

Name _____

Date _____



The Great Depression

Today, we're going to talk about the Great Depression...in just a minute.

The Great Depression was a period of intense economic hardship that lasted from 1929 to 1941. Many Americans lost their jobs, savings, and homes, while businesses and industries dramatically decreased production.

It began on October 29th, 1929, now known as Black Tuesday. The New York Stock Exchange crashed, and the market lost \$14 billion in one day. But the causes of the Depression started a decade earlier.

The Roaring Twenties were a time of economic boom and consumerism. But many Americans were relying on credit, or borrowed money, to make purchases and investments. Banks and businesses were making investments based on the debt consumers owed them. When the market crashed, many businesses closed. People lost their jobs and life's savings. By 1932, 25% of Americans were unemployed.

Meanwhile, a 10-year drought was ravaging the Great Plains. During the Dust Bowl, many farmers were unable to grow crops and fell into poverty and homelessness.

When Franklin D. Roosevelt became president in 1932, he enacted the New Deal, a series of programs and projects to relieve economic hardship. The Public Works Administration and Works Progress Administration provided jobs for millions of Americans. But it wasn't until the onset of World War II that the Depression was officially over.

Why is it important to learn about difficult periods in history like the Great Depression?