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EXEMPLAR

Units & Lessons

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Grade 4

Lesson 3: The Great Depression

Focus Standard(s): RI.4.2

Additional Standard(s): RI.4.1

Estimated Time: 1-2 days

Text(s): [About the Great Depression](#)

Resources and Materials:

- Handout 3.1: “About the Great Depression”
- Handout 3.2: Vocabulary in Context for “About the Great Depression.”
- Handout 3.3: The Great Depression Text Dependent Questions

Lesson Target(s):

- Students will orally make inferences about author’s decisions and the content of a text.
- Students will orally and in writing refer to details and examples from the text when drawing inferences.
- Students will orally and in writing determine the main idea of an informational text.
- Students will orally and in writing explain how the main idea is supported by key details.

Guiding Question(s):

- Can you explain how the author uses inferences?
- Can you write the details and examples from the text when drawing inferences?
- Can you write the main idea of an informational text?
- Can you write and explain how the main idea is supported by key details?

Vocabulary	
<p>In-Context Vocabulary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goods • Great Depression • Installment buying • Produced <p>Note: Words included as in-context are meant to aid in comprehension of the text through the instruction of context clue strategies. When assessing for student mastery of in-context vocabulary, assess students' ability to use strategies. See RL.4.4.</p>	<p>Strategies for Teaching How to Determine Meaning from Context Clues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> CPR <input type="checkbox"/> Definition <input type="checkbox"/> Restatement or synonym <input type="checkbox"/> Contrast or antonym <input type="checkbox"/> Comparison <input type="checkbox"/> Examples
<p>Direct Instruction Text Vocabulary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy • Labor-saving machinery • Profits • Surpluses 	<p>Instructional Strategies for Direct Instruction Text Vocabulary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Introduce words with student-friendly definition and pictures <input type="checkbox"/> Write/discuss using the words
Symbol	Type of Text and Interpretation of Symbol
	Instructional support and/or extension suggestions for students who are EL, have disabilities, or perform/read well below the grade level and/or for students who and/or a more advanced text for students who perform/read well above grade level.
✓	Assessment (Pre-assessment, Formative, Self, or Summative)
Instructional Plan	
<p>Understanding Lesson Purpose and Student Outcomes:</p> <p>Students review the following “I Can Statements” for this lesson, being sure to underline the parts of the statements that seem easy and circle the parts that seem difficult:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can orally make inferences about author’s decisions and the content of a text. • I can orally and in writing refer to details and examples from the text when drawing inferences. • I can orally and in writing determine the main idea of an informational text. • I can orally and in writing explain how the main idea is supported by key details. 	

Anticipatory Set/Introduction to the Lesson:

- ✓ Review words on the word wall. For word wall game ideas, see **Handout 1.4**.

Introduced the term “The Great Depression” and brainstorm what students think the term means. Write down their predictions and discuss The Great Depression by pointing out that the stock market (define in student-friendly term) crashed and many people lost a lot of money and became unemployed. Have students infer what life would be like during that time. Write down their inferences on the board. Tell students you will read an article to them about the Great Depression because it will give them a greater understanding about the setting and characters behaviors in the anchor text, *Mississippi Bridge*.

Activity 1: Vocabulary Direct Instruction

Briefly, directly teach the meaning of the vocabulary words: profits, surpluses, labor-saving machinery, and economy. Place the words on an anchor chart with student friendly definitions. Add all vocabulary words to the word wall.

- Profit-money that a person makes
Sentence Example: I earned \$50.00 for cleaning the house, and after I paid my brother \$20.00 for helping me, I had a profit of \$30.00.
- Surpluses-when there is too much of an item than is needed
Sentence Example: I have 25 students in my class, but I brought 30 candy bars. I have a surplus of 5 candy bars.
- Labor-saving machinery-a machine that helps people by making work easier and more efficient
Sentence Example: A sewing machine is labor-saving machine because people do not have to sew clothes by hand.
- Economy-the amount of money a country has
Sentence Example: When the economy is good, the country has money, people are working, and poverty is low. When the economy is poor, the country does not have a lot of money, many people are not working, and poverty is high.

Note: Once you give students the student-friendly definition, make sure you point out and teach the vocabulary embedded in the text.

Activity 2: First Reading

Hand out the article **Handout 3.1: About the Great Depression** and have student do the first reading silently. Set the purpose for reading and have students read text as independently as possible. The first read should be without building background; students should be integrating their background knowledge with the text as they read. Following the first read, have students Think-Pair-Share to assess what they have gleaned from the text. By listening to students as they share, you can determine the focus of the second read.

Activity 3: Reading “About the Great Depression”

Read the article, aloud to the class. When you read to the students, read fluently and with expression.

- ✓ As you read, stop and have students discuss text-dependent questions and in-context vocabulary words with elbow partners. Have students share out their responses to the rest of the class. Continue this process throughout the entire text.

- 1. Read the “Definition” section to the students and ask students to define the *Great Depression* using context clues. Give students an opportunity to discuss and fill in **Handout 3.2: Vocabulary in Context for “About the Great Depression”** for *Great Depression*. Have students discuss with their partners(s) what they thought it was like to live during the Great Depression and use evidence from that section to support their inference. Have students share out their responses.
- 2. Read the “Causes” section to the students and ask students to define *produced, goods, and installment buying* using context clues. As you read, make sure to point out the vocabulary words *profit, surpluses, labor-saving machinery, economy, and debts* within the text. Refer to the anchor chart of those vocabulary words that was made at the beginning of the class. Give students an opportunity to discuss and fill in **Handout 3.2: Vocabulary in Context for “About the Great Depression”** for *produced, goods, and installment buying*. Assign each set of partners a cause to discuss (i.e. Two students will discuss cause number one, two other students discuss cause number two, and so on). Ask them to make an inference on what each of those causes mean. Have students share out their responses.
- 3. Read the “Effects” section to the students and tell them to discuss with their partners(s) what it means to feel ashamed, put up a false front, and keep to themselves. Have students share out their responses.
- 4. Read the “How People Coped” section to the students. Ask students to think and share with their partner(s) the following questions: If you were in the same situation what would you give up? Why would you give it up? Have students share out their responses.
- 5. Read the “Government Intervention” section to the students. With their partner(s), have students talk about why they think President Hoover did not help the people, but when President Roosevelt took office, he did help the people. Have students share out their responses.

Activity 4: Fluency Practice

After reading the entire passage, go back to section “Effects.” This section is particularly difficult because it talks about “psychological issues.” Reread this section to students sentence by sentence and have students echo read back to you. This will help aid in reading fluency and give you an opportunity to have more of a discussion on the section.

Activity 5: Text-Dependent Questions

After reading, encourage deeper conversation on what life may have been like during the Great Depression.

- ✓ Students answer the text dependent questions, **Handout 3.3: The Great Depression Text Dependent Questions**. Have students answer questions in pairs or small groups.

Activity 6: Writing Activity

Note: If students have not received instruction on how to write a summary, provide that instruction before assigning this task.

Have students write a summary of this article.

- ✓ When grading the summary, the focus should be on content and comprehension of the article. The summary should include:
 - The Great Depression was caused by businesses failing, falling prices, and many individuals did not have employment.
 - People had very little food and turned to charity, family, and friends for help.
 - Many families lived in one apartment which allowed them to share expenses.
 - Families went without necessities- instead of electricity, they would use kerosene lamps.
 - Once the new president, Franklin Roosevelt, was elected, many changes took place and people got the help they needed and the Great Depression ended.

For students who are EL, have disabilities, or perform/read well below the grade-level:

- The teacher could provide an example of a written summary with the different parts labeled

Extensions and/or a more advanced text for students who perform/read well above grade level:

- If students have background knowledge, have them compare and contrast the Great Depression with another historical event. If they do not have the background knowledge, provide them with another article to use for the compare and contrast activity.

Reflection and Closing:

- ✓ Provide an exit ticket with the activity, Give One Get One. The activity calls for students to write down one thing they learned in the lesson. Then students must find another student in the class (usually the teacher will give direction regarding how to find a partner. Example: Find someone who was born in the same month as you.) The students will get together and tell each

other what they learned. They must write down what their partner said. That is how they give an idea and get one in return. The teacher will be walking around the room to ensure the conversations stay on track.

For students who are EL, have disabilities, or perform/read well below the grade-level:

- Provide handouts of notes for students.

Extensions and/or a more advanced text for students who perform/read well above grade level I:

- The teacher may quietly ask these students who write down more than one thing they learned or how they will apply what they learned in class to their classwork.

Homework

Directions for students:

- ✓ Explore different forms of nonfiction text (e.g., newspaper/magazine articles, biographies, informational/historical text). Identify the different text features that the author uses.
- ✓ Discuss with your parent / guardian the important information that each text structure adds to the text.
- ✓ Write down information learned from text features to clarify understanding.

See pages 13 and 14 of the [Family Guide for Student Success](#).

Handout 3.1: About the Great Depression

Definition: The Great Depression was a period of severe decline in business activity accompanied by falling prices and high unemployment. During the Depression nearly 13 million people were out of work, banks closed, savings were wiped out, and the stock market collapsed.

Causes: A number of factors worked together to cause the Great Depression. Six of them are listed here.

1. Businesses during the twenties had kept prices and profits high while keeping wages low. This meant that labor could not afford to buy what it produced.
2. After World War I farmers kept up their high levels of production, and surpluses piled up. Supply became greater than demand, thus driving prices down.
3. Industry had built more and larger plants, allowing them to produce more goods than they could sell.
4. The introduction of labor-saving machinery put men out of jobs in several industries.
5. World War I left the worldwide economy shaky.
6. Installment buying allowed people to purchase on credit, and people piled up debts. They used their money to buy stocks on margin, hoping that prices would rise and they would make a profit.

Effects: The effects of the Great Depression were many and included the obvious—hunger, poverty, and homelessness. Another effect was psychological in nature. Men were expected to work, and joblessness was considered a result of laziness. When millions could not find jobs during the Depression, they felt ashamed, even though the situation was not their fault. Some put up a brave, false front, while others kept to themselves to avoid revealing their situation and true feelings.

How People Coped: People were forced to change their lives during the Depression. There was no unemployment insurance to fall back on or Social Security benefits, either. People found ways to cope the best they could. Belt tightening became a way of life. Some people had to turn to charity, friends, or family for help. Two or more families often crowded into one apartment, splitting the rent. Meat became a luxury, as did eating out at a restaurant. When electric bills were too high for some to pay, they resorted to kerosene lamps.

Government Intervention: As the Depression raged on, it was obvious that some government help would be necessary to get the economy back on its feet. President Hoover did not believe in either government intervention in business or direct assistance for the people. When Franklin Roosevelt was elected president, he quickly acted. In a flurry of legislative activity during a period known as the First Hundred Days, Congress passed several innovative laws, some of which are still in effect today.

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Handout 3.2: Vocabulary in Context for “About the Great Depression.”

1. “The **Great Depression** was a period of severe decline in business activity accompanied by falling prices and high unemployment.”

A. What do you think this word means?

B. What clues helped you determine the meaning?

2. “Businesses during the twenties had kept prices and profits high while keeping wages low. This meant the labor could not afford to buy what it **produced**.”

A. What do you think this word means?

B. What clues helped you determine the meaning?

3. “Industry had built more and larger plants, allowing them to produce more **goods** than they could sell.”

A. What do you think this word means?

B. What clues helped you determine the meaning?

4. “**Installment buying** allowed people to purchase on credit, and people piled up debts.”

A. What do you think this word means?

B. What clues helped you determine the meaning?

Handout 3.3: The Great Depression Text Dependent Questions

1. How is this organized? Define the structure of this text. Use evidence from the text to justify your answer.

2. What are some of the causes of the Great Depression?

3. What was the result of the Great Depression? Use the text to support your answers.

4. What do you think the author means that people were forced to change their lives? Which details in the text led you to that conclusion?

5. How did the United States recover from the Great Depression?

6. Why do you think this time in history was called the Great Depression? Were people happy? Use details from the text to support your answer.

7. Write in one sentence what this passage was about.

For training or questions regarding this unit,
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