

Goals—

- 1) to teach history from an interdisciplinary perspective
- 2) to provide students the resources and tools to make historical discoveries
- 3) to ensure student comprehension of the Great Depression era

Instruction—

The lesson will employ three types of literature—the history textbook, first-hand accounts from 1930s Americans (in letters), and Eudora Welty’s “The Whistle”—to draw historical connections between a variety sources. Ideally, students will learn to use their basic knowledge of Depression-era political figures, dates, and trends to gather contextual clues from the letters and the Welty story—encouraging critical thinking across subject areas.

- 1) Students will read the corresponding chapter in the school-issued textbook and the material will be covered again in class through lecture/note-taking and class discussion. Such information will include major dates, key political figures, basic knowledge of recession, inflation, and the Stock Market, important New Deal Programs (acronyms and purposes), demographics, geography, weather patterns (the Dust Bowl), etc.
- 2) Students will read six short letters written in the 1930s by those suffering during the Great Depression. These letters are taken from the following collection:

McElvaine, Robert S., ed. *Down and Out in the Great Depression: Letters from the Forgotten Man*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983.

The six letters are written by people under different circumstances and of different ages and socio-economic backgrounds.

- 3) Students will read Welty’s “The Whistle.” A discussion will take place about the plot and characters of the story.

Questions to be considered include:

- What do the letters and short story tell that is not found in the textbook?
- How can we know that the letters and story relate to the Depression—are there contextual clues that give this away?
- Why is it helpful to look for history in a variety of sources?
- Are there other sources that might be helpful (photographs, works of art, music, etc)?

Assessment—

Students will be evaluated both informally and formally—through class discussion and a subject test.