

NAME: _____ DUE DATE: _____

Reading Guide for:
“The CRUELEST YEAR” from *The Glory & the Dream*
by William Manchester

EQ#1: What were the political, economic, geography and social problems confronting the US as the Great Depression hit and deepened? How did the Great Depression threaten a fundamental breakdown of law and order? Why did such a breakdown fail to happen?

EQ#2: What was the response to the Depression by the traditional political and business leadership including Hoover? Why did that response fail to address the problems of the Depression? How was FDR’s political leadership differ from the traditionalists including Hoover? Why and how did FDR appeal to Americans?

INSTRUCTIONS: Use the following prompts to help you focus as you read. Highlight, mark-up and make marginal notes on the chapter as you see fit. After reading and digesting the chapter, write a 1 page double-spaced reflection. (1 line heading max; name on back)

- (1) What effect did the traditional American work ethic have on American citizens during the Depression?
- (2) What were the “false underpinnings” of 1920s prosperity that Manchester argues contributed to the financial collapse of the stock market in 1929 and the Depression in the 1930s?
- (3) Given the poverty, frustration, anger and disillusionment of millions of Americans during the Depression, how can you explain the relative lack of violence or popular demands for radical change?
- (4) Why is it that during the “cruellest year” (1932) American agriculture and industry were turning out cheaper and cheaper goods—which millions of Americans could not afford to purchase? How did Hoover’s government respond to this dilemma?
- (5) How did the Depression tarnish the popular folk image of American capitalists? What factors turned captains of industry back into robber barons in the eyes of poorer Americans?
- (6) How did FDR’s philosophy compare to the traditional Democratic party’s platform?