Crisis and Choice

Compare how governments responded to the Great Depression.

MWH.C.6.4.A "Describe the various causes and consequences of the global economic collapse and evaluate how democratic and authoritarian governments responded to the Great Depression..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two causes of the Depression and circle two consequences. Label one democratic response D and one authoritarian response A so you can compare them.

When the Economy Collapsed

1. In 1929, a Wall Street stock crash shook the United States, but the crash alone did not cause the Depression. Banks had made risky loans, and when banks failed, families lost savings and businesses lost credit. Falling spending led to layoffs. U.S. lenders also recalled loans from abroad, spreading the crisis across borders.

2. World trade shrank as countries raised tariffs and buyers had less money to spend. Export farmers and factory workers far from Wall Street lost income. In the United States, voters could replace leaders, and President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal created jobs through public projects. Social Security later provided old-age pensions and unemployment insurance, while private businesses remained in operation.

3. Germany's Nazi dictatorship also used state spending to cut unemployment, especially on roads and weapons. Unlike U.S. programs, Nazi policies crushed independent labor unions and prepared for war. Lower jobless numbers could not erase the loss of freedom or persecution of Jews. Comparing these responses requires weighing economic relief against political rights, not treating every government job program as equal.

TWO GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

Government	Economic action	Rights and institutions
United States	Public jobs and pensions	Elections and private firms continued
Nazi Germany	Roads and rearmament	Unions banned; Jews persecuted

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did problems with U.S. lending help spread the crisis beyond the United States?

2. Why did shrinking trade hurt workers far from Wall Street?

3. How did the U.S. response combine government action with private business?

4. Why is falling unemployment alone an incomplete measure of the Nazi response?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a country facing mass unemployment in 1933. Propose two actions that protect political rights, then explain one trade-off compared with the Nazi response.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two causes of the Depression and circle two consequences. Label one democratic response D and one authoritarian response A so you can compare them. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did problems with U.S. lending help spread the crisis beyond the United States?	**U.S. lenders recalled loans from abroad, spreading the crisis to other countries.**
2	Why did shrinking trade hurt workers far from Wall Street?	**Tariffs and reduced buying shrank world trade, so export farmers and factory workers lost income.**
3	How did the U.S. response combine government action with private business?	**The government funded public jobs and Social Security, while private businesses continued to operate.**
4	Why is falling unemployment alone an incomplete measure of the Nazi response?	**State spending reduced unemployment, but the regime crushed unions, persecuted Jews, and prepared for war.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would fund repairs to water pipes and provide temporary payments to people who have lost jobs. Elected lawmakers would review the costs, and workers could keep their unions. The programs might require higher taxes, but they could help families buy necessities. Unlike the Nazi response, this plan would not use rearmament to create jobs or take away political rights.

Accept other plausible links between causes and consequences that the passage supports. For Part 3, look for two distinct actions, protection of political rights, and a specific comparison or trade-off.