LESSON 4
The Decade of 1930–1939

LESSON ASSIGNMENTS

You are encouraged to be very attentive while viewing the video program. Review the video objectives and be prepared to record possible answers, in abbreviated form, as you view the video. The topics and time periods may differ from the chapters of the textbook your school system is using. Each video program chronicles a wide array of events and personalities during a specific decade of the 20th century. Keep in mind that one of the overarching goals of each lesson is to help you understand how past historical events and actions by historical personalities did not occur in a vacuum, and that they are inextricably interwoven in your society today.

Video:


Activities:

Your teacher may assign one or more activities for each lesson.

OVERVIEW

The 1930s were a time of emotional depression as well as economic depression. The southern Great Plains were subjected to a drought and low farm prices through much of the decade. Lack of rain and poor agricultural practices resulted in the Dust Bowl that was not only characterized by dirt being scattered throughout the Great Plains, but people as well. John Steinbeck wrote in his 1939 novel The Grapes of Wrath about the migration of people to the west in search of a better life.

Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected in 1932 and introduced an array of New Deal programs to halt the slide into depression. The famous “alphabet soup” of federal programs was enacted to bring relief to the farmers and the unemployed, recovery to the business community, and reform of the political and economic systems. President Roosevelt envisioned a new role for the federal government, one that would find the government increasingly more involved in the lives of the people. He would stretch the power of the executive branch to limits only dreamed of by his distant cousin, Theodore Roosevelt.

Franklin D. Roosevelt was not the only world leader who would seek to increase his power. Europeans, and Germans in particular, were reeling from the ravages of World War I and the harsh Treaty of Versailles. The economic climate was perfect for the growing of political extremes such as fascism, Nazism, and communism. Leaders like Benito Mussolini, Adolph Hitler, and Josef Stalin championed their own brands of totalitarianism, which would bring them into conflict with the democracies of France, Great Britain, and the United States.
On the cultural scene, Grant Wood’s famous *American Gothic* work was illustrative of the American regionalist art style. Literature included the works of Dr. Seuss, John Steinbeck, and Carl Sandburg. It was the golden era of radio and the motion picture business in Hollywood. By 1939 about 80 percent of the population in the United States owned radio sets. Movies offered the general public a way to briefly escape the calamities of the depression.

The world applauded the accomplishments of figures such as Mildred Babe Didrikson and Jesse Owens in the world of sports and Amelia Earhart in the field of aviation.

**LESSON GOALS**

To be able to analyze how the Great Depression and World War II enabled Franklin D. Roosevelt to involve the federal government more actively in the lives of the people on the domestic scene and enhance the power of the executive branch.

To evaluate why leaders of totalitarian governments were able to gain power in Europe and what the effect of their leadership was.

**VIDEO OBJECTIVES**

The following objectives are designed to assist the viewer in identifying the most significant aspects of the video segment of this lesson. You should take succinct notes while viewing the video.

Video: “The Decade of 1930–1939”

1. Analyze the effects of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal policies on the involvement of the federal government in the lives of the American people.

2. Identify some of the key programs of the New Deal that are still in effect today and explain why they still exist.

3. Evaluate why the leaders of totalitarian governments were able to seize power in the 1930s and what the effects were.

4. Examine the implications of following a policy of “appeasement” on the international scene in the 1930s.

5. Explain how the following are a reflection of the 1930s: Hollywood, radio, Public Works programs of the New Deal, “The Grapes of Wrath”, Lindbergh Kidnapping, “swing” music, Roosevelt’s “court packing” scheme, radar, and the FBI.

6. Indicate the causes and effects of the Great Depression.

7. Determine if the “Dust Bowl” could occur again in the United States.
### TIME CODES

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Code</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>00:00</td>
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<td>Opening</td>
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<td>00:30</td>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>Howard K. Smith intros the decade</td>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>Episode IV: 1930s</td>
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<td>1930</td>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>Optimism gone</td>
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<td>02:34</td>
<td>1930</td>
<td>US Politics</td>
<td>Hoovervilles &amp; bread lines</td>
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<td>03:41</td>
<td>1931</td>
<td>Social Issues</td>
<td>Capone sentenced</td>
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<td>04:06</td>
<td>1931</td>
<td>Discoveries &amp; Technology</td>
<td>Washington Bridge; Empire State Building</td>
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<td>07:37</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>US Politics</td>
<td>Roosevelt elected; &quot;Happy Days Are Here Again&quot;</td>
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<td>08:55</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>Sports: Olympics – Babe Didrikson</td>
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<td>09:18</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Social Issues</td>
<td>Lindbergh Baby Kidnapping</td>
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<td>10:10</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>US Politics</td>
<td>Roosevelt – 15 new pieces of Legislation</td>
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<td>12:18</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>World Politics</td>
<td>Germany – Communists &amp; Nazis, Hitler becomes Chancellor</td>
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<td>16:00</td>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Natural Phenomena / Economy</td>
<td>Dust Bowl &amp; migration west</td>
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<td>17:41</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>Music – Guthrie; Literature – Steinbeck; Movies – Fonda, Berkeley, Temple, West, Hayes Code, Gable, Robinson, Cagney</td>
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<td>1933</td>
<td>Social Issues</td>
<td>Rogue Criminals &amp; G-Men, J. Edgar Hoover</td>
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<td>22:50</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>Music: Swing – Goodman &amp; Ellington &amp; the Jitterbug; Movies – Astaire &amp; Rogers</td>
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<td>1935</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Aviation – Hughes &amp; Post</td>
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<td>25:55</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>Will Rogers</td>
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<td>26:26</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>US Politics</td>
<td>FDR – Social Security</td>
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<td>27:05</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>World Politics</td>
<td>King Edward VIII abdicates; German re-armament</td>
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<td>28:24</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>Howard K. Smith segues between 1st and 2nd half of 1930 decade – era of innovations</td>
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<td>29:15</td>
<td>1935-39</td>
<td>World Politics</td>
<td>Stalin &amp; The Great Terror; Mussolini invades Ethiopia; Rome-Berlin Pact; Spanish Civil War</td>
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<td>34:26</td>
<td>1935-39</td>
<td>World Politics</td>
<td>China Civil War; Japan invades eastern China</td>
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<td>37:25</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>US Politics</td>
<td>Roosevelt re-elected but Honeymoon with Congress over Labor strikes</td>
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<td>38:05</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Social Issues</td>
<td></td>
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<td>38:30</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>Sports: Olympics – Jesse Owens</td>
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<td>39:32</td>
<td>1936/37</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Amelia Earhart; Hindenburg dirigible</td>
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<td>41:03</td>
<td>1937/38</td>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>Disney – Snow White; Tracy in Captain Courageous &amp; Boys Town</td>
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<td>42:07</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Discoveries &amp; Technology</td>
<td>Golden Gate Bridge; Boulder Dam</td>
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<td>42:30</td>
<td>1937/38</td>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>Sports: boxing – Louis</td>
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WEB ACTIVITIES

These activities are not required unless your teacher assigns them. They are offered as suggestions to help you learn more about the material presented in this lesson.

Activity 1—Radio

1. Access the following Web sites and review the information:

   “The History of Radio”
   http://old-time.com/halper/index.html

   “Radio”
   http://www.nhmccd.edu/contracts/lrc/kc/decade30.html

   “The Original Amos and Andy Web Page”
   http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/2587/

   “History Page”
   http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/2587/history.htm

   “Radio’s War of the Worlds Broadcast” (1938)
   http://members.aol.com/jeff1070/wotw.html

   “Welcome Fireside Chats of Franklin D. Roosevelt”
   http://www.mhrcc.org/fdr/fdr.html

   “Address of the President in Connection with the Opening of the Fifth War Loan Drive”
   http://www.mhrcc.org/fdr/chat30.html

2. Select one of the following topics:

   Franklin D. Roosevelt’s radio broadcasts
   Orson Wells’ radio broadcast
   The “Amos ‘n’ Andy” radio show
3. Access the National Archives and Records Administration Web site at http://www.nara.gov/education/teaching/analysis/sound.html

Use the “Sound Recording Analysis Worksheet” as a basis for analyzing one of the three topics listed above.

**Activity 2—Russian Archives**

1. Access the “Revelations from the Russian Archives” at the following Library of Congress Web site: http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/archives/intro.html and review the various topics listed.

2. Access the “Ukrainian Famine” link and one of the following links:
   - “Repression and Terror: Stalin in Control”
   - “Repression and Terror: Kirov Murder and Purges”
   - “Secret Police”
   - “The Gulag”
   - “Collectivization and Industrialization”


Use the worksheet as a guide to analyze each of the primary documents listed with the links you choose.

**Activity 3—U.S. Constitution and “Separation of Powers” issue**


2. Read the “Historical Background” information.

3. Read the letter written by Frank Gannett sent to the Solicitor in the Justice Department located at the following Web site: http://www.nara.gov/education/teaching/conissues/gannett.jpg.

4. Answer one question, with reference to the letter written by Frank Gannett, from each of the following categories listed at the Web site: http://www.nara.gov/education/teaching/conissues/separat.html.
   a. Reading for the Main Idea
   b. The Constitutional Issue
   c. Thinking Metaphorically
   d. Techniques of Persuasion
Activity 4—The New Deal Cultural Programs

1. Access the following National Archives and Records Administration Web sites and read the historical background:

“New Deal Cultural Programs”

“New Deal for the Arts”
http://www.nara.gov/exhall/newdeal/newdeal.html

2. Select one work of art from each of the following categories to analyze:
   a. Rediscovering America
   b. Celebrating “the People”
   c. Work Pays America
   d. Activist Arts
   e. Useful Arts

3. Access the National Archives and Records Administration “Photograph Analysis Worksheet” at http://www.nara.gov/education/teaching/analysis/photo.html. Use the worksheet as a basis for your analysis.

PRACTICE TEST

After watching the video and reviewing the objectives, you should be able to complete the following Practice Test. When you have completed the Practice Test, turn to the Answer Key to score your answers.

Multiple-choice

Select the single best answer. If more than one answer is required, it will be so indicated.

1. The causes of the Great Depression included:
   A. agricultural overproduction.
   B. unequal distribution of wealth.
   C. overextension of credit.
   D. barriers to foreign trade.
   E. all the above.
2. In 1932 Franklin Roosevelt campaigned on the promise that as president he would attack the Great Depression by:
   A. nationalizing all banks and major industries.
   B. experimenting with bold new programs for economic and social reform.
   C. returning to the traditional policies of laissez-faire capitalism.
   D. continuing the policies already undertaken by President Hoover.
   E. doing all of the above.

3. The most pressing problem facing Franklin Roosevelt when he became president was:
   A. a chaotic banking situation.
   B. the national debt.
   C. the need to silence demagogic rabble-rousers such as Huey Long.
   D. unemployment.

4. All of the following contributed to the Dust Bowl of the 1930s except:
   A. dry-farming techniques.
   B. drought.
   C. farmers’ failure to use steam tractors and other modern equipment.
   D. wind.

5. President Roosevelt’s “Court-packing” scheme in 1937 reflected his desire to make the Supreme Court:
   A. more conservative.
   B. more independent of Congress.
   C. more sympathetic to New Deal programs.
   D. less burdened with appellate cases.

6. Throughout most of the 1930s, the American people responded to the aggressive actions of Germany, Italy, and Japan by:
   A. assisting their victims with military aid.
   B. giving only economic help to the targets of aggression.
   C. retreating further into isolationism.
   D. demanding an oil embargo on all warring nations.
7. Fascist aggression in the 1930s included Mussolini’s invasion of ______, Hitler’s invasion of ______, and Franco’s overthrow of the republican government of ______.
   A. Egypt; France; Poland.
   B. Sardinia; Italy; Austria.
   C. Ethiopia; Czechoslovakia; Spain.
   D. Belgium; the Soviet Union; France.

8. Shortly after Adolf Hitler signed a nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union:
   A. Britain and France signed a similar agreement.
   B. the Soviets attacked China.
   C. Germany invaded Poland and started World War II.
   D. Italy signed a similar agreement with the Soviets.

Essay/Problem Questions

9. Explain the purpose of the following New Deal programs:
   a. Social Security
   b. TVA
   c. NRA
   d. FDIC
   e. AAA

10. Identify five causes of the Great Depression and indicate which you think are the most significant and explain why.

11. What technological advances were made during the 1930s? What role did they play in World War II?
**ANSWER KEY**

The following provides the answers and references for the practice test questions. Video objectives are referenced using the following abbreviation: V=Video Objective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Essay/Problem Questions</th>
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<td>4. C Ref. V 7</td>
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<td>5. C Ref. V 5</td>
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<td>7. C Ref. V 3; 4</td>
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