

The Great Depression: Photo Essay

What you will do

- Gather depression-era photographs on the Internet.
- Assume the role of a Works Progress Administration (WPA) writer given selected photos.
- Provide photo captions to complete a work that fits a thematic title.

What you will need

Web Sites:

Note: some links direct you to external web sites. These sites and their content are not controlled by SAS.

Great Depression Pictures (<https://www.thoughtco.com/great-depression-pictures-1779916>)

Features images of farms for sale, migrant workers, breadlines, and the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Image Thumbnails: New Deal

(<http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/archives/collections/franklin/index.php?p=digitallibrary/thumbnails&subjectid=6>)

Provides digital images from the FDR Library.

Surviving the Dust Bowl (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/dustbowl/>)

Provides photos, audio clips, and historical data.

Walker Evans Photos (<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~UG97/fsa/welcome.html>)

Includes photos taken for the Farm Security Administration.

Documenting America

(<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/fsa/documentingamerica.html>)

Features the work of Farm Service Administration photographers such as Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans.

Top 10 Public Works Projects (<https://listosaur.com/history/top-10-public-works-projects-from-the-great-depression/>)

Explore WPA projects and accomplishments.

How you will do it

1. Using the suggested web sites, find and study photographs from, and related to, the era.
2. Choose a title after viewing enough photographs to give you a sense of the possible range of available material. Suggested titles include:
 - The Dusty Old Dust
 - Heading to the Promised Land
 - Small-town, USA

- Were the Golden Gates Really Open?
 - In the City
 - Back on Their Feet Again
 - Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?
 - Working Men and Women
 - Changing Landscapes
 - Taming the Land
3. Select photos from the web and save them to your computer. Order them in a way that tells a story. (You must credit photo sources in the appropriate manner.)
 4. Playing the role of a WPA writer (one who is part sociologist and part journalist), tell the story that the photos suggest. Choose photos that allow for the inclusion of factual material. While you may not know the exact details of a photograph (who the subject is, where it was taken, etc.), you should be able to use the photos as a prompt to discuss appropriate facts and relevant situations and people represented by the picture. Captions should be believable if not specifically accurate.
 5. Organize the pictures and captions into a final product. It can be presented in hard copy like a scrapbook or magazine article, or it can take an electronic form as in a PowerPoint presentation or a web page.
 6. Be prepared to share your work in a class presentation.

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