

The Dust Bowl (I)

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OVERVIEW

- Students will evaluate the impact of dust storms on a farming family in Colorado and write a letter to a friend describing the storms and their impact.

STANDARDS

- Reading & Writing Standard 2.1: Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- History Standard 2.2: Students know how to interpret and evaluate primary and secondary sources of historical information.
- Economics Standard 1.1: Students know that economic choices are made because resources are scarce and that the act of making economic choices imposes opportunity costs.

OBJECTIVES

After completing this activity, students will be able to:

- interpret information from historical photographs and text
- evaluate the impact of the dust storms on the lives of farmers in the early twentieth century
- write a friendly letter from the point of view of a child of a farming family describing the storms and their impact

INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- What were the dust storms like?
- What kind of damage did the storms do to homes, farms?
- What impact would these storms have had on farming families?
- What was the Great Depression? How would the dust storms have made life during the depression even worse?
- What decisions do you think might have been facing farmers and their families at this time?

MATERIALS

- Photographs # 3 and 4 and all text from the Twentieth Century Topic, Work Places – Farming Theme from the Doing History CD-ROM disk or Internet site.
- Children of the Dustbowl: The True Story of the School at Woodpatch Camp. New York: Crown Publishers, 1993.

PROCEDURE

1. Have students review the above listed photographs and text with the above inquiry questions in mind.
2. As a whole class or in small groups, discuss the students' thoughts and answers to the inquiry questions, listing the students' ideas.
3. Read the picture book, Children of the Dust Bowl. Discuss the similarities between the book and the students' ideas.

ASSESSMENT

Tell students that they are going to pretend that they are a child living on a farm in eastern Colorado during the depression. They are writing a letter to a friend "back east" describing the dust storms and the depression and how it is impacting them and their family. Remind students to be descriptive and use the voice of a child on the farm.