

All Pikes Peak Reads 2008
Curriculum Guide
for
Life During the Dust Bowl
by Diane Yancey



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OVERVIEW

The teachers' guide employs these thinking skills: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The questions and the activities engage students at all levels. The questions and the activities align with **Colorado's Content Standards**.

Reading and Writing Content Standard #4: Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.

Reading and Writing Content Standard #5: Students read to locate, select, and make use of relevant information from a variety of media, reference, and technological sources.

Reading and Writing Content Standard #6: Students read and recognize literature as a record of human experience.

History Content Standard #1: Students understand the chronological organization of history and know how to organize events and people into major eras to identify and explain historical relationships.

History Content Standard #2: Students know how to use the processes and resources of historical inquiry.

History Content Standard #3: Students understand that societies are diverse and have changed over time.

History Content Standard #4: Students understand how science, technology, and economic activity have developed, changed, and affected societies throughout history.

THEMES

1. HUMAN SURVIVAL. Social philosophy maintains that human survival is dependent upon the banding together of humans to find strength in group unity and action. An individual's very existence is defined by his responsibility (or lack of) for those with whom he interacts. In order for the country not only to survive but also to thrive, citizens need to band together. Identify the causes requiring unity and action. Develop an action plan.

2. HAVES vs. HAVE NOTS. During the Dust Bowl, the people who had little were survivors. To these people, owning or working the land meant that they had a rewarding life. The have/have not thinking still exists today. Identify the portions of the population who are marginalized and the effect on the general population. Access to health care is a major issue facing the community, the state, and the country. What are the answers? Further, explore the issues of affordable housing, automobile insurance, and the increasing cost of food.

3. THE LAND AND SELF-RESPECT. Another component of this era is the tenants' connection with the land and the resultant destruction that occurs when he is torn from it – or when he fails it. These men take their dignity and self-respect from the proximity to earth and its cycles of growth. When this relationship is severed or diminished, they lose their identity and drift. They also question their ability to care for their families. People's identities are tied to land and home ownership. How is the mortgage crisis affecting

Colorado Springs and the rest of the country? The expansion of Fort Carson is causing great concern for ranchers whose land might be taken by the government. Is eminent domain ethical? Should the government have the right to take someone's land?

4. **SOCIAL COMMITMENT.** People must work for the good of all. People must practice humanism – helping those who are trapped by hard times. In recent years, the country has shifted from government assistance to non-profits providing needed assistance. Research area assistance programs and agencies, such as food drives and food banks, toy drives, back-to-school supply drives, etc. Debate whether citizens should receive a “free ride” from the government when they encounter hard times. How does the tax incentive packages and mortgage bail outs and national health care fit into this discussion?

In the book's Foreward, the author's main point is discovering the humanity in all of us. That premise ties in with the APPR 2008's goals and themes. Therefore, throughout this teacher's guide there will be suggestions for community-service projects.

ACTIVITIES

1. Collect newspaper headlines from then and now. Mix the headlines together and then sort into two piles based on your guesses of which ones were printed in the 1930s and which ones were presented in 2008. What parallels do you see?
2. Display Farm equipment covered with sand to demonstrate how hard it would be to farm when the equipment had to be cleaned continually.
3. Visit the Pioneers Museum in downtown Colorado Springs for displays of bygone years. Pay particular attention to the collections from the 1930s.
4. Check out pictures of the 1930s from the Pikes Peak Library District.
5. Research www.one.org (a campaign to make poverty history) and *Time* magazine's ServiceNation which is scheduled to kick off September 11, 2008. Another national group is DoSomething.org. What role can you play?

Pre-Reading:

1. The introduction, of course, provides the overview for the Dust Bowl. Display a large map of the United States and identify the places mentioned throughout the book.
2. Maintain a log of statistics mentioned. For example, the storm lasted for three hours in Liberal, Kansas. (10) Here are other statistics: “According to a federal government report, 35 million acres of cropland were destroyed and another 100 million acres were seriously damaged as early as 1934.” (13) “By late afternoon, 12 million tons of dust from Montana and Wyoming was falling like snow over Chicago.” (13) Analyze the statistics. Collect pennies or pop tabs to try to represent one set of statistics. When the project is completed donate the pennies to Pennies for Peace (www.penniesforpeace.org) and the pop tabs to Ronald McDonald House.

3. Create a manual of community-service projects for your school. Can each team or classroom or club select a different project? Include ways to help others; it can be as simple as using charity-minded search engines, such as GoodSearch.com which donates fifty percent of the advertising revenues from searches to the charities of your choice or CatchTomorros.com which donates fifty percent to any school district you select. Likewise, a percentage of revenues from purchases at Office Depot can be donated to any area school of choice. Another idea is to donate old crayons at CrazyCrayons.com.

4. Collect and display pictures from the Dust Bowl era to create a mural.

5. In *Out of the Dust*, Billie Jo mentions that they are experiencing hard times. In his book, *The Worst Hard Time*, Timothy Egan insists that the worst hard time in history was during the Dust Bowl. How would you describe hard times now? What parallels do you see with the 1930s? Make two columns. Label one “then” and the other “now.” Discuss with your classmates.

Issue	Then	Now
The economy		
Unemployment		
Devaluing dollar		
The environment		
Health care		

6. “Because he was the sponsor of all this change, President Roosevelt went down in history as one of America’s most controversial commanders in chief. . . Many people grew more enthusiastic as the president’s policies helped the nation recover” (84) Pay close attention to the current presidential candidates’ platforms to turn the country around now.

7. “. . . People share common needs – warmth, good company, stability, and affirmation from others.” (9) Research Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. Where would the people who lived during the Dust Bowl place on the hierarchy? Where would you place most Americans? Where do you place?



www.union.umd.edu)

Essential Question: How does the depiction of the Dust Bowl era help readers comprehend the human toll, the environmental damage, the cause, the lessons learned, and the relevance of these same issues today?

Introduction Black Blizzards

1. RELEVANCE: Although the book describes dust storms also called “dusters,” we are more familiar with snow storms, blizzards, and tornadoes. What was the worst blizzard ever to ever hit Colorado Springs? How long did it last? What did people do to pass the time? Have you ever been in a tornado? If so tell, your class about it. When was the last tornado to touch down in Colorado Springs? Research about tornadoes during the last two years in Colorado. How much damage was done? How many people were hurt or killed? What was the financial toll? Maybe – just maybe – we can understand a little about the Dust Bowl that lasted for years.



2. “Sunday, April 14, 1935, began as a warm spring day in the western part of Oklahoma known as the Panhandle. . .When (church) services ended, people flocked outside, ready to take advantage of the good weather. Some went on picnics. Others visited neighbors or went home to plant their gardens. Before the afternoon was over, however, ominous changes occurred in the weather. In some places, the temperature dropped by fifty degrees in a few hours.” (10) This is the day known as Black Sunday. Research more about the weather extreme which is often referred to as the worst weather disaster in history. Since a lot has happened since 1935, decide whether you think that it still deserves that title –Before you knew that the description was about a spring day in Oklahoma, you might have thought that the author was describing a spring day in Colorado Springs. “Springers” often say, “If you don’t like the weather here, wait an hour; and it will change.” Chart the weather in Colorado Springs this autumn. Find examples to determine whether it is really true of weather in Colorado Springs.

3. “In others, the stillness caused birds to flutter and chatter nervously. . . As it (a huge cloud) rolled forward at a terrifying pace, thousands of excited geese, ducks, and smaller birds took to the air.” (10) Animals can sense the change in the weather. Provide more recent examples of animals’ behavior prior to or during a storm or natural disaster. For example, research animals’ behavior during wild fires or hurricanes or tsunamis. Another possibility is to research the pandas who had to be rescued after the earthquake in China.

4. “In 1932, fourteen dust storms were reported. . .the following year (1933), the number jumped to thirty-eight. A record twenty-three dust storms buffeted Oklahoma and neighboring states in May 1937 alone, and there were at least seventy-two for the year.” (11) Prepare a chart of the number of “dusters” from 1930 to 1940. Then, prepare a chart for the number of snowstorms and tornadoes in Colorado Springs during a decade. Compare the charts.

5. “The area affected by these storms, including northeastern New Mexico, southeastern Colorado, western Kansas, and the panhandles of Texas and Oklahoma, became known as the ‘dust bowl.’ Montana, Nebraska, and North and South Dakota were involved to a lesser degree. . .Despite its name, the dust bowl was not dust shapes, nor was it an area of low elevation. In fact, it was part of the Great Plains, a vast, dry grass highland that stretches from northern Canada to southern Texas and from the Rocky Mountains eastward for about four hundred miles.” (11, 12) Using a large map of the United States, locate these areas. According to Timothy Egan, author of *Worst Hard Time*, the dust descended across the entire United States at times. Read those sections of his book.

6. “The name ‘dust bowl’ was casually coined by Associated Press reporter Robert E. Geiger, who was familiar with the Rose Bowl and Orange Bowl football championships. He used the term in one of a series of articles he wrote for the *Washington (D. C.) Evening Star* in April 1935. On April 15, he stated, ‘Three little words . . . rule life in the dust bowl of the continent – if it rains.’ ” (12) Research other newspaper reports filed by Geiger.

7. “Although dirt began blowing in 1932, a dust storm that struck on the afternoon of January 21, 1933, in the Texas panhandle served as the unofficial beginning of the dust bowl. . .its destructiveness was a warning that trouble was on the way. . .Some were relatively localized, such as a storm that enveloped just the state of Colorado on March 11, 1936, and continued for two days, reducing all visibility to less than a mile.” (12, 13) Research Colorado’s history to learn more about that storm.

8. “One storm that affected an enormous part of the United States began on May 9, 1934. On that day, a dust cloud that extended from the Canadian border to Oklahoma and covered fifteen hundred miles from the Rocky Mountain to the Great Lakes moved across country. By late afternoon, 12 million tons of dust from Montana and Wyoming was falling like snow over Chicago. Buffalo, New York was darkened by dust in the middle of the next day, and on May 11, dust settled over Boston, New York City, Washington, D. C., and Atlanta, Georgia. The storm finally moved out to sea, where ships three hundred miles out found dust on their decks a day or two later.” (13) “The storm moved out to sea, covering ships that were more than two hundred miles from shore. Its rear guard also spread south, leaving a taste of prairie soil in the mouths of members of Congress. Dust fell on the National Mall and seeped into the White House, where President Roosevelt was discussing plans for drought relief. Dust in Chicago, Boston, Manhattan, Philadelphia, and Washington gave the great cities of America a dose of what the people in the little communities of the High Plains had been living with for nearly two years.” (Egan, 152) The people in the East did not understand the problems caused by the dust storms until they experienced it (albeit briefly). There is an adage “Before you judge a man, walk a mile in his shoes.” Once the storm fell on the National Mall and seeped into the White House, serious discussions about the issue started.

Often we aren’t concerned about a problem until we are affected personally. Discuss another problem that started somewhere other than Colorado but eventually became a local issue, as well. (gangs, smog, rapid expansion) Have you ever had a personal experience that led you to reconsider your initial opinion? Share the incident with the class.

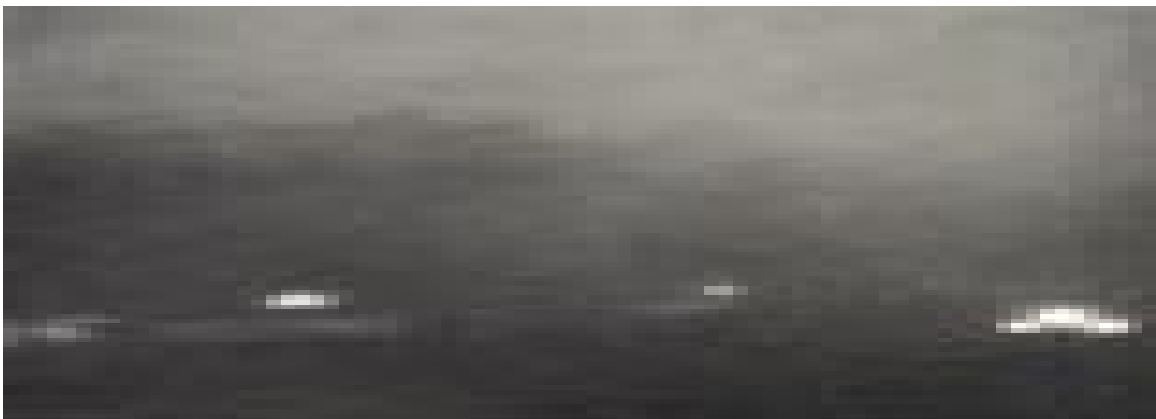
9. “Some people gave up the struggle and left the region to look for a better life. The majority, however, stayed on their land, worked, raised their children, and waited for better times to return. . . ‘We’ve got the greatest country in the world if we can just get a few kinks straightened out,’ declared John L. McCarty, editor of the *Dalhart Texan*. ‘Let’s keep boosting (improving) our country.’ ” (14) John Steinbeck wrote the story of the “exodusters” (the people who left the Dust Bowl to look for a better life) in his novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. And, Timothy Egan wrote the story of those who stayed behind in his book *The Worst Hard Time*. Those two books are the APPR selections for high school students and adults. Egan mentions McCarty numerous times. Read other examples of McCarty’s cheerleading for the region. McCarty stood up for his town; many “Springers” (no one has ever devised a good nickname for people who live in Colorado Springs) sing this city’s praises. Write a favorable editorial about life in Colorado Springs and submit it to a local newspaper for publication consideration.

10. “Ironically, it was enthusiasm and a strong work ethic that first led Americans to plow up the plains, setting the stage for the dusty tragedy that struck in the 1930s.” (14) Essentially, man was to blame for the ecological nightmare known as the dust bowl. Research contributing factors. People often believe that they are doing the right thing, only to learn later that there are serious consequences. For example, what are the issues surrounding plastic water bottles and drinking bottled water instead of tap water; what are the issues regarding parents’ deciding not to have their children vaccinated against measles and the current measles epidemic?

Chapter 1 The Great Plow-Up

Question: What caused the Dust Bowl?

1. “People had to be tough to live on the Great Plains, and those who did could testify that drought, wind, and blowing dust were common to the region.” (15) Find pictures to testify to the harsh conditions. Start a mural in your classroom or nearby hall. Discuss whether you think that people today would be up to the challenge should another dust bowl occur. Do we today have the skills the people of the 1930s had to live off the land? Due to modern conveniences, are we too soft today?



2. “Dust storms were so bad in 1880 that the *Wichita Eagle* carried the following complaint: ‘Dust, grit, and sand everywhere – in your victuals (food), up your nose, down your back, between your toes . . .’ (15) Recall being in a similar situation, such as at the beach with sand everywhere. How uncomfortable was it?

3. “Tough native plants such as buffalo grass were well suited to grow on the plains. Surviving on little water, these plants held the soil together with their deep roots, creating a mat called sod. Sod was so thick and tough that early settlers often cut it into chunks and used it to build houses.” (16) Today, many people are removing sod from their yards in favor of xeriscaping. While such a plan reduces the need for water, some landscapers believe that in the long run, xeriscaping might cause harm to the environment. Research the issues and then present your conclusions to the class.

4. “. . .the soil was composed of fine particles that did not easily clump once they became dry. . .” (17) Egan pointed out that a particle of dust is about the same size of a typewritten period. What other measurements could be used to illustrate how small it is? (e. g., pixel)

5. “In 1862, the government began encouraging people to settle the plains. The Homestead Act of that year allowed settlers to claim 160 acres of land and receive free title to it if they cultivated and made improvements on at least a part of it. In 1873, the Timber Culture Act allowed settlers to claim 160 acres of land if they agreed to plant 40 acres of trees. In 1877, the Desert Land Act allowed settlers to claim 640 acres of land provided they agreed to irrigate it.” (17) What role did the federal government play in the unintentional creation of the Dust Bowl? Did the government acknowledge its part? Provide other examples of when the government made decisions in more recent history that later proved to be mistakes.

6. Art: “You had railroad companies and states putting out advertisements encouraging people to think of this land as a bountiful land. The State of Kansas put out posters showing watermelons the size of . . .small automobiles, grapes the size of bowling balls, corn that you had to pick by going up a ladder, and people were encouraged to believe that this was the Garden of Eden if they would only have the courage to go out and challenge the land.” (17) Draw the posters.

7. “We saw a preacher standing on the corner the other day with his back up, his coattails over his head, and his chapeau (hat) sailing heavenward, spitting mud out of his mouth, and looking unutterable things. He dug the sand out of his eyes and the gravel out of his hair, and said nothing. It wouldn’t have been right. But we know what he thought.” (17) Write what the preacher was thinking.

8. “Most farmers were ignorant of soil conservation and erosion control practices in the early 1900s. . .Some people did care about soil and water conservation, but many of them held the erroneous belief that the more intensely fields were cultivated, the better farming conditions would be. . .In general, farmers plowed, planted, and harvested with little thought of the bad effect they had on the land. . .To prepare their fields for next year’s

harvest, they burned off the crop stubble, effectively removing organic matter that would have held the soil down.” (19) This is only one example of practices people used in the past because no one told them that it was harmful to the environment. List other examples. (e. g., burning leaves, throwing rice at weddings, releasing balloons, using DDT to spray for mosquitoes)

9. “Landowners planted crops for which there was much demand, such as wheat, barley, rye, and corn. Cotton was also popular in some areas.” (20) Which crops are in much demand today? How many acres in the United States are planted with wheat, corn, barley, rye, and cotton today? In addition to food, corn is used in what products? (fuel, alcohol)

10. “Wheat was the preferred crop for many farmers, especially when World War I broke out in Europe in 1914. The demand for grain overseas was high, and prices rose from less than a dollar a bushel to over two dollars a bushel in 1917.” (20) Wheat is a staple of many Americans’ diets. Where does bread/bread products fit in the food pyramid? What kind of bread do you like? Research a bread store like Great Harvest or a grocery store to list all of the different breads available. Why do many nutritionists advise against eating white bread?



11. “Not everyone believed that such a narrow focus was sensible. ‘Wisely or other-wisely, this region has permitted wheat growing to become its main concern,’ said author Caroline A. Henderson, a farm wife from Eva, Oklahoma.” (21) Read Caroline Henderson’s diary, *Letters from the Dust Bowl*.

12. “As prices fell, farmers on the plains simply plowed under more prairie land and planted more wheat in order to keep their incomes high. And, to get the work done quickly, some of them bought better tractors, larger combines, and trucks to carry their crops to market. All buying was done on credit . . . since the machines could be easily paid for when the crops were sold in the fall.” (21) Buying on credit appears to have its start here. The credit crunch in the U. S. today is a major concern for the economy. How much money do Americans collectively owe on their credit cards? Why is this a problem? Most credit card companies target college and high school students. Discuss whether credit card companies should be allowed to send advertisements to underage students or adults only.

13. “That’s kindly (kind of) a human trait: we don’t think. We don’t think, except for ourselves and it comes down to greed. You know, we’re selfish and we want – we’re self-centered and we want what we want what we want and we don’t even think of what the end results might be. . They didn’t think in the future what could happen if things did

change.” (21) Does this statement describe people today or then or both? Does it surprise you to know that Texan Melt White was describing life during the Dust Bowl? (Melt is the son of Bam White who figures prominently in Egan’s book.) Provide examples from the 1930s and from the current decade to illustrate that the quote could apply to both. For example, big cars followed by high gas prices; big houses followed by the mortgage crisis.

14. “One of the most well known of the suitcase farmers was Hickman Price, also known as the wheat king because of the size of his farming operation. . . he bought and leased 34,500 acres of land – nearly fifty-four square miles – near Plainview . . .” (22) What percentage of the state did he farm? Compare the size of the land he farmed with the smaller states and Washington, D. C. How big is Colorado? (See www.enchantedlearning.com/usa/states/area.html.)

15. “On October 24, more than 12 million shares of stock were traded on the New York Stock Exchange, and investors lost billions more. Suddenly, the national economy was on shaky ground . . . Businesses failed and millions of Americans – up to one fourth of the labor force – were put out of work. ‘Almost overnight it was like a bomb had fallen,’ remembered one woman.” (22) Compare that explanation with today. How much has the stock market dropped in the last year? How many businesses have failed? How many Americans are out of work? How many people would describe today as “a bomb had fallen”?

16. “With prices low, money tight, and drought affecting more than half of the nation, all it took was one more factor – wind – to create disaster on the plains . . . As historian Vance Johnson writes, ‘Every wind was destructive, and the wind blew almost every day. . . Acre by acre, the crops were torn out by their roots and carried away.’ In 1935 alone, 850 million tons of topsoil ‘so rich,’ an observer noted, that it ‘looked like chocolate where the plow turned the sod’ blew away from over 4 million acres on the plains. With the topsoil went nutrients and organic material, leaving behind a sterile hardpan soil that was as hard as cement.” (24) Where did the 850 million tons of topsoil end up? How much topsoil was blown out of Colorado? Would you be able to grow wheat or corn on your driveway?

Chapter 2 Life in the Dusters

Question: What was it like to live during this time?

1. BREATHING. “When the wind blew in the dust bowl, something as ordinary as breathing became a challenge. . . it (dust) would just coat the inside of your nose literally. And sometimes your mouth would just get cottony dry because . . . you spit out dirt. . . It looked like tobacco juice. . . But I just thought that was part of livin.’ ” (24) Teacher: Mix a small amount of chewing tobacco and water in a jar with a tight lid to demonstrate what tobacco juice looks like and why students wouldn’t want to taste it. What can people do to improve air quality? What was the issue of air quality in Beijing during the Olympics? What did the Chinese government do to improve the air quality? China isn’t the only

country to struggle with clean air. American cities also have faced the issue. For years, Los Angeles had the reputation of smog, and Denver was known for its brown cloud. What did those cities do to provide cleaner air?

2. DAILY ROUTINE. “The blowing dirt made daily routines burdensome and depressing. Whether one was trying to keep house, run a small business, go to school, or go to church, the impact of the dust was serious.” (25) Find testimonies from people who lived then. Compare their daily lives to yours.

3. “Everything that had a surface became dusty. Clothes hanging on the line to dry ended up stiff with dirt. Families went to sleep on clean sheets and pillowcases and awoke to find everything dirty but the spots where they had lain.” (25) Using large sheets of drawing paper, have students work in pairs. Directions: One student reclines on the paper while the other draws the outline; then they switch places. Scatter confetti. Then, lift up the outline. Write a list of hardships. e. g.,

- a. Wash hanging outside to dry ended up stiff with dirt.
- b. All surfaces were constantly covered with dust.
- c. Bedding was covered in dirt particles by morning.
- d. Dust lay in ripples across the floors.
- e. Dust blew in through unsealed windows and cracks in the house.
- f. Pictures hanging on walls became so heavy that they fell off the wall.
- g. Some attics collapsed due to the weight of the dust.

4. EATING. “Even the best cook found it hard to provide an appetizing meal during a dust storm. In the kitchen, surfaces and utensils had to be washed and wiped before they could be used. Low remembered, ‘Before starting breakfast I had to sweep and wash all the dirt off the kitchen and dining room floors, wash the stove, pancake griddle, and dining room table and chairs.’ ” (26) List the procedures:

- a. Cupboards had to be wiped before putting dishes away.
- b. Glasses and cups were stored upside down.
- c. Plates were washed after meals and again before use.
- d. Women mixed bread dough inside a drawer with a towel over their hands.
- e. Milk was covered as soon as it came out of the cow and then sealed into glass mason jars.
- f. People used straws to drink that milk.
- g. Fried food was cooked at high temperatures so the air rising above would lift away the dust.
- h. Everyone ate immediately when the food came to the table.
- i. Some people just ate out of the pot on the stove.
- j. Some people covered the food with a tablecloth and ducked under to eat.

Compare these methods with food preparation and dining at your house.

5. LIFE ON THE FARM. Read and record life regarding the animals, the crops, and the difficulties of farming. Then search the net to find pictures to match the descriptions. Add the pictures to the classroom mural.



6. ENTERTAINMENT. “Townpeople found that movie theaters were particularly comfortable places to sit out a storm, because they were well built and even air-conditioned.” (30) Over the years, research has shown that movies make more money during harder economic times than during stronger economies. Why is that? Research the movie industry today to determine whether their sales have increased. Then, find out whether movies offered at a discount (matinees, dollar shows) have done better than when the ticket prices are at the regular fee. How have movie concession sales done recently?

7. BUSINESSES. “The dust found its way into every building, from butcher shops to dentists’ offices to watch repair shops. Clothing stores were hard-hit: many of their garments got soiled hanging on the rack. . .In hospitals, the staff placed wet sheets over patients and struggled to maintain sterile conditions.” (31) Compare the types of businesses mentioned here and businesses affected by other natural disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina. Looting was also a problem for business owners after Hurricane Katrina. Is looting a problem after many natural disasters? What can be done to prevent looting and further losses for the business owners?

8. SCHOOL: “Schoolchildren walked backwards to school to protect their faces from the stinging dust. Once in the school building, they were taught emergency procedures to follow when severe storms hit unexpectedly. . . In some towns, local business owners escorted schoolchildren home during blinding storms so they would not get lost.” (31) Walk backwards down an empty school hall. How hard is it to walk backwards for a distance? Then try it with fans blowing at you. Preparedness drills are still a part of the school environment today. What types of drills do schools have today? Why are the drills necessary?

9. TRAVELING. “Leaving shelter during a storm was always dangerous, even if one relied on the protection afforded by an automobile. With so much dust in the air, it was impossible to see more than a few feet in any direction, so drivers could easily run off the road.” (32) “Many people did not use their cars during dust storms for fear of ruining the engines. Even leaving vehicles sitting outside in a storm could be damaging. . .Static electricity, created by the dust particles rubbing together during storms, often caused automobile ignition systems to fail and cars to stall. Motorists learned to attach a drag

wire and chains to their autos in order to ground the electricity.” (33) Read more about the vehicles during this time, the dangers, and the precautions. Report to the class. Compare the driving situation during a dust storm with being caught in a winter storm in Colorado. What items are most affected by static electricity today? How do people today protect their electronics from static electricity issues?



10. “Heavy dust storms even halted public transportation systems. On March 26, 1935, a freight train near Dighton, Kansas, rammed a passenger train because the engineer could not see a warning signal through the blowing dirt. On January 18, 1938, a train was stalled for eighteen hours near Sublette, Kansas, because of dust drifts covering the tracks.” (33) If you have traveled during a snow storm, you know the difficulties. Compare traveling during the dusters to traveling during a blizzard. In addition to bad weather, air traffic contributes to the problems. What causes airlines to delay or to cancel flights?

11. “. . .no weather event in modern history had ever been so prolonged, dramatic, and destructive.” (33) How long did the dust storm era last? How much destruction was caused? Has there been any storm since then to claim the record of being the worst natural disaster in history?

12. COPING SKILLS “Despite the suffering they endured, those who lived with the storms managed to cope – hating them, but withstanding them.” What skills did they have then that we don’t have today that enabled them to cope? How would we fare if another dust bowl developed? According to an article in the *Gazette* in February 2008, “The amount of dust blowing into Colorado from the west has increased 500 percent since humans settled the region, a Dust Bowl effect that could affect snowpack and human health.” Access the *Gazette*’s archives to read the full article. Discuss whether another Dust Bowl could happen.

Chapter 3 In the Calm

Question: What was “normal” for these people?

1. “Dust storms that shut down all activities were usually fairly brief events. After the sky would clear, the sun would shine, and normal life would resume.” (34) Compare this description to storms and the weather following storms in Colorado.

2. DAILY LIFE. “We never sat down. . .we were up early in the morning and gone till late at night, especially my dad and I. The girls . . .had to get up early and milk and they’d milk at night. On rainy days if we weren’t in school especially on a Saturday or Sunday when we couldn’t be out in the field working because it was raining, (dad would) send us to the barn to shuck corn. . .” (34) List other chores children were required to do. See pages 36-37. Compare their lives with yours.



3. HOT. “There were few rainy days during the drought of the 1930s. High temperatures added to farmers’ troubles and made even calm days unbearably hot.” (35) Drought and heat have caused trouble in Colorado. For example, during the summer of 2008, Denver had a record number of consecutive days with temperatures in the 90s. What were the high temperatures during that time? How did Denver’s temperatures compare with the rest of the state? What was the average rainfall in Colorado during the past five years? What is the current average rainfall? Hot, dry weather in July 2008 pushed Colorado Springs residents to consume a record amount of water (4.33 billion gallons). “Although this is the driest year on record in Colorado Springs since before the Great Depression, mountain snowmelt has been abundant, keeping reservoirs near capacity. The previous highest demands recorded in July were 4.29 billion gallons in 2001; 4.19 billion gallons in 2000; 4.01 billion gallons in 1997; and 3.93 billion gallons in 2007.” (*The Gazette*) How much did city expansion add to the water usage?

4. DIET. “Lack of water was not the only problem. With a shortage of feed, some farmers resorted to feeding their cattle Russian thistles, also known as tumbleweed.” (35) Egan also mentions in *The Worst Hard Time* that some people also canned Russian thistles to eat when there was nothing else to eat. Today, many people balk at eating unpalatable items. Which items would you put into the taste-like-cardboard category? Which foods do you like? dislike?

5. WOMEN’S LIVES. “Men were not the only hard workers in the family. In addition to cooking and cleaning, raising the children and managing the household, farm women made their own soap and churned their own butter. . .women drew all the water used from a well or cistern and heated it over a wood- or coal-burning stove. They washed

clothes on a washboard and hung them on lines to dry. . .” (38) Compare a woman’s chores then with now. Is there any question about who had it tougher?

Have you ever made homemade items for holiday or birthday gifts? Make some items, such as hand lotion, from scrap. Research the internet for recipes.

Due to food scares, many people are returning to growing their own foods and to canning. Likewise, farmers’ markets have seen a huge increase in sales. Research the recent food scares and report to the class. Have a small classroom garden. One item might be sweet potato plants. Then, donate the leafing plants to nursing homes.

6. HOME REMEDIES. “Although many farm women had little education past the eighth grade, they had plenty of common sense and a wealth of information learned from their mothers. Medical information was vital.” (38) Research home remedies. Have you ever had any home remedies tried on you (e. g., rub Vicks on your chest to ease a chest cold)? Compare home remedies with folklore medicines. Do any of them have merit?

7. CHILDBIRTH. “Doctors were often some distance away, so many women relied on midwives when they gave birth.” (38) Other books selected for All Pikes Peak Reads mentions childbirth. In *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck, Rose of Sharon’s baby is stillborn probably due to poor nutrition and no prenatal care. In *Out of the Dust* by Karen Hesse, Franklin dies shortly after birth. Research midwives today and why the practice of midwifery has regained popularity. Another option is to research the importance of prenatal care and what is available to indigent expectant mothers in this community. Hold a baby shower and donate the items to local agencies.

8. WATER. “We did not waste any water, in fact, but used the rinse water on the plants.” (38) Water is huge issue today. What can we all do to decrease water consumption? What recommendations does Colorado Springs Utilities Department offer? Discuss with your parents how to save more water. Research the water issues in Colorado.

9. SCHOOL. School days and expenses are discussed on pages 38 – 40. Compare school then with now and expenses then with now. “Getting a higher education was almost impossible with family responsibilities and no money. Nevertheless going to college remained a top priority for some families.” (40) How expensive is college today? Which college costs the most? Why have community colleges continued to flourish? Research the college program being touted by college athletics. Do you plan to attend college? If so, have you considered a college and a major?

10. HOUSE SIZE. “. . .most small farmers could afford only a small wood-framed structure that included a large kitchen, a parlor (living room), and several bedrooms. Furniture was limited to a worn sofa, a large wooden table and chairs in the kitchen, and several double beds. Dishes sat on open shelves, clothes hung on pegs, and an outhouse in the backyard served as a bathroom.” (40) Compare living arrangements then with your house. Today, there are few outhouses anywhere. What role did environmental concerns have in the demise of outhouses?



11. STORM CELLARS. “Town homes were often built better than farmhouses, too, and some had cellars in which people took shelter during the worst storms.” (41) Where do people go for shelter during storms (such as tornadoes) today? Why did people quit building storm cellars?

12. PARTY LINES. “Few rural families had electricity, but most had a telephone, which eased their isolation from the outside world. Party lines – where several families shared the same circuit and could thus listen in on each other’s conversations – were common then.” (41) Research the history of telephones. When did privacy in phone conversations become such a big issue? Is there any where in the U. S. that people still share party lines? What is the concern of people being able to hear other people’s conversations on cell phones?

13. ENTERTAINMENT. “Other than a trip to town, there was little entertainment for farm families to enjoy. In the evenings, many relied on books and the local newspaper to pass the time. . .Some families enjoyed music. . .Community activities were also popular and usually centered around church. . .Because everyone was poor, church social events were simple and inexpensive. . .Eating together was also a good way to socialize. . .Libraries provided pleasure for those who loved to read. . .” Compare entertainment opportunities then to now. When did some games, such as Checkers, become popular? Hold a potluck with a small admission fee or a box supper where people bid on the decorated boxes. Donate the proceeds to a local food bank. Research the statistics for use of the Pikes Peak Library District’s main building and branches. Usually, usage increases during slower economic times. Is that holding true today? Take a field trip to one of the local libraries.

14. TREATS. “If we were able to get a loaf of light bread that was like dessert to us. My mother did have a friend that she’d got acquainted with when we had our shoe shop. She would sometimes save the bread heels for my mother in a flour sack. My mother would bring them home on Saturday night as a treat for us kids. She’d say, ‘Let’s let them last two or three days. Don’t eat too many of them.’ She’d make bread puddings and we thought we were in hog heaven.” (42) Make bread pudding! In general, Americans waste a lot of food. Determine how much food is wasted in your school cafeteria on one day. Could any of that food been donated to feed the hungry? Studies also show that many children who participate in the free lunch programs at school go without food in the evenings and on weekends. Work with your administrators and cooks to plan a way to send “leftovers” home.

15. PLAY. “Children’s pastimes was as simple as those enjoyed by their elders. Little girls played dolls and house. Boys were outside in all but the worst storms, shooting marbles, climbing trees . . . we made kites.” (43) Donate gently used toys or make toys in wood shop classes to donate to Christmas Unlimited or to Toys for Tots.

Chapter 4 If It Rains

Question: How do people survive when it seems that everything is against them?

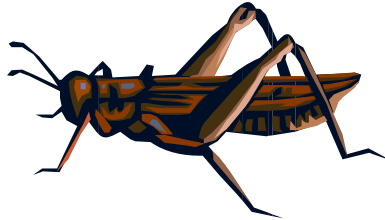
1. “There were plenty of challenges in addition to dust storms to test the optimism of plains residents during the 1930s. At times, it seemed as if all the forces of nature were against them. . .one storm dropped cue ball-size hail that broke windows and killed livestock.” (15) List the other weather-related challenges:

- a. lightning strikes
- b. prairie fires
- c. tornadoes
- d. bone-chilling winds
- e. snowstorms/blizzards.

Then, find specific examples from other sources about these events. Share your report with the class.

2. “In addition to weather, farmers regularly combated invasions of insects.” (47) List the other plagues and pests:

- a. boll weevils



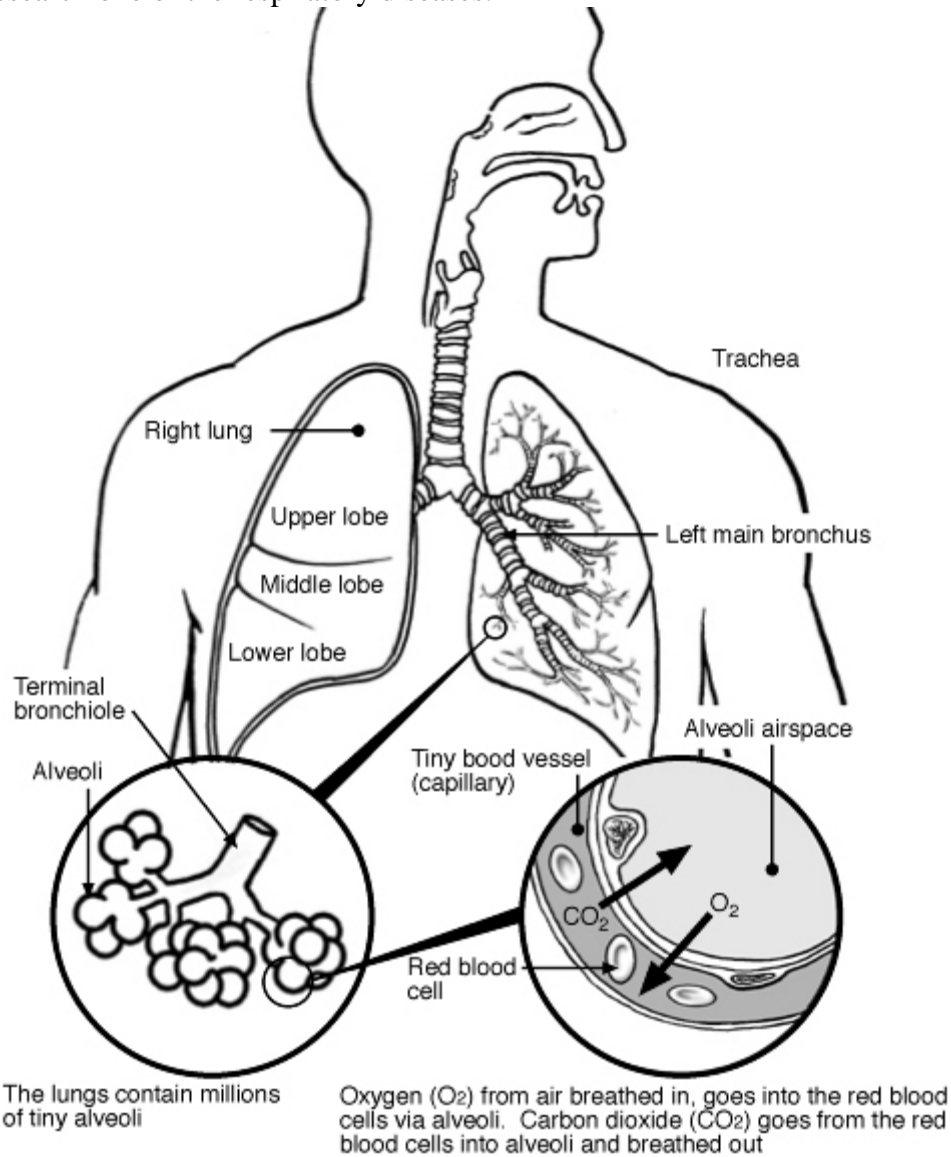
- b. grasshoppers
- c. army worms
- d. jackrabbits.

Select one of the plagues or pests to research. Share your report with the class.

3. “Jackrabbits were almost as thick as grasshoppers. . .hundreds of thousands appeared on the plains, eating anything that grew. . .Residents knew how to combat this kind of plague. Rabbit hunts were organized, and . . .hundreds of people turned out to drive the animals into quickly constructed corrals where they were beaten to death with clubs. . . After the kill, the animals provided meat for many poor families and could be sold for fur and pet food in order to bring in a little extra cash.” (48, 49) Egan further reports that often the rabbits were left to rot or were buried. What would PETA have to say about the practice of clubbing rabbits to death?

4. “Dust bowl families faced more than bad weather and insect invasions. All had to deal with normal tribulations of life such as childhood diseases – measles, mumps, chickenpox, diphtheria, and whooping cough – which struck regularly. . .Fine silicon particles – similar to those that caused black lung disease in coal miners – were present in

the dirt, and when they were inhaled they cut and irritated the mucous membranes of the respiratory system. ‘Dust pneumonia,’ a condition in which dust irritated the lungs and bronchial tubes and led to infection and sometimes death, was extremely common during this time. . In the spring of 1935, the U. S. Public Health Service noted a 50 to 100 percent increase in pneumonia over the same months in 1934. Other respiratory conditions such as sinusitis, laryngitis, and bronchitis were also more common. Many people suffered from strep throat and eye infections, and, perhaps as a result of swallowing so much dirt, many people developed appendicitis, as well. (48, 49) Research one of the respiratory diseases.



Lung showing alveoli

www.showcase.com/uk

5. GETTING BY. “Neighbors and friends were also a source of support and comfort in times in crisis. ‘Everybody helped . . .If I had something that somebody else could use, I

gave it to them. If it hadn't been for people helping one another, I don't know what we would have done.' ” (51) Research the holiday give-away started by Bob Telamosse and now continued by Steve Bigari, owner of Mr. Biggs'. Hold a drive to have people donate items for this holiday give-away. Other agencies, such as Silver Key, also accept used items. Call Silver Key to learn how to participate in their Grandparents' Program, whereby you visit an elderly person and/or do small chores for the elderly.

Research songs and poems that promote friendship and helping others, such as “With a Little Help from My Friends” by the Beatles. What is the universal message?

6. “The faith and optimism of many dust bowl residents were apparent in decisions they made to remain and go on with their lives despite the hard times. . . Many dust bowl residents were indignant when outsiders drew national attention to the devastation of the dust bowl. That attention included the government film *The Plow That Broke the Plains*.” The star of that film was Bam White. (Melt White, his son, was mentioned initially on page 21.) “In the PBS special “Surviving the Dust Bowl,” Melt White describes the situation. Watch the PBS special at www.pbs.org.

7. “Some people, like John McCarty, editor of the *Dalhart Texan*, even decided to take a public stand against the negative press. . . McCarty decided that he would not desert the region. In his newspaper, he published a pledge that he would stay even if he were the last man left. . . As they filed into McCarty's office and shook his hand, The Last Man's Club was formed.” (52, 53) According to Egan, McCarty eventually had to leave the area for health reasons. What was the power of the press then? What is the power of the press today? Discuss whether the standard press (newspapers and magazines) lost some of their impact due to the internet.

8. “. . . others turned to humor. Jokes and tall tales that made light of the wind and the dirt crisscrossed the plains.” (53) Retell some of the jokes and tall tales from that period.

19. “Singer Woodrow Wilson ‘Woody’ Guthrie captured some of the melancholy humor of the dust bowl in songs that he wrote about the people and the problems of the Great Plains.” (53) Research more about Woody Guthrie's music. Play the songs. Are there any musicians today singing about the world's issues?

Chapter 5 Dusted Out

Question: Who were the “exodusters”? Why did they leave?

1. “Dust bowl families were loyal to the plains, but years of bad crops, economic depression, insects, heat, and wind gave some of them little choice but to look for work elsewhere. . . Other realized that their dreams were forever beyond reach.” (56) John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* tells the story of the Joad family who opted to leave and to move to California in hope of a better life. Although that novel is written for high school students and for adults, you can read the abridged version. *The Grapes of Wrath* was abridged and adapted by Tony Napoli and published by Globe Ferron.

2. “No one knows exactly how many people left the land in the ‘dirty thirties,’ but experts believe the total reached 3.5 million people by 1940, with the majority moving after 1935. Oklahoma lost over 18 percent of its 1930 population. Morton County in southwestern Kansas lost 47 percent of its population, and nearby counties experienced similar losses.” (56) Where did the people go? (not all moved to California) What is the population of Oklahoma now? Americans are still on the move due to economics and jobs. What parts of the United States are experiencing people leaving? Which areas are seeing increased population? What is the prediction for the Front Range?

3. “Although many of the ‘dusted out’ stayed in the region, a large proportion went west, where work and better times were supposed to be guaranteed. Almost half a million migrated to the Pacific Northwest. Two out of every five went to California.” (58) What was the effect of the dusts leaving the Panhandle? How long did it take for the areas to recover?

4. “Migrants went west any way they could. Some, particularly young men who were setting out on their own, went by Greyhound bus. . .Most, however, traveled by car or truck, although well-worn jalopies were usually in no condition to make such a long trip.” (59) Research the Greyhound bus company. When did it start? How is it doing today? With the high price of gas, are people returning to riding buses? Check whether mass transit has seen an increase in riders. Report to the class.



5. “For most migrants, the trip west was made on U. S. Route 66. . .It wound through cornfields, deserts, and mountains, cutting across Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona.” (60) Research Route 66. Explain why it is still a popular route today.

6. “Despite the difficulties, most of the migrants eventually made their way across the country and arrived at the border crossing between Arizona and California. This proved to be a serious obstacle. Many Californians were prejudiced against anyone of a different race, religion, or background, and they were appalled at the number of migrants coming into the state, looking for jobs, and needing welfare.” (63) Compare the attitude towards the Okies with the attitude today towards illegal immigrants. Divide the issues (health care, public education, welfare, jobs, housing) among students to show how illegal immigrants impact these services and create issues. Present to the class.

7. “Jobs in agriculture were not as easy to get as many had thought, and wages were extremely low. Many families had to continue their migrant lifestyle, continually moving up and down the state, picking cotton, peas, oranges, and whatever crop was ripe at a certain season.” (64) Land owners had distributed thousands of flyers recruiting farm workers – and then paying the lowest possible wages. The cost of living and the minimum wage are issues today. How much has the cost of living increased over the last five years? What are the pros and the cons of increasing the minimum wage?

8. “Many clustered together for companionship and protection, forming tent cities along a stream or irrigation ditch that could be used as a source of water. They lived in tiny tents or shacks built of cardboard, scraps of tin, and wood.” (64) Find pictures to add to the mural. With the high cost of living in Los Angeles, tent cities sprouted again in the spring of 2008. Find pictures on the internet. Why did the city remove these tent cities?

9. “Photographer Dorothea Lange captured the humanity and the desperation of the migrant workers after being hired in 1935 by the California State Emergency Relief Administration to document conditions in labor camps throughout the state.” (65) Display copies of her pictures. Write captions for the pictures.

10. “In 1937, the Farm Security Administration began to aid the poorest migrants by building camps in California where they could live in dignity and safety. . .By 1940, there were twelve camps in California and several others in other states.” (65, 67) Read *Children of the Dust Bowl: The True Story of the School at Weedpatch Camp* by Jerry Stanley.

11. “Fortunately, those who sincerely wanted to alleviate suffering outnumbered the con men and crooks. One of the concerned, President Franklin Roosevelt, praised the efforts of others who did what they could to improve conditions both in the dust bowl and for migrants in California. (He said,) “I have been deeply impressed with the general efficiency of those agencies of the Federal, state and local governments which have moved in on the immediate task created by the drought. . .With this fine help we are tiding over the present emergency. We are going to conserve soil, conserve water and conserve life. We are going to have long-time defenses against both low prices and drought. We are going to have a farm policy that will serve the national welfare. This is

our hope for the future.” (68) Compare federal relief policies then with the government’s reaction after Hurricane Katrina.

Chapter 6 To Help or Hinder

Questions: What should the role of government be in providing assistance? How much should private citizens help?

1. “To ask for aid implied personal and providential (divine) failure. . . In any case, there was little charity to be had, at least locally: no effective organization to give it out, public or private, in most counties; and nothing to give.” (69) Today there are many organizations providing assistance to the needy. Research the Pikes Peak Library District’s database of agencies. With the slower economy, many agencies are struggling. What can more affluent people do to make a difference? What can YOU do to make a difference? Write a community service directory for your school.

2. “Farm families were self-sufficient, but also deeply religious and had no difficulty turning to God for help in time of trouble. Drought and dust qualified as serious trouble, and in churches throughout the dust bowl, ministers prayed regularly for rain. . . Their congregations prayed as well. ‘Prayer bands’ – groups of people willing to pray – were formed throughout Kansas, and some churches held daily prayer meetings for the faithful.” (69) Faith is still a factor in many peoples’ lives. Research prayer groups, the National Day of Prayer, prayer lists, and prayer chains on the internet.

3. “Franklin Delano Roosevelt, elected president in 1932, promised a ‘new deal’ to lead the nation out of the depression, and pushed Congress to pass laws and reforms that would help those in greatest need.” (70) The only agency still in existence is the Social Security Administration. Research the SSA and the concerns whether it will run out of money in the future. What new government agency was created after 9/11? (Homeland Security). What is its role?

The Denver Post reported in August that the Democratic platform “harkens to a New Deal-era style of government, mentioning Franklin Roosevelt three times and calling for greater civic participation.” (www.denverpost.com) Research more and compare FDR’s policies with the Democratic platform.

4. “The Department of Agriculture had been formed in 1862 to provide information to farmers about growing crops, but Congress also formed the Agricultural Adjustment Administration in 1933 to regulate farm production as well as to advise and assist farmers during the depression. The Farm Credit Administration made short- and long-term credit available. The Drought Cattle Purchase program paid ranchers for their cattle when they could not sell them at market.” (70, 71) What assistance does the federal government give to farmers today? A controversial issue is whether to pay farmers to allow fields to lie fallow. Discuss.

5. “Determined to help, Roosevelt listened to what experts and farmers were saying needed to be done in the dust bowl, and then he took action. Families in greatest need were slated to receive federal relief checks and also credit to buy equipment and fuel so

they could cultivate their fields properly.” (71) This government program is similar to the tax stimulus package in 2008 and the mortgage bailouts. Research the programs then and now. Debate with your class whether it is the federal government’s role to care for everyone.

6. “Farmers were also willing to plow under crops and sell their extra cattle and hogs to the government in order to stabilize farm prices. Nevertheless, it seemed a terrible waste to destroy wheat and animals when millions of people were starving.’ (72) This action seems appalling. Yet, today, grocery stores, restaurants, hotels, etc., waste incredible amounts of food. Florida Governor Charles Crist signed legislation last year removing liability from companies who donate food to food banks, etc. Start a campaign in Colorado Springs to encourage the state legislature to pass a similar law.

7. “The government’s land purchase program, run by the federal Resettlement Administration, was controversial as well. The intentions of the programs were good. Small, dusty farms would be purchased and turned back into grazing land. Those who lived on them – usually poor families – would be relocated to land where they could make a better living. Despite good intentions, the agency seemed to hurt those who were most in need of assistance.” (72) Compare this program with the actions of FEMA after Hurricane Katrina.

8. “Unlike government aid, aid from private sources was always a blessing. . . Hundreds of people appreciated the American Red Cross, which distributed thousands of dust masks and coordinated emergency health care activities. . . It also opened six emergency hospitals in Colorado, Kansas, and Texas.” (73, 74) Research the history of the American Red Cross and report to your class. Research where the emergency hospital in Colorado was located. Additionally, the Red Cross sent nurses to 1,631 homes mostly for dust-related illnesses. Research the Visiting Nurses’ Association today. Ask a nurse or a representative from the Red Cross to visit your class to explain the needs in the community.

9. “Like so many other people who broke the Constitution’s Eighteenth Amendment, which made producing, transporting, and selling liquor illegal in the 1920s, farmers trying to scratch out a living for their families often sold corn to moonshiners (illegal manufacturers) . . . In the early 1930s, nearly fifty thousand gallons of ‘white lightning’ (whiskey) was produced and sold every week in a five-county region that supplied whiskey for the cities of Denver and Dallas.” (76) Some people advocate reinstating Prohibition. Debate the Prohibition issue or debate the issue of the drinking age being lowered to 18. What is the legal drinking age in Colorado? Why do so many college presidents support the lower drinking age? Why is Mothers Against Drunk Driving opposed?

10. Criminals captured the minds and the imaginations of the public, besides giving them something else to talk about. In fact, some people considered Pretty Boy Floyd the Robin Hood of Oklahoma, and many cheered Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow for robbing banks. “When the couple was gunned down on May 23, 1934, near Shreveport,

Louisiana, many mourned their deaths. Historian Jonathan Davis explained that, in a time when even law-abiding people were angry with the government, Bonnie and Clyde were heroes. ‘Anybody who robbed banks or fought the law (was) really living out some secret fantasies (of) a large part of the public.’ ” (78) Research one of these colorful figures. Videotape your presentation and show it to the class. Are there any criminals today that Americans seem to glorify?



11. “The most popular and widely used approach to opening the clouds had always involved the use of explosives. . .Most dust bowl residents had little time to waste on rainmakers’ theories.” (78, 79) The concussion theory was popular during this time and was even promoted by C. W. Post. Pretend to be a rainmaker and make your pitch to the people. Rainmaking theories are still prevalent today. What did China do to encourage and to discourage rain during the Olympics? Can man control rain? the weather?

Channel 7 The Dust Settles

Question: What did people learn from the Dust Bowl?

1. List the reasons conditions improved:
 - a. rain
 - b. government aid
 - c. farming practices, such as a lister, puddling, rough tillage, strip planting, duck-foot cultivators.

“One of the greatest changes came in the federal government’s approach to running the country. Before the 1930s, the government had remained uninvolved in farm practices, favoring state and local management. . .With the election of Franklin Roosevelt, the federal government began assuming greater responsibility for the economic growth and security of the nation and the people. . .Although some people resented federal policies and spending and made fun of the government’s many ‘alphabet soup agencies,’ most soon grew used to having government as a safety net in times of trouble.” (83, 84)

Review the “alphabet soup agencies” and their roles. What “alphabet soup agencies” do we have today?

2. “Experts like the Department of Agriculture’s Hugh Hammond Bennett, the first director of the Soil Conservation Service, encouraged and aided farmers in their conservation efforts.” Research which programs Bennett put into place, which ones worked, and which ones are still in effect today.
3. “When the rain came, it meant life itself. It meant a future.” (83) The opposite – flooding – damaged crops in the Midwest during the summer of 2008; and tropical storms

ruined crops in Florida. Research the effects the floods and storms will have on our food supply and on prices.

4. “The war (World War II) brought an end to several dust bowl projects, however.” (88) As everyone knows, wars are expensive for taxpayers. Today, many people object to the war in Iraq and believe that the money should be spent on projects in the United States. How much money has the Iraqi War cost the United States? If you were in charge and could come up with an equal amount, how would you spend that money? Which projects would benefit? Would you develop new projects? Be a politician and plan your agenda.

Epilogue: Another Dust Bowl

Question: What can Americans do to prevent another Dust Bowl?

1. “. . .could the dust bowl happen again?” (90) Do the research and hold a class discussion. Divide the class into two sides, with the “no ways” on one side of the room and the “sure enoughts” on the other side. As the issues are discussed, allow students to change sides or to meet in the middle.

2. “Some people believe that the greenhouse effect and global warming may also increase the risk of another dust bowl. . . In an effort to learn more in order to prevent further tragedies in the Great Plains and elsewhere in the United States, Congress passed the National Drought Policy Act in 1998.” (91) Research the greenhouse effect, global warming, or the congressional act. Present your findings to the class. Then, organize students to encourage people to do what they can to decrease the effects of global warming, etc.

3. Connie Woodhouse, a climatologist at the University of Colorado, and Jonathan Overpeck, who is with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, point out that the Dust Bowl drought wasn’t the most severe such event to hit the Great Plains. Evidence indicates that more prolonged droughts hit the western U. S. in the 13th and 16th centuries. Those dry periods lasted approximately 20 years as compared to 8 years for the Dust Bowl and covered a larger geographic area.” Use search engines to read more of their reports.

4. The National Drought Policy Commission stated, “We must adopt a forward-looking stance to reduce this nation’s vulnerability . . .Preparedness-especially drought planning, plan implementation, and proactive mitigation – must become the cornerstone of national drought policy.” (93) Most people have never heard of this commission. Learn more about it. Then, decide which points you agree with.

Culminating Activities

1. Attend the All Pikes Peak Reads kick-off event on September 21 at America the Beautiful Park.

2. Attend the Living Voices presentation, “Journey from the Dust: A Story of the Great Depression” at the East Library on October 10 at 9 a. m., 11 a. m., or 1 p. m. Call the East Library to reserve your seats.
3. Participate in the DreamCity/Vision 2020 discussions about what Colorado Springs should be like in the year 2020. Student input is encouraged. For more information, visit www.DreamCity2020.com.
4. Enter the contests sponsored by the Pikes Peak Library District:
 - a. Traditional Visual Art: Draw, sculpt, or photograph or computer manipulate a piece that depicts your vision of the community of 2020.
 - b. Performing Art & Film: Create a piece of music, dance, or film that captures your vision for the community of 2020.
 - c. Literature: Write a poem (200 words or fewer) or a piece of prose or an essay (500 words or fewer) about your hopes and visions for the community in the year 2020. For more information visit, www.ppld.org.
5. Develop a multi-genre project based on *Life During the Dust Bowl* to display at the Pikes Peak Library District. “When students read and write, they conduct research, they frequently compose in more than one genre. The types and the kinds of reading and writing interwine and blend together. Their work becomes multigenre. In the lesson described in-depth at www.readwritethink.org, students meld together fiction, nonfiction, and art through their research on the depression era and the novel.” (Copyright permission granted.)
6. Attend the film screenings at the Pikes Peak Library District.
7. Attend a production of Manitou Arts Theater’s *Kids in the Dust Bowl: True Colorado Perspectives*.
8. Attend author Timothy Egan’s presentations on October 2. See ppld.org for the schedule.

See the teachers’ guide for *Out of the Dust* for more suggested activities.

Works Cited

www.denverpost.com
www.DreamCity2020.com
www.enchantedlearning.com/usa/states/area.html.)
www.pbs.org
www.ppld.org
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See the Further Reading section in the teachers’ guide for *Out of the Dust*.