

Great Depression-So What?

What meaning do you make about what you learned about the Great Depression and the Depression Era? What lessons do you draw for your own life? How does what you learned help you understand the world in which you live? How does the Great Depression connect to what we've already learned?

Task: Think deeply about the prompt & write a 2 paragraph response to it (1 single-spaced page, 500 words max).

Paragraph 1: The meaning you make about the Great Depression can be as small as giving you insight into your relationship with your family, what you are learning in your other classes or as big as helping you understand globalization. The key is the response has to be PERSONAL; the paragraph has to be what this unit has meant to YOU. It also has to be SPECIFIC. Avoid broad statements that are vague or merely summarize “The Great Depression is still interesting because it continues to influence politics today.” HOW does it? WHY is that interesting to YOU?

Paragraph 2: The connections you make between the Great Depression and our previous units & overarching values will help you build a personal story about American history. It will also force you to think about our previous units so you are more likely to remember them. This paragraph is HARD. In order to help you write this paragraph I have created some prompts that will get you to start thinking about how the Great Depression connects to specific units & to some of the themes & values of this course.

Menu of potential questions to answer:

- Unit 2: Industrialization & Progressivism-How does the New Deal mark a triumph for the Progressive movement & the Social Gospel? or How does the New Deal mark a triumph for big business?
- Unit 3: Emergence as a Global Power-How did the United States' establishment as the leading economic power following World War I contribute to the Great Depression becoming a global depression?
- Unit 4: The 1920s/Change & Tradition-How does the Great Depression mark a turning point in American history? Or is it not and just a continuation of traditional American values?
- History & Myth-How does the Great Depression add to or take away from the story that America is the land of opportunity? That anyone can succeed if they work hard enough?
- PEGS-Politics: How did the Great Depression change the way that Americans interacted with the government?
- Values: How does the Great Depression mark a challenge to the American value system? Why did the United States maintain democratic capitalism when many European nations lost it?
- Values: How did the Great Depression change the American Values? Which values changed most significantly? Which values remained the same?

Conventions

- Hard Copy Turned in beginning of class on _____
- 500 words max (1 page)
- Single-spaced
- ½” to 1” margins top, bottom, left, right
- Times New Roman size 12 font
- Paragraph 1 should be informal & personal, paragraph 2 formal
- Name & Word Count handwritten in center of the page on the back

POLITICAL VALUES AND ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Liberty and Order

What is the meaning of freedom? How have historical movements challenged and changed the understanding of freedom? To what extent has liberty been limited by other important values including stability and security?

Equality and Hierarchy

Has the premise of the Declaration of Independence – that “all men are created equal” – been a defining value? Or has it been compromised in favor of other goals – liberty, democracy, safety, or prosperity? What are legitimate sources of hierarchy?

Democracy and Authority

To what extent has the United States truly been based upon majority rule? What are legitimate forms of authority in American life and culture? Does representative democracy safeguard or endanger individual rights?

Capitalism and Centralization

Is America a land of opportunity? How have individual property rights and free markets shaped American history? How should they be limited?

Individualism and Collectivism

How are rights and responsibilities distributed between individuals and groups? How have social movements changed that distribution?

HISTORICAL THEMES AND QUESTIONS

Diversity and Identity

Who are we? What are the sources of personal and national identity? Is America a “melting pot”?

International Relations

Has the U.S. acted in its own self-interest at the expense of other peoples and nations? Has it improved the status and prosperity of others around the world?

Change and Tradition

*To what extent is the US a dynamic society – one that embraces progressive changes?
To what extent have Americans drawn on cultural tradition?*

PEGS: Politics, Economics, Geography and Social Institutions

Politics: *How is our government and political system structured?*

Economics: *By what systems and mechanisms are resources, products and services produced, allocated and used?*

Geography: *To what extent has our geography shaped political and social ideals and institutions and resulted in regional differences and conflict?*

Social Institutions: *How is American society organized and how do its members view its organization? What has been the impact of race, gender and religion on American history and society?*

History and Myth

How do we make meaning of the past? Is the story of American exceptionalism – the US as defender of individual liberty, equality, democracy and economic opportunity – accurate? Is it a disappointment? Or is it a promise for a better future?