

Hard Times, Shared Effects

Trace how two 1930s disasters changed work, homes, and communities.

8.5b "The Great Depression and the Dust Bowl affected American businesses and families."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each cause of hardship, circle each effect on a business, and number each effect on a family. These marks will help you trace how economic and environmental disasters changed lives.

Businesses and Families Under Pressure

- ① In 1929, the stock market crash helped begin the Great Depression, a long economic downturn. As people and companies had less money to spend, stores sold fewer goods. Factories reduced production or closed, and banks failed as loans went unpaid and customers rushed to withdraw savings. Business owners cut workers' hours or jobs. In New York City, unemployed people searched for work while relief agencies struggled to meet growing need. A business failure could spread hardship beyond its own doors, affecting workers, customers, and nearby shops.
- ② Families felt the crisis in different ways. A parent who lost a job might use savings, move in with relatives, or lose a home when rent or mortgage payments could not be made. Children sometimes left school to work or care for siblings. Women often sought paid work or stretched household budgets, even though jobs available to them were limited. Black Americans and other groups often faced discrimination that made work and relief harder to obtain. Wealthier families usually had more savings and property to protect them.
- ③ At the same time, drought struck the Great Plains. Years of deep plowing had removed grasses whose roots held soil in place. Dry, loose topsoil blew in huge dust storms, creating the Dust Bowl. Farms lost crops and income, so farm families struggled to pay debts or moved west seeking work. Some local businesses lost customers as families left. The federal government created the Soil Conservation Service in 1935 to promote methods such as contour plowing and planting trees, which reduced erosion and protected soil.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Explain how less spending during the Great Depression could lead to workers losing jobs.

2 Name two hardships families faced during the Great Depression. Why did the crisis not affect every family in the same way?

3 What two conditions helped create the Dust Bowl, and how did it affect local businesses?

4 What did the Soil Conservation Service promote, and what problem was it meant to address?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly four sentences about an invented family and a local business during either the Great Depression or the Dust Bowl. Include one cause of hardship, one effect on the business, one effect on the family, and one government action that could help.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each cause of hardship, circle each effect on a business, and number each effect on a family. These marks will help you trace how economic and environmental disasters changed lives. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Explain how less spending during the Great Depression could lead to workers losing jobs.	When people spent less, stores sold fewer goods. Factories reduced production or closed, so business owners cut workers' hours or jobs.
2	Name two hardships families faced during the Great Depression. Why did the crisis not affect every family in the same way?	Answers may include using savings, moving in with relatives, losing a home, leaving school, seeking paid work, or stretching budgets. Effects differed because wealthier families had more savings and property, while discrimination made work and relief harder for Black Americans and other groups.
3	What two conditions helped create the Dust Bowl, and how did it affect local businesses?	Drought and deep plowing that removed grasses helped create the Dust Bowl. Local businesses lost customers when farm families left.
4	What did the Soil Conservation Service promote, and what problem was it meant to address?	It promoted methods such as contour plowing and planting trees. These methods were meant to reduce erosion and protect soil.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In 1936, drought and exposed soil damaged the Rivera family's farm. With little crop income, the family struggled to pay its debts. The nearby store lost sales because farm families could afford fewer goods. Soil Conservation Service guidance on contour plowing could help protect the family's remaining topsoil. Accept equivalent cause-and-effect explanations that are supported by the passage. In the open response, check for all four required elements and a historically plausible connection between business and family hardship.