

<Name>

Mr. Burns

US History II/APUSH

<Due Date>

Great Depression Documents Analysis

Directions: **Analyze** the documents and **answer** the short-answer questions that follow each document in the space provided. Then **Complete** the SPACEY Analysis for each document.

Document 1

. . . This is not an issue as to whether the people are going hungry or cold in the United States. It is solely a question of the best method by which hunger and cold can be prevented. It is a question as to whether the American people on the one hand will maintain the spirit of charity and of mutual self-help through voluntary giving and the responsibility of local government as distinguished on the other hand from appropriations out of the Federal Treasury for such purposes. My own conviction is strongly that if we break down this sense of responsibility, of individual generosity to individual, and mutual self-help in the country in times of national difficulty and if we start appropriations of this character we have not only impaired something infinitely valuable in the life of the American people but have struck at the roots of self government. Once this has happened it is not the cost of a few score millions, but we are faced with the abyss of reliance [trap of relying] in [the] future upon Government charity in some form or other. The money involved is indeed the least of the costs to American ideals and American institutions. . . .

Source: President Herbert Hoover, Press Statement, February 3, 1931

1 According to this document, how did President Hoover hope the American people would respond to the problems of the Depression? [REDACTED]

1. SPACEY the Document

Speaker: What do we know about the author of this document?	
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Audience: Who do you think this document was intended for?	

Context: What was happening at the time that this document was created?	
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Document 2

. . . Kentucky coal miners suffered perhaps the most. In Harlan County there were whole towns whose people had not a cent of income. They lived on dandelions and blackberries. The women washed clothes in soapweed suds. Dysentery bloated the stomachs of starving babies. Children were reported so famished they were chewing up their own hands. Miners tried to plant vegetables, but they were often so hungry that they ate them before they were ripe. On her first trip to the mountains, Eleanor Roosevelt saw a little boy trying to hide his pet rabbit. "He thinks we are not going to eat it," his sister told her, "but we are." In West Virginia, miners mobbed company stores demanding food. Mountain people, with no means to leave their homes, sometimes had to burn their last chairs and tables to keep warm. Local charity could not help in a place where everyone was destitute. . . .

"No one has starved," Hoover boasted. To prove it, he announced a decline in the death rate. It was heartening, but puzzling, too. Even the social workers could not see how the unemployed kept body and soul together, and the more they studied, the more the wonder grew. Savings, if any, went first. Then insurance was cashed. Then people borrowed from family and friends. They stopped paying rent. When evicted, they moved in with relatives. They ran up bills. It was surprising how much credit could be wangled. In 1932, about 400 families on relief in Philadelphia had managed to contract an average debt of \$160, a tribute to the hearts if not the business heads of landlords and merchants. But in the end they had to eat "tight." . . .

A teacher in a mountain school told a little girl who looked sick but said she was hungry to go home and eat something. "I can't," the youngster said. "It's my sister's turn to eat." In Chicago, teachers were ordered to ask what a child had had to eat before punishing him. Many of them were getting nothing but potatoes, a diet that kept their weight up, but left them listless, crotchety [cranky], and sleepy. . . .

Source: Caroline Bird, *The Invisible Scar*, David McKay Company. 1966.

2 State two ways the families described in this passage dealt with the problems of the Depression.

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Document 3



Source: H. W. Felchner, New York City, February, 1932

3 Based on the photograph, state one effect the Great Depression had on many Americans.

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Document 4

. . . Brigades of Bonus Marchers converged on Washington [in 1932]. Congress had voted the bonus money, but for later. Some of these men might have been hustlers and perhaps there were a few Communists among them, but most were ex-soldiers who had served the nation [in World War I], frightened men with hungry families. The ragged hordes blocked traffic, clung like swarming bees to the steps of the Capitol. They needed their money now. They built a shacktown on the edge of Washington. Many had brought their wives and children. Contemporary reports mention the orderliness and discipline of these soldiers of misfortune. . . .

Source: John Steinbeck, "Living With Hard Times," Esquire. June 1983.

4 Based on this document, state the reason the Bonus Marchers went to Washington.

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Document 5

. . . Working women at first lost their jobs at a faster rate than men — then reentered the workforce more rapidly. In the early years of the Depression, many employers, including the federal government, tried to spread what employment they had to heads of households. That meant firing any married woman identified as a family’s “secondary” wage-earner. But the gender segregation in employment patterns that was already well established before the Depression also worked to women’s advantage. Heavy industry suffered the worst unemployment, but relatively few women stoked blast furnaces in the steel mills or drilled rivets on assembly lines or swung hammers in the building trades. The teaching profession, however, in which women were highly concentrated and indeed constituted a hefty majority of employees, suffered pay cuts but only minimal job losses. And the underlying trends of the economy meant that what new jobs did become available in the 1930s, such as telephone switchboard operation and clerical work, were peculiarly suited to women. . . .

Source: David M. Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*, Oxford University Press. 1999.

5 Based on this document, state two ways women in the labor force were affected by the Great Depression.

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Document 6

. . . For black people, the New Deal was psychologically encouraging (Mrs. Roosevelt was sympathetic; some blacks got posts in the administration), but most blacks were ignored by the New Deal programs. As tenant farmers, as farm laborers, as migrants, as domestic workers, they didn't qualify for unemployment insurance, minimum wages, social security, or farm subsidies. Roosevelt, careful not to offend southern white politicians whose political support he needed, did not push a bill against lynching. Blacks and whites were segregated in the armed forces. And black workers were discriminated against in getting jobs. They were the last hired, the first fired. Only when A. Philip Randolph, head of the Sleeping-Car Porters Union, threatened a massive march on Washington in 1941 would Roosevelt agree to sign an executive order establishing a Fair Employment Practices Committee. But the FEPC had no enforcement powers and changed little. . . .

Source: Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, HarperCollins Publishers. 1980.

6a Based on this document, state one reason many African Americans did not benefit from New Deal programs.

b According to this document, how did the government respond to the threat from the Sleeping-Car Porters Union?

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Document 7

... Suddenly the papers were filled with accounts of highway picketing by farmers around Sioux City. A Farmers' Holiday Association had been organized by one Milo Reno, and the farmers were to refuse to bring food to market for thirty days or "until the cost of production had been obtained." ...

The strike around Sioux City soon ceased to be a local matter. It jumped the Missouri River and crossed the Big Sioux. Roads were picketed in South Dakota and Nebraska as well as in Iowa. Soon Minnesota followed suit, and her farmers picketed her roads. North Dakota organized. Down in Georgia farmers dumped milk on the highway. For a few days the milk supply of New York City was menaced. Farmers in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, organized, and potato farmers in Long Island raised the price of potatoes by a "holiday." This banding together of farmers for mutual protection is going on everywhere, but the center of this disturbance is still Iowa and the neighboring States.

The Milk Producers' Association joined forces with the Farmers' Holiday. All the roads leading to Sioux City were picketed. Trucks by hundreds were turned back. Farmers by hundreds lined the roads. They blockaded the roads with spiked telegraph poles and logs. They took away a sheriff's badge and his gun and threw them in a cornfield. Gallons of milk ran down roadway ditches. Gallons of confiscated milk were distributed free on the streets of Sioux City. ...

Source: Mary Heaton Vorse, "Rebellion in the Cornbelt," Harper's Magazine, December 1932

7 Based on this document, state two actions taken by farmers to deal with their economic situation during the Great Depression.

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Document 8

Lorena Hickok, a former Associated Press reporter, was hired by Harry Hopkins (head of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration) to travel throughout the United States and send Hopkins private reports on the state of the nation and effects of the New Deal programs. This is an excerpt from one of those reports, dated January 1, 1935.

. . . Only among the young is there evidence of revolt, apparently. These young people are growing restive [restless]. Out of some 15 weekly reports from industrial centers all over the country, hardly one omitted a paragraph pointing out that these young people may not tolerate much longer a condition that prevents them from starting normal, active, self-respecting lives, that will not let them marry and raise families, that condemns them to idleness and want. At present there is no leadership among them. College men are shoveling sand, checking freight cars, working in filling stations. High school graduates are offering themselves to industry “for nothing, just experience”—and are being accepted. Boys who normally would be apprentices in the trades are tramping [wandering] the pavements, riding the freights back and forth across the country, hanging about on street corners. One day in November a 21-year-old boy in Baltimore walked 20 miles, looking for work. “I just stopped at every place,” he said, “but mostly they wouldn’t even talk to me.” . . .

Source: Lowitt and Beasley, eds., *One Third of a Nation*, University of Illinois Press, 1981

8 Based on this document, state one way the Great Depression affected young people.

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