

# The Great Depression



## Before Reading

### Motivation / Purpose

The purpose of this text is to report on the Great Depression. The text links with the *Social Studies* theme *Economies*.

### Text Type

Draw students' attention to the:

- chapter titles and page numbers
- photographs and captions
- newspaper clippings
- glossary and index.

Ask "What type of book is this?" (Factual). How do you know? What type of factual book is this? (Report).

### Visual Literacy

Look at the front cover and describe what you see. Describe how the family in the photograph is feeling.

Try and predict what this text will be about. Browse the first few pages of the text and discuss the effect of the colours and background images.

### Background Knowledge

What is the economy? What things do people talk about when they discuss the economy? What do you think it means if the economy is in good shape? What if it is in bad shape? What is an economic depression? What happens when one occurs?

### Phonological Awareness

Make sure students are able to break words into syllables. Why is it important to pronounce words clearly when breaking them into syllables for spelling?

high: 1 syllable; fac / tor: 2 syllables;  
in / tro / duce: 3 syllables;  
e / co / no / my: 4 syllables.

Clap a vocabulary word from the list. Students guess the word. Students take turns to select a word and clap the syllables for others to guess.

Write high frequency and vocabulary words on cards. Select five words. Cut the words into syllables. Place the cards on the floor. Mix up the syllables. Students remake the words. Mix up the syllables again. What other words can you make by combining the syllables? Repeat with another set of words. Increase the number of words to be remade in each set.

### Vocabulary

American, benefiting, borrowed, businesses, companies, credit, depression, economy, employment, European, factor, industries, investors, optimistic, policies, profits, radios, stock

### High Frequency Words

affected, buying, countries, decisions, families, high, introduce, occurred, production, provide, receive, required, several, various

Look at each word. What part of the word may be a problem? Students shut their eyes, visualise or spell the word in their head, then write the word from memory.

## During Reading

### Vocabulary in Context

Find words in the text that belong to the same word family (e.g. economy, economies, economic; unemployment, employed; business, businesses; industry, industries; investors, invest). List other words that belong to each word family by adding other suffixes and writing the base word. (e.g. busy, employ, economical, industrial, investing).

Write the following words: country, economy, policy, industry. Students suggest a general rule to explain what happens to the word ending when changing these words into plurals.

### Checking for Meaning

#### Literal:

What is an economic depression? (A time when there is a long downturn in the economy of a country)

What countries were affected by the Great Depression? (The United States of America, Germany, England, France, Canada and Australia)

What is the stock market? (Where people can buy shares, which are part of a company)

During the Great Depression, how many people in the United States were unable to find work? (12 million people)

### Inferential:

Why couldn't people afford to stay in their homes?

Why would people buy cars and radios if they couldn't afford them?

Make sure students understand the difference between literal and inferential information.

### Response:

What would it have been like to live through the Great Depression?

How can you apply the information in the book to your own experiences with money?

### Grammatical Patterns

Make sure students understand the following components of a report:

- Introductory statement defining the topic: *A depression is a time when there is a long downturn in the economy of a country.* (p.4)
- Passages of description relating to various aspects of the topic: *The Great Depression* (pp.6-7), *the Stock Market crash* (pp.16-17)
- Paragraphs with topic sentences to organise information: *The money kept flowing because people started using credit* (p.14)
- Use of timeless present tense indicated by action and relating verbs: *It is a time of high unemployment, which means that jobs are hard to find and many people are out of work.* (p.4)
- Use of past tense action and relating verbs when reporting on past events: *The car and radio industries grew bigger and employed more people.* (p.12)
- Use of general nouns: *world* (p.6), *future* (p.9), *households* (p.11)
- Use of technical language: *economy* (p.4), *depression* (p.6), *investors* (p.16)
- Use of nouns and noun groups as the beginning focus of a clause: *The stock market is where people can buy shares* (p.16), *Governments around the world tried various ways to end the Great Depression.* (p.22)

### Fluency / Punctuation Patterns

Pronouns link ideas between sentences for cohesion: *It is also a time of low economic activity. This means that people can't afford to buy goods or pay for services.* (p.5) Demonstrate reading these sentences as a pair, where the second sentence clarifies the meaning of the preceding sentence.

Commas separate connectives at the beginning of sentences: *But, by the late 1920s, many Americans were spending more money than they were earning.* (p.15) Demonstrate pausing at the comma. Students echo your reading.

These punctuation patterns occur in the text:

- Use of capital letters for proper nouns: *Australia* (p.6), *Henry Ford* (p.10)

- Use of commas to separate connectives at the beginning of sentences: *As a result,* (p.5), *However,* (p.10), *At the same time,* (p.11)
- Use of commas and brackets to separate phrases that add information within sentences: *People who study the economy, called economists, still don't know for sure why the Great Depression occurred.* (p.8), *(as well as several other large industries)* (p.13)

### Critical Literacy

What is the main purpose of this report? What resources could the author have used to find out facts about the past? How is the information organised? What other topics could be written as a report?

### Linking Visual and Written

Examine the different borders around the photographs in this text. What do they remind you of? What is the effect of their use?

Why are there so many black and white photographs in this text? What is the effect? How would these photographs be chosen? What factors would influence their use?

## After Reading

In what way is each chapter a report? Identify the introductory statement, the main ideas and concluding statement. Write a sentence starter for the students to complete to summarise the main idea of paragraphs in each chapter. (e.g. People started using credit because \_\_\_\_\_ (p.14).)

### Activities

Students will:

- make and justify opinions about statements in the text
- locate and write words breaking them into syllables
- locate and write base words with suffixes added in a word find
- complete sentences to write a mini report about the Great Depression.

Comprehension (meaning)    Vocabulary (structure)    Phonics (visual)    Writing (structure)

