

Name: _____

The Great Depression, New Deal, and World War II Guided Readings

Read like a Rockstar! Annotate your texts! Yes, this counts toward your score.

1. Highlight or underline key terms.
2. Put a box around words you don't know. (And look them up!)
3. Underline things that are important.
4. Put a ★ next to main ideas.
5. Put a ? next to things you do not understand *so you can find more information about the topic.*
6. Add # to make personal connections to the text

The Great Depression

Herbert Hoover's Optimism

When Herbert Hoover was elected in 1928, the Roaring 1920s had reached its peak. During the election of 1928, Hoover credited the laissez faire policies of Republican presidents for the successful economy and Wall Street's Bull Market. Laissez faire policies meant that the government would not interfere with the economy.

"By adherence to the principles of decentralized self-government, ordered liberty, equal opportunity, and freedom to the individual, our American experiment in human welfare has yielded a degree of well-being unparalleled in all the world. It has come nearer to the abolition of poverty, to the abolition of fear of want, than humanity has ever reached before."

--Herbert Hoover's Campaign Speech, October 22, 1928

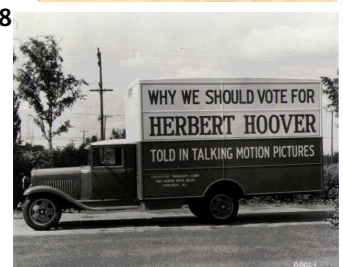
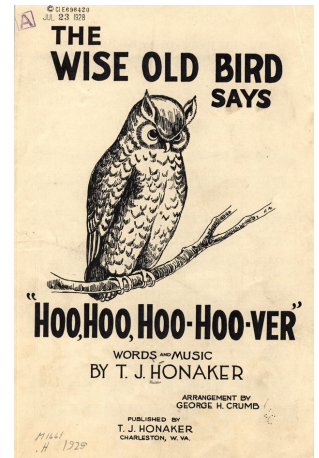
1. What did Hoover promise in his campaign speech on October 22, 1928?

The Interactions of Business Overproduction and Consumer Underconsumption

Though the US economy appeared to be prosperous during the 1920s, the conditions that led to the Great Depression were created during that decade. During the 1920s, the wealthy grew wealthier due in large measure to government fiscal policies that both reduced business regulations and allowed the wealthy to keep more of their money. These reduced regulations and low corporate taxes increased the profits of corporations and made their stocks more valuable. At the same time, the poor and working classes lost the ability to buy products because their wages stayed the same while prices rose. This reduction in consumer consumption resulted in business overproduction and eventually caused business profits to decline. These factors were an important cause of the Great Depression.

New methods of buying products, including the installment plan and buying on credit, became popular during the 1920s. These methods encouraged consumers to buy more than they could afford and to go into debt. Worst of all, banks loaned people money to buy stock with very little money paid at the time of purchase. The stocks themselves became the collateral for the loan. This was called buying on margin. Rising stock prices and the ability of ordinary people to buy stock on credit increased investment in the stock market and inflated the price of stocks above their actual value. Then, by October 1929, the US economy was beginning to show signs of slowing down. Stockholders feared the economy was ending a period of prosperity and entering a period of recession. This caused some investors to panic and sell their stocks. As more people sold their stock, other people panicked and sold their stock as well, driving down their prices and causing a stock market crash. A loss of confidence in financial institutions moved people to pull their investments from banks, resulting in a bank rush. Banks closed as they ran out of money, and only those who arrived early enough to withdraw their deposits in time were able to recover their investments from the failed banks.

In turn, the stock market crash triggered other economic weaknesses and plunged the United States into the Great Depression—a severe economic recession in the 1930s that affected all the world's industrialized nations and the countries that exported raw materials to them. Industry, trade, construction, mining, logging, and farming decreased sharply. Business profits, tax revenues, and personal incomes did, as well.



2. Why were poor unable to buy some consumer products of the 1920s?

3. What was the result of "business overproduction"?

4. Which practice by banks led to people buying more than they could afford?

5. What led to the stock market crash?

6. Explain how bank rushes happened.

7. If people saved money wisely, refrained from buying on credit or buying on margin, refrained from stock speculation, *but they did not withdraw their sums before a bank failed*, could they recover their life savings?

8. What was the Great Depression?



Dust Bowl

New machinery and improved farming techniques made American farmers very productive. By producing more food each year, farmers thought they could earn more money. Instead, this overproduction helped drive down the prices of their products and made it harder for them to make a profit. In response, farmers tried producing even more food by taking out more loans to buy more land and farm equipment. As a result, most farmers were very vulnerable to economic and environmental disasters when banks started foreclosing on farms owned by farmers unable to repay their loans. To make matters worse, the Great Plains states were experiencing a severe drought. When a series of severe dust storms hit the prairies, they picked up the dirt loosened by the drought and the over-farming practices that had eroded the soil. This ecological disaster was called the Dust Bowl. Dry conditions and high winds made farming impossible. Tenant farmers and sharecroppers were among the hardest hit as their landlords evicted them and sold the land. Over 500,000 Americans were left homeless. Many farmers from Oklahoma, Texas, and the surrounding Dust Bowl states migrated to California in search of work.



John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath tells the story of the Joad family's journey from the Dust Bowl to California

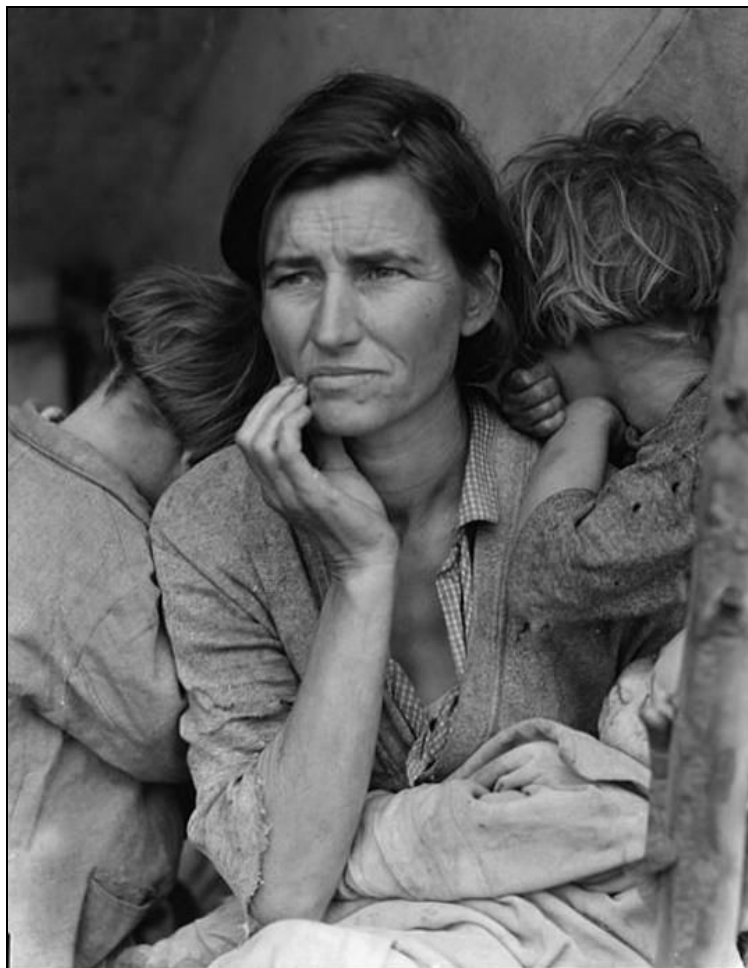
"The cars of migrant people crawled out of the side roads onto the great cross-country highway, and they took the migrant way to the West. In the daylight they scuttled like bugs to the westward; and as the dark caught them, they clustered like bugs near to shelter and to water. And because they were lonely and perplexed, because they had all come from a place of sadness and worry and defeat, and because they were all going to a new mysterious place, they huddled together; they talked together; they shared their lives, their food, and the things they hoped for in the new country. Thus it might be that one family camped near a spring, and another camped for the spring and for company, and a third because two families had pioneered the place and found it good. And when the sun went down, perhaps twenty families and twenty cars were there."

--Excerpt from Chapter 17 of *The Grapes of Wrath*

9. What were the 3 causes of the Dust Bowl?

10. Where did many migrants go when they left the Dust Bowl to seek better economic opportunities and environmental conditions?

11. What was the main idea of *The Grapes of Wrath* excerpt?



"Migrant Mother." Dorothea Lange, February 1936.

The Resettlement Administration was one of President FDR's agencies that helped people from the Dust Bowl. This agency hired photographer Dorothea Lange to take pictures that would build support for its programs. This photograph was one of several that Dorothea Lange took of migrant farm worker Florence Thompson, a widowed pea-picker, and three of her seven children. The family is a real migrant family from a migrant camp headed to California from the Dust Bowl during the Great Depression.

12. How might this photograph be useful as evidence of the living conditions of migrant farm workers during the Great Depression?

13. What about this source might make it less useful as evidence of the living conditions of migrant farm workers during the Great Depression?

Widespread Unemployment

As profits fell and it became clear consumers would need to reduce spending, workers began to lose their jobs. By 1932, the unemployment rate in the United States had reached 25%. Unemployed workers who had no savings could not pay their debts, and many lost their homes. Homeless and unemployed people settled in camps of shacks and tents in rundown areas. These homeless shanty towns became known as Hoovervilles, named after Herbert Hoover, the US president when the Depression started (due to his laissez faire approach and refusal to provide direct aid during the Depression). Hooverville residents slept in packing crates if they were lucky; if not, they slept on the ground. They begged for food from people who still had jobs and housing. They often relied on breadlines from charities and would wait in line for long periods of time for food and other necessities.

14. What was a direct result of widespread unemployment?

15. Who lived in Hoovervilles? What were they?

16. What were breadlines?



Hoover's Response to the Great Depression

Hoover believed that direct aid for the needy could not be provided by the federal government because the Constitution did not include a provision to do so. He believed the depression could be helped by volunteers, or individuals aiding by philanthropy and charity, and localism, or help provided by local governments and organizations (who understand the needs of their own communities). Hoover celebrated the spirit of Americans to exhibit rugged individualism in times of hardship: "...individual initiative and enterprise through which our people have grown to unparalleled greatness."

Hoover's approach for much of his presidency proved to be ineffectual. By the last year of his presidency, Hoover changed course for some of his laissez faire policies. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation was established in 1932. This government corporation provided financial support to state and local government and lent money to banks, railroads, and other businesses. He also approved of federal funding for the building of the Hoover Dam (originally called the Boulder Dam) to generate jobs and hydroelectricity for the Southwest. Hoover believed investing in business would benefit those hit hardest by the depression by "trickle-down" economics.

17. Why did Hoover believe the federal government could not provide direct aid?

18. How did Hoover believe the depression could be helped?

19. How did Hoover believe support for governmental, financial, and business institutions would benefit those most in need?



The “New Deal”

In the first presidential election during the Great Depression, American voters rejected Herbert Hoover and voted in **Franklin Delano Roosevelt**, perhaps best known as FDR, in 1932. When he took the oath of office March 4, 1933, he famously declared, “First of all, the only thing we have to fear is fear itself --nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror.” However, more banks continued to close across the nation as the economy hinged upon collapse. Roosevelt offered initiatives he termed the “New Deal,” his series of programs to end the Depression. He promised these programs would help different segments of the economy recover by addressing specific needs and weaknesses.



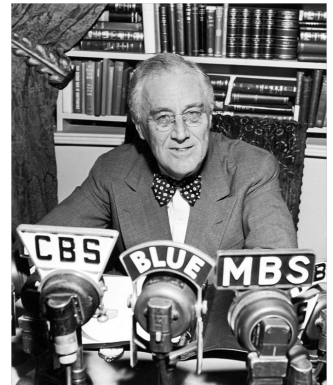
The Hundred Days

One of the first issues FDR sought to address was the instability of the banking system. His economic advisors prepared the Emergency Banking Relief Act, which passed both houses of Congress within his first week in office. This law provided loans to banks to help them reopen and established some federal oversight of the banking industry. Months later the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) was created to insure bank deposits up to \$2500. This emphasized the commitment of the federal government to protecting deposits and preventing another panic. FDR’s address of the Banking Crisis, among his attempts to address the depression with other initiatives, between March 9th and June 16th of 1933 were historically noted as (the first) Hundred Days. During the Hundred Days, Congress approved fifteen pieces of major social and economic legislation designed by a group of presidential advisors, known as “the brain trust.” The first Hundred Days of the presidency has since become a precedent by which newly elected presidents are judged on their efforts to fulfill their campaign promises.



Fireside Chats

Eight days after he was elected, FDR delivered his first fireside chat. Fireside chats were a series of radio addresses to calm the American public and to simplify and explain the initiatives and goals of the New Deal to the masses. As families might gather around the radio by the living room fireside to listen to these addresses, FDR explained his attempts at relief (to help those in need), recovery (to improve the economy of the US), and reform (change laws to prevent another economic crisis). FDR charmed Americans with his charisma, and he reached them directly without giving frequent public appearances in Washington. Fireside chats allowed for FDR to further conceal his disability. The public did not know that a disease had resulted in the loss of FDR’s legs more than 11 years before FDR took office. He frequently sought rehabilitation and remedies to gain the use of his legs again, but he was confined to a wheelchair for the rest of his life. FDR concealed his disability from the American public by using leg braces, podiums, railing, and even other people to help hold him in an upright position on his legs for speeches occasionally.



1. What was the purpose of the New Deal?
2. What were the purpose of fireside chats?

First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt

Eleanor Roosevelt was a very dynamic and influential first lady. She redefined the roles and activism expected of a first lady. She was interested in humanitarian causes and social progress, and she was very vocal about them during her husband's time in the White House. As a supporter of women's activism, she was also instrumental in convincing Roosevelt to appoint more women to government positions. She traveled all over the United States to observe social conditions so she could keep the president informed about the state of the nation. She served as FDR's eyes and ears during his time in office, because of his limited mobility that was maintained as a secret. FDR spent much of his time engaging in hydrotherapy treatments at the "Little White House," his resort in Warm Springs, Georgia where he spent much of his time during the last two decades of his life treating his polio symptoms. *Interestingly, since his death researchers have concluded that it was more likely that FDR contracted Guillain-Barre Syndrome, rather than polio, from which he lost his ability to walk.*



3. How did Eleanor Roosevelt come to symbolize social progress and women's activism?

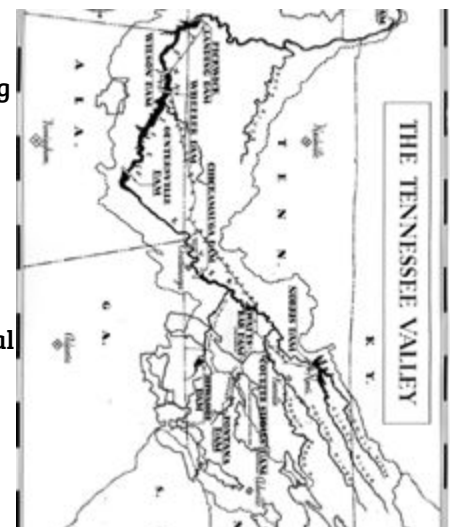
4. Do you think she changed the role of the first lady? How?

New Deal Relief Efforts

Unlike Hoover, FDR promised to provide direct federal relief to curb the effects of high unemployment. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) created a jobs program for young men aged 18 to 25. The men lived in camps and worked on a variety of conservation projects in US parks and recreation areas. During the nine years that it existed, over 2.5 million workers earned \$30 a month cutting trails, building reservoirs, and building a shelter-belt of 200 million trees stretching from Texas to Canada to protect against erosion, such as the conditions that contributed to the Dust Bowl. The Public Works Administration (PWA) also financed more than 34,000 construction projects, such as hospitals and schools, at a cost of more than \$6 billion. Although the New Deal did not end unemployment, it provided opportunity, hope, and national purpose which had been missing since the nation had spiraled into the depression.

New Deal Recovery Efforts Cont.

FDR asked Congress to take unprecedented action to meet the farm crisis. The Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) proposed to increase farm income by paying farmers to leave acres unplanted. This was a controversial approach at a time when people were hungry. Due to decreased production of crops, the price of farm products rose after more than a decade of low crop prices. The Tennessee Valley Authority contributed to the New Deal's recovery program by helping to revitalize and modernize the south. It funded the construction of a system of dams and hydroelectric plants to provide inexpensive electricity and flood control for impoverished residents of the Tennessee Valley. This ambitious program of regional planning helped to stimulate growth in an area that had been amongst America's most underdeveloped regions.



5. What was the effect of the TVA on the rural South?

6. Which states were affected by the TVA recovery efforts besides Tennessee?

Opposition to the New Deal

Father Charles Coughlin was a Catholic priest from Detroit. Known as the "Radio Priest," Coughlin delivered radio sermons to a nationwide audience estimated at over 30 million Americans. Like the late 19th century Populists, Coughlin supported nationalizing the banks and coining more silver dollars. Another critic of FDR was Francis E. Townsend, a retired physician who argued that the New Deal did not do enough for older Americans. He endorsed a program to provide relief checks to the elderly. Perhaps the most famous opponent of FDR was Huey Long, a colorful and controversial governor and US senator from Louisiana. He famously stated, "I'm a small fish here in Washington. But I'm the Kingfish to the folks down in Louisiana." Known as the "Kingfish," this radical populist claimed to be the enemy of Wall Street and big business. He developed the "Share Our Wealth" program, promising to tax the rich and guarantee each American a \$5000 home and an annual income of \$2500. Confident that he would win the election of 1936, he wrote a book about his goals for his time in the White House. However, he was assassinated on the steps of the Louisiana capitol in Baton Rouge in September of 1936.



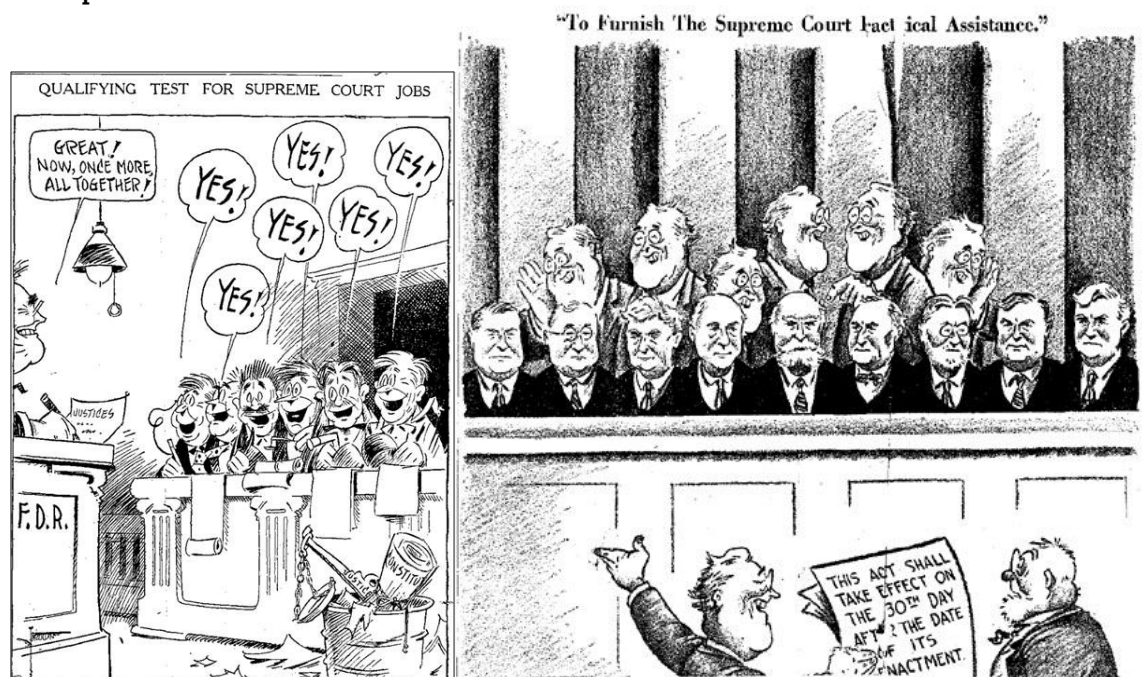
7. Why did Huey Long oppose the New Deal?

Court-Packing Scheme

In the summer of 1935, the Supreme Court began to deliver a series of decisions overturning key New Deal programs. FDR was alarmed that some New Deal programs were invalidated by these decisions and others could be overturned by the Supreme Court. Determined to protect the New Deal, FDR asked Congress for the authority to appoint a new Supreme Court justice for every member over the age of 70. This would allow him to change the number of justices from 9 to 15. Both the public and members of Congress opposed "court-packing" as a violation of judicial independence and the separation of powers. Rejection of FDR's Court Reform Bill was his first major legislative defeat as president. Ultimately, the Supreme Court upheld the Wagner Act and Social Security Act. Furthermore, several justices retired and FDR appointed nine new members to the Supreme Court while he was president.

8. Why were critics concerned that court packing could disrupt the system of checks and balances?

9. What is the main point of the political cartoons below?



The Second New Deal

The Second New Deal was made possible by Democratic victories in both the House and Senate during the mid-term elections of 1934. FDR promised increased Democratic support in the legislature would allow him to further the goals of the New Deal.

Works Progress Administration

Congress enacted the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in April of 1935. Initially funded with \$5 billion, the WPA launched an ambitious program that included constructing 600,000 miles of highways, repairing 100,000 bridges, and erecting thousands of public parks and recreational facilities. The WPA did more than hire construction workers. It also funded innovative projects designed to utilize the skills of artists, actors, and writers. For example, the Federal Art Project employed artists to paint murals for post offices, libraries, and other public buildings across America.

*Refer to the end of the guided readings to examine slave narratives collected by WPA writers.



The Social Security Act

Signed by FDR in August in 1935, the Social Security Act answered the Townsend Plan by enacting the New Deal's most far-reaching legislative initiative. The act established a pension for retired people over the age of sixty-five. A small payroll tax paid by both workers and employers financed the fund. In addition, the Social Security Act committed the national government to a broad range of social welfare activities including federal grants-in-aid for old age assistance and aid for dependent children. The Social Security Act also had some important limitations. It initially excluded farm laborers, domestic servants, and the self-employed. It also took money out of workers' paychecks when low consumer demand remained one of the main causes of the depression.



The Wagner Act

The Second New Deal gave the labor movement a significant victory with the passage of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). Often called the Wagner Act for its sponsor, New York Senator Robert Wagner, the NLRA protected the right of workers to join unions and bargain collectively with management. The NLRA also created a National Labor Relations Board to supervise union elections and investigate unfair labor practices by employers. The Wagner Act resulted in increased union membership, with a jump from an estimated 3 million workers at the beginning of the depression to an estimated 9 million workers by the end of the 1930s.

10. After the passage of the Wagner Act, would it be legal to blacklist a worker belonging to a labor union?



World War II and FDR's Opposition to Neutrality

The New Deal did not bring about the full economic recovery FDR promised. The US finally emerged from the Great Depression when the federal government sharply increased military spending as the nation prepared for World War II. America fought World War I as an idealistic crusade to "make the world safe for democracy." However, as totalitarian regimes became increasingly aggressive in Europe, American isolationists argued that the US should follow George Washington's advice to avoid becoming politically involved in European affairs and advocated for American neutrality.

To prevent FDR from involving America in what some saw as a European war, Congress passed a series of Neutrality Acts to make it illegal to sell arms or make loans to nations at war. FDR recognized that the US could not isolate itself from the spreading fascist aggression. In his 1936 Quarantine Speech, FDR warned "[t]he peace-loving

nations must make a concerted effort in opposition to those violations of treaties . . . which today are creating a state of international anarchy and instability from which there is no escape through mere isolation or neutrality.” The fourth of the Neutrality Acts, passed in 1939 in recognition of the Nazi threat to Western Europe’s democracies, permitted the sale of arms to nations at war on a “cash and carry” basis. This meant that buyers would have to pay cash and send their own ships to American ports to pick up the supplies, thereby keeping American ships from being sunk by the Germans. While America tried to remain at peace, Hitler plunged Europe into war.

On September 1, 1939, Germany launched a massive blitzkrieg, or “lightning war,” against Poland. France and Britain immediately declared war on Germany. Britain called on the US to support their fight against Nazi Germany. In a fireside chat, FDR explained that America must become an “arsenal of democracy” by providing war materials to Britain. He then asked Congress to approve a Lend-Lease Act allowing him to send war materials to any country whose defense he considered vital to the US. Congress approved the Lend-Lease Act in March of 1941. Depression ridden industries were reinvigorated by war mobilization to produce weapons.

11. What were the purpose of the Neutrality Acts?
12. Why did FDR oppose them?
13. Explain the difference between “cash and carry” and “lend-lease.”
14. What is the message of the political cartoon to the right? (The ship is named “Aid That Will Win”)
15. Do you recognize the illustrator (hint: he later became a children’s author)?
16. How did the entrance of the US into World War II improve the economy of the US?



Create a blog post to share on social media to disseminate your message as either a member of the Brain Trust or Huey Long (or other opponent of FDR). No, the internet still didn't exist for basically another 60 years.

1. If you choose to be a member of the Brain Trust, write an endorsement of at least two New Deal programs. You must explain the purpose of each program and evaluate its effectiveness. **Persuade Americans to support the New Deal!**
2. If you choose to represent Huey Long or another FDR opponent, critique at least two of the New Deal Programs. You must explain the purpose of each program and evaluate its effectiveness. **Persuade Americans to protest the New Deal!**

You may complete either option in whatever illustrative medium you prefer. Upload it to Edmodo to submit.



Do you know why this portrait of FDR at The Little White House was left unfinished?



World War II

World War II was the culminating event in the United States' rise to the level of a superpower. Though initially reluctant to become involved in the fighting, once attacked, the United States responded with military and economic contributions that led to an Allied victory. Responding to the country's need to fight the war, the federal government grew larger.

Protesting Discrimination

In 1941, **A. Philip Randolph**, the founder of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, proposed a march on Washington, D.C., to protest discrimination in the military and in industry. He called on African Americans from all over the United States to come to Washington and join him. President Roosevelt, afraid the march might cause unrest among whites, summoned Randolph to the White House and asked him to call off the march. When Randolph refused, Roosevelt issued an executive order that called on employers and labor unions to cease discrimination in hiring practices in industries related to defense. As a result of Roosevelt's actions, the march was canceled.

Pearl Harbor and Its Aftermath

On the morning of December 7, 1941, the navy of the Empire of Japan launched a surprise attack on the US Navy base at **Pearl Harbor**, Hawaii. Over 2,400 Americans were killed and 1,178 more were wounded, 19 ships were damaged, and over 300 aircraft were destroyed. The Japanese attack took the United States officially into World War II. One effect of America's entry into the war was alarm about the loyalty of Japanese Americans: 120,000 Japanese Americans lived in the United States, most of them on the West Coast. Fears of spies and sabotage led to prejudice and sometimes violence against Japanese Americans. In the name of national security, Roosevelt ordered all people of Japanese ancestry be moved from California and parts of Washington, Oregon, and Arizona to rural prison camps. Although most of the people imprisoned in these **internment** camps were Japanese Americans, there were also small numbers of German Americans and Italian Americans imprisoned under the same law, as well as hundreds of Native Americans from Alaska.

1. Who was A. Philip Randolph?
2. What did he do?
3. What did Roosevelt do in response to him refusing to the call off the march?
4. What happened on December 7, 1941?
5. What were the casualties?
6. What did the attack on Pearl Harbor move some Americans to do?
7. What was the purpose of Roosevelt's Executive Order?
8. Who was sent to internment camps and why?

The “European Theater” and “Pacific Theater”

The United States entered World War II after the attack at Pearl Harbor. There were two theaters of war. American forces fought in both the Pacific and in Europe. Fighting in the Pacific Theater presented some extra strategic difficulties and ultimately led to the use of atomic weapons to end the war. The distance across the Pacific was three times the distance from New York to Great Britain. It could take up to five months for supplies to get from California to Australia. The decision to prioritize the war in Europe sent the best and greatest amount of equipment to Europe. This allocation of resources meant that forces in the Pacific faced outdated equipment and shortages until the United States' industrial capacity could catch up with demand. Additionally, there was little or no infrastructure to transport and store supplies in the Pacific once they arrived in the theater. Finally, the climate of the Pacific region was difficult to manage and caused food supplies to spoil. These conditions led to the Allied policy of **Island Hopping** across islands that served as landing strips. These locations allowed air bombardments of Japanese fortifications. The Pacific Theater presented unique challenges for the United States in delivering food, weapons, and medical supplies to troops in the region during World War II. Headway was made in the Pacific six months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The United States won a sea battle against the Japanese Navy that was a turning point in World War II. The Japanese tried to trap and sink America's aircraft carriers near Midway Island, which was an American refueling station for ships and airplanes. The United States had gained intelligence information that the attack was coming and lured the Japanese into the waiting American forces. In the **Battle at Midway**, the United States destroyed four Japanese aircraft carriers while losing only one American carrier. The American victory at Midway is regarded as the most important naval engagement of the Pacific campaign. The success was also a huge morale boost for the United States. The Japanese never recovered from this defeat, which enabled the United States to gain control of other strategic Pacific Islands.

Eventually, the Island Hopping campaign in the Pacific led President Truman to a critical juncture. President Roosevelt had died in early 1945 and Harry Truman was the new President responsible for making the decisions regarding the conduct of the war. Should the United States use a new atomic weapon or would a military invasion of Japan's mainland be necessary to achieve victory in the Pacific? The development of the atomic weapon had been a tightly held secret and would certainly cause significant damage if used in battle.

The **Manhattan Project** was a code name for a secret research and development program whose goal was to build an atomic weapon during World War II. European scientists who fled Germany in the early 1930s, including Albert Einstein, feared that German physicists were developing an atomic weapon for Hitler. The scientists urged Roosevelt and Churchill to create a similar program. United States General Leslie Groves led the development of numerous research labs, where three atomic weapons were ultimately created. One of the research labs was the Los Alamos facility in New Mexico.

9. What were some of the challenges of fighting a war in two “theaters” of the world?

In the European Theater?

In the Pacific Theater?

10. What was the Manhattan Project?

