

Windows Into Time

Read how creative works reveal life in the Great Depression.

5.20.B “explain how examples of art, music, and literature reflect the times during which they were created.”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each example of art, music, or literature. Circle the words that tell what life was like when each work was created, then draw a line from each work to its clues.

Creative Clues From the 1930s

- ① During the Great Depression, which began after the 1929 stock market crash, many Americans lost jobs and homes. Artists, musicians, and writers showed what people saw, felt, and worried about. Their works did not tell every person's story, but they can help historians understand the hardships and hopes of the 1930s in the United States.
- ② The federal government created the Works Progress Administration, or WPA, to provide jobs. Its Federal Art Project hired artists, and other New Deal programs supported murals in public buildings. Many murals showed factory workers, farmers, or builders. These strong, busy scenes reflected a time when paid work was scarce and many people believed public projects could help communities recover.
- ③ Music and literature also carried Depression-era concerns. The 1932 song “Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?” speaks in the voice of a worker who helped build the nation but cannot find work. In John Steinbeck's 1939 novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, the fictional Joad family leaves Oklahoma seeking jobs in California. Both works reflect unemployment and migration during the period.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

- 1 What problem described in paragraph 1 helps explain why the WPA provided jobs? Explain the connection.

- 2 How did the subjects of many New Deal murals reflect the time when the murals were made? Use one detail from the passage.

- 3 How does the worker's situation in "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" reflect the Great Depression?

- 4 What shared problem appears in both the song and The Grapes of Wrath? Explain how each work shows it.

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Choose a work of art, music, or literature from a time period you have studied. Write three sentences that name the work and its time period, then explain two details that show how it reflects that time.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each example of art, music, or literature. Circle the words that tell what life was like when each work was created, then draw a line from each work to its clues. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What problem described in paragraph 1 helps explain why the WPA provided jobs? Explain the connection.	Many Americans had lost jobs. The WPA provided paid work because jobs were scarce during the Great Depression.
2	How did the subjects of many New Deal murals reflect the time when the murals were made? Use one detail from the passage.	The murals showed workers, farmers, or builders. They reflected a time when paid work was scarce and people hoped public projects could help communities recover.
3	How does the worker's situation in "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" reflect the Great Depression?	The worker helped build the nation but cannot find work. This reflects the unemployment many people faced during the Great Depression.
4	What shared problem appears in both the song and The Grapes of Wrath? Explain how each work shows it.	Both works show economic hardship and unemployment. The song's worker cannot find work, and the Joad family leaves Oklahoma to seek jobs in California.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Maya Angelou published the poem "Still I Rise" in 1978. Its speaker says she will rise despite people who try to hurt her, reflecting a time when many Black Americans continued to demand equal treatment after the civil rights movement. The poem's proud, determined voice reflects a continuing struggle for justice.

Accept answers that connect a specific feature of a work to conditions, beliefs, or events of its time. For Your Turn, accept a different accurate work and time period when the student explains two relevant details.