

Name _____



The Great Depression: A Time of Hardship and Change

The Great Depression, which lasted from 1929 to the late 1930s, was a period of immense economic turmoil and social upheaval in the United States. It had far-reaching impacts on the lives of everyday people and reshaped the nation in many ways.

Social Impacts

- **Unemployment and Homelessness:** During the Great Depression, millions of Americans lost their jobs. Families struggled to make ends meet, and many people became homeless as they could no longer afford to pay rent or mortgages. Shantytowns, known as "Hoovervilles," sprung up in cities across the country, where people lived in makeshift shelters.
- **Struggles for Survival:** The lack of jobs and income meant that people had to get by with very little. Families had to make do with less food, clothing, and basic necessities. Children often went to school without shoes, and many people had to stand in long lines at soup kitchens for a simple meal.
- **Migration:** In search of employment and a better life, many families and individuals moved from rural areas to cities. This led to overcrowding in urban areas and increased competition for the few available jobs.
- **Emotional Toll:** The Great Depression took a significant emotional toll on people. Depression and anxiety were widespread as individuals grappled with the uncertainty of their future. Families faced stress and strain, and suicide rates increased during this period.

Economic Impacts

- **Bank Failures:** Many banks went out of business during the Great Depression, causing people to lose their savings. This loss of confidence in the banking system led to a widespread distrust of banks that persisted for years.
- **Stock Market Crash:** The Great Depression began with the stock market crash of 1929. Investors lost enormous amounts of money, and the crash marked the beginning of a severe economic downturn.
- **Agricultural Crisis:** Farmers were hit hard during the Great Depression. Falling crop prices, droughts, and soil erosion led to widespread agricultural struggles. Many farmers lost their land and livelihoods.
- **New Deal Programs:** In response to the economic crisis, President Franklin D. Roosevelt introduced a series of government programs called the New Deal. These programs aimed to provide jobs, stimulate the economy, and provide relief to those in need. Some of the most famous New Deal initiatives include the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

