

Title of Lesson: *Alabama Farm Life in the Great Depression*
(Suggested grade level: 6)

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Background Information:

Background information for teacher:

- The teacher should be familiar with the cultural and economic circumstances in the United States prior to and during the Great Depression which can be found at :
<http://www.nps.gov/archive/elro/glossary/great-depression.htm>
- Specific conditions in the state of Alabama can be found at:
<http://www.alabamamoments.state.al.us/sec48det.html>
- The effects on African Americans after the Great Depression can be found at:
<http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-1435>
- Boll Weevil: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/dec11.html>
- An article about the Boll Weevil in Alabama can be found at:
<http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-1436>

Overview of lesson: This lesson will include the use of a primary document and period photographs for a cross-curriculum lesson analyzing setting to identify some adverse effects of the Great Depression for farmers. The student will create a postcard which depicts an understanding of the impact of the Great Depression on farmers.

Content Standards

[*Alabama Course of Study: Social Studies*](#) (Bulletin 2004, No. 18)

Fourth Grade: Standard 12, page 33

Sixth Grade: Standard 7, page 44

[*Alabama Course of Study: English Language Arts*](#) (Bulletin 1999, No. 17)

Fourth Grade: Standard 12, page 39

Fourth Grade: Standard 7, page 38

Sixth Grade: Standard 7, page 53

Sixth Grade: Standard 16, page 54

[*National Standards for History, 1996*](#)

Standards in History for Grades 5-12, p. 117

Era 8, Standard 1B – The student understands how American life changed during the 1930s.

[*Curriculum Standards for Social Studies*](#), (Bulletin 111, 2010)

Standard 2: Time, Continuity, and Change (p. 97)

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the past and its legacy.

Standard 5: Production, Distribution, and Consumption (p. 112)

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people organize for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and service.

Primary Learning Objective(s):

- The students will be able to describe and picture the effects of the Great Depression on Alabama farmers.
- The students will be able to determine setting, as a literary device, from a primary source document and photographs.

Time allotted: 45 minutes

Materials and Equipment:

- Classroom copies of the first four paragraphs from [*A Place of Springs*](#) by Viola Goode Liddell (Paragraphs may be projected instead.)
- One copy per group of the following photographs:
 - [African Americans picking cotton](#)
 - [Woman picking cotton in north Alabama](#)
 - [Toll of erosion](#)
 - [Former slave standing in field in Cahaba, Alabama](#)
 - [African American man standing in a field in Russell County, Alabama](#)
 - [Dadeville, Alabama gully stabilized with kudzu in 1934](#)
 - [Farmer using a mule-driven plow](#)
 - [Alabama tenant farmer and children. Family labor in cotton. Near Anniston, Alabama](#)
- Knowledge, Observation, Interpretation Matrix
- Postcard rubric
- Postcard assignment sheet
- Art supplies including scissors

Technological Resources:

- Internet access

Background/Preparation:

- The students should have an understanding of the effects of the Civil War and Reconstruction on agricultural Alabama.
- The students should have an understanding of the effect of Jim Crow on African Americans.
- The students should have an understanding of the causes of the Great Depression.
- The students should be familiar with the concept of *setting* in literature.

Procedures/Activities:

Engagement/Motivation Activity: The teacher will state, “The Great Depression began for farmers in the 1920s due an extended drought, low prices for farm products, the boll weevil, and poor farming techniques. What do you think life was like for Alabama farmers during the 1930s if times were already difficult by the beginning of the Great Depression?” Give students time to respond.

Step 1	Pass out copies or project the first four paragraphs of <i>A Place of Springs</i> . Tell the students that this is an excerpt from an Alabama author’s memoir written in the 1930s. Say, “Follow along with me as I read the excerpts, and picture the setting in which this story takes place. As I read this, remember that setting includes time, place, mood, physical environment, and cultural environment.” Read the excerpt to the class.
Step 2	Ask the students the following questions about the reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Are there any words that you did not understand?” • “Where is the action of the story taking place geographically?” • “What time period is it?” • “What feeling is created in this paragraph? Is it bright, cheerful, or dark?” • “What did you visualize as I was reading?” • “What are some of the descriptive words or phrases that caught your attention?” • “Have you ever been in such a place? If so, describe the setting.”
Step 3	Divide the class into eight groups. Give each group a copy of the “Knowledge, Observation, Interpretation Matrix” and a copy of one of eight photos linked in Materials and Equipment. Give students time to analyze the setting using the matrix.
Step 4	Allow a spokesman from each group to share answers to the questions on the matrix while the teacher shows the corresponding photograph. Another group member will record descriptors related to the picture on a chart. Examples of descriptors should include hot, dry, erosion, few material goods, tattered clothes, insects, animal-powered farm equipment, dilapidated housing. Tell students, “This list of descriptors of setting will be displayed for your use as you create a postcard illustrating what you have learned.”
Step 5	Pass out postcard assignment sheet and rubric to each student. Tell students, “Imagine that you are a young person living on a farm in Alabama during the Great Depression.” Instruct students to cut out the postcard portion of the sheet, then say, “On the blank side of the postcard design a picture illustrating the setting of your farm. On the other side, write a message describing a day in your life on the farm. Address the postcard to your hypothetical cousin in Ohio.”

Assessment Strategies: Grade the postcard by using the rubric.

Extension: Have students research the use of kudzu to stop erosion and the unintended consequences of its planting. They may illustrate their research by finding pictures or photographing results of unintended consequences of kudzu planting.

Remediation:

- Allow extra time to complete the assignment.

Accommodation:

- The student will be required to complete only one side of the postcard.
- Give students copies of the pictures used by the groups.

Modification:

- Review Individualized Education Plans, 504 Plans, and Gifted or ELL Plans for instructional and assessment accommodations or modifications.

Knowledge, Observation, Interpretation Matrix

Knowledge	Observation	Interpretation
Who are the people in the photo?	What objects are in the photo?	What do you think is the relationship between the people in the photo?
What is happening in the photo?	Are there any animals or pests in the photo?	What do you think happened right before the photo was taken?
What activities are going on in the photo?	What kind of clothing is worn?	What time of the year was the photo taken? Time of day? How do you know?

Design Your Own Great Depression Postcard!

Directions: Imagine that you are living on a farm in Alabama during the Great Depression. You will be writing a postcard to a cousin in Ohio describing a day in your life. Cut out the postcard below, and create a design on the blank side which reflects the setting of your farm. On the reverse side, you have been provided with the area to write a message, the person's address, and a stamp from the time period. You may use the list of descriptors displayed in classroom for ideas to use in your drawing and in your message. You will be graded according to the attached rubric. The DUE DATE for this assignment is: _____.

<p>Greetings from:</p>	 <p>Addressee:</p>
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Design Your Own Great Depression Postcard

Student Name _____

Directions:

- Cut out the postcard portion of the sheet provided.
- On the blank side of the postcard, design a picture illustrating the setting of your farm.
- On the other side, write a message describing a day in your life on the farm.
- Address the postcard to your imaginary cousin in Ohio.

CATEGORY	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point	Total
Writing - Organization and Mechanics	The message in the postcard has a clear beginning, middle, and end and the salutation, date, and address are all correct.	The message in the postcard has a clear beginning, middle, and end, but the salutation, date, and/or address are incorrect.	The message in the postcard is not organized but the salutation, date, and address are correct.	The message in the postcard is not organized and the salutation, date, and address are incorrect.	
Content - Accuracy	The message and the cover design both accurately reflect the time period.	The cover design accurately reflects the time period, but the message does not accurately reflect the time period.	The message accurately reflects the time period, but the front illustration is not connected to the time period.	The message and the cover are inaccurate for the time period.	
Graphics/Pictures	Graphics go well with the text and there is a good mix of text and graphics.	Graphics go well with the text, but there are so many that they distract from the text.	Graphics go well with the text, but there are too few and the postcard seems "text-heavy".	Graphics do not go with the accompanying text or appear to be randomly chosen.	
Attractiveness & Organization	The postcard is exceptionally neat in appearance, is original in design, and is colorful.	The postcard is neat in appearance, reflects some originality, but is not colorful.	The postcard is not original in design and does not reflect understanding of the time period.	The postcard's formatting and organization of material are confusing to the reader.	
Historical Accuracy	The design demonstrates research and understanding of the time period through the use of symbols, pictures, and titles.	The design demonstrates understanding of the time period but lacks evidence of research.	The design demonstrates some understanding of the time period but lacks evidence of research.	The design demonstrates no understanding of the time period.	

Total _____