to see if they know where the Great Plains is located on a map of the United States.
- TTW will then pass out a map of the United States and ask students to label the 10 states of the southern Plains (Artifact 1).
- TTW will have students read an article describing the ecosystems of the Great Plains and give a brief verbal description of the region (Artifact 2).

During
- TSW learn about the emotional and social impact of the Dust Bowl through song, secondary accounts, and primary sources.
- TSW listen to "Great Dust Storm Disaster" by Woody Guthrie (Artifact 3).
- TSW read excerpts from secondary sources on the Dust Bowl (Artifacts 4-5).

Closure
- Sentence Synthesis: Use the terms (*Dust Bowl*, *Drought*, *Erosion*, and *Plains*) in a single sentence to summarize what you learned about the causes of the Dust Bowl.

Day Two:

Before
- TSW will be assigned a partner as they enter the classroom.
- TTW model primary source analysis using the Observe-Reflect-Question process with the iconic "Migrant Mother Image" (http://loc.gov/pictures/resource/fsa.8b29516/).

During
- TSW, in partnership, will view and analyze an assigned image, from the Farm Security Administration photos from the LOC (see Primary Sources 1-12 below), using the Observe-Reflect-Question process.
- TSW will write a caption for the image based on their analysis.
- TTW present all twelve images, preceded with each student pair the caption they wrote for their assigned image, providing additional historical details.

After
- TSW write a five-paragraph argumentative essay in response to the following prompt: Summarize the causes and impact of the Dust Bowl on the United States during the Great Depression and beyond? The essay will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
    1. Student created an argument.
    2. Student identified three causes of the Dust Bowl.
    3. Student synthesized from at least four sources.
    4. Student created an argument that was free of grammar and spelling errors.

Assessment

Formative: Analysis of a primary source using the LOC Observe-Reflect-Question response and Sentence Synthesis response.

Summative: Essay summarizing the causes and impact of the Dust Bowl on the United States during the Great Depression.

Differentiation

- Student partners will be assigned purposely, so that accelerated learners are partnered with struggling learners.
- Extended time for completion of the essay.

Supplementary Materials

- Piper, Craig S., *New Deal Migrant Camps in California: Three Case Studies*
- Dawe, D. Theodore, "Migratory Children: Educational Achievement Status of the Migratory Children in Kern County"
- Wood, Irving, "Migrant Camp Report"
- Farm Security Administration, "A View of the Migrant Problem"

Teaching with Primary Sources Resource Guide

Title: Dust Bowl: An Environment Disaster and its Impact.
Historical Background:

> The Dust Bowl was a devastating environmental disaster that occurred in the United States during the Great Depression. This environmental disaster had far-reaching consequences beyond the Great Plains region. Read also this blog post: http://www.yawednesday.com/blog/before-the-dust-settles

Primary Source 1:

Title: Abandoned farm in the dust bowl area. Oklahoma
Link: https://www.loc.gov/resource/fsa.8b38293/
Purpose: To show the devastation of a soil erosion on the Great Plains.

Primary Source 2:

Title: Soil blown by "dust bowl" winds piled up in large drifts near Liberal, Kansas
Link: https://www.loc.gov/resource/fsa.8b27287/
Purpose: To show the devastation of a soil erosion on the Great Plains.

Primary Source 3:

Title: Dust Bowl Farmer raising fence to keep it from being buried under drifting sand. Cimarron County, Oklahoma
Link: https://www.loc.gov/resource/ppmsca.31916/
Purpose: To show the devastation of a soil erosion on the Great Plains.

Primary Source 4:

Title: Adobe farmhouse of rehabilitation client. Cimarron County, Oklahoma. Dust Bowl
Link: https://www.loc.gov/resource/fsa.8b27547/
Purpose: To show the devastation of a soil erosion on the Great Plains.

Primary Source 5:

Title: Squatters along highway near Bakersfield, California. Penniless refugees from dust bowl. Twenty-two in family, thirty-nine evictions, now encamped near Bakersfield without shelter, without water and looking for work in the cotton.
Link: https://www.loc.gov/resource/fsa.8b26857/
Purpose: To show families fleeing the Dust Bowl and moving west.

Primary Source 6:

Title: Along the highway near Bakersfield, California. Dust bowl refugees
Link: https://www.loc.gov/resource/fsa.8b26859/
Purpose: To show families fleeing the Dust Bowl and moving west.

Primary Source 7:

Title: Oklahoma dust bowl refugees. San Fernando, California
Link: https://www.loc.gov/item/2017759887/
Purpose: To show families fleeing the Dust Bowl and moving west.

Primary Source 8:
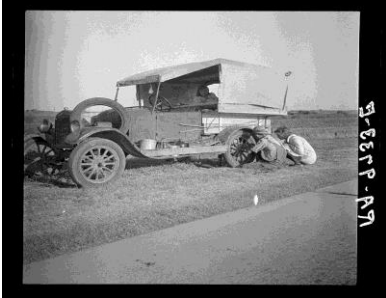
Title: Family between Dallas and Austin, Texas. The people have left their home and connections in South Texas, and hope to reach the Arkansas Delta for work in the cotton fields. Penniless people. No food and three gallons of gas in the tank. Father is trying to repair a tire. Three children. Father says, "It's tough, but life's tough anyway you take it"
Link: https://www.loc.gov/resource/fsa.8b29785/
Purpose: To show families fleeing the Dust Bowl and moving west.

Primary Source 9:

Title: Tent camp of migrants north of Harlingen, Texas
Link: https://www.loc.gov/item/2017739163/
Purpose: To show the conditions that Dust Bowl migrants lived under when arriving in California.

Primary Source 10:

Title: Migrant camp, California
Link: https://www.loc.gov/item/2017759833/
Purpose: To show the conditions that Dust Bowl migrants lived under when arriving in California.

Primary Source 11:

Title: Four-room labor home. Visalia migratory labor camp. California
Link: https://www.loc.gov/item/2017765374/
Purpose: To show the conditions that Dust Bowl migrants lived under when arriving in California.

Primary Source 12:

Title: Atmosphere shot of migrant camp, Weslaco, Texas
Link: https://www.loc.gov/resource/fsa.8a25050/
Purpose: To show the conditions that Dust Bowl migrants lived under when arriving in California.