The Great Depression

Unit 7: The Great Depression and World War II
Part 4: Surviving Hard Times
Objectives:

1. Explain the impact of the Great Depression on women and minorities. (7.4.4.21.2)
2. Describe ways the Great Depression affected the nation. (7.4.4.21.2)
3. Explain what the “Dust Bowl” was and how it affected American farmers.
During the 1930s, states from Texas to the Dakotas suffered a severe drought. Topsoil dried out. High winds carried the soil away in blinding dust storms. The area became known as the Dust Bowl.

A Dust Storm in Kansas
The Dust Bowl Area

Key:
- **Yellow**: Drought and erosion
- **Orange**: Dust Bowl
I. The Dust Bowl (con’t)

B. What caused the Dust Bowl?

1. Years of overgrazing by cattle and plowing by farmers destroyed the grasses that once held the soil in place.

2. The drought dried out the soil, and high winds blew it away.
C. Who was affected by the dust storms?

1. Hardest hit were poor farmers in Oklahoma and other Great Plains states. Hundreds packed their belongings into cars and trucks and headed west. (Called “Okies”)

2. They became migrant workers—people who move from one region to another in search of work.

3. Once the migrants reached the West Coast, they faced a new hardship—they were not wanted. Sometimes, angry crowds blocked the way and sent the migrants away.
I. The Dust Bowl (con’t)
II. Women in the Depression

A. Traditional roles took on added importance during the depression. Some women took in laundry or boarders to help pay the rent.

B. Working women faced special problems. If jobs were available, employers hired men before they would hire women. The federal government refused to hire a woman if her husband had a job.
II. Women in the Depression (con’t)

C. Still, millions of women worked to support themselves and their families. The number of married women in the work force increased by 52 percent.

D. Some women workers went on strike for better pay when employers lowered their wages.
E. **Eleanor Roosevelt** created a new role for the First Lady. She toured the nation as the President’s “eyes and ears.” Further, she used her position to speak out for women’s rights.
A. When hard times hit, African American workers were often the first to lose their jobs. They were often denied public works jobs, too. Some charities even refused to serve blacks.

B. Eleanor Roosevelt and others close to the President urged him to improve the situation of African Americans.
C. FDR invited black leaders to the White House. These unofficial advisers became known as the Black Cabinet. The President appointed Mary McLeod Bethune to head the National Youth Administration’s Division of Negro Affairs. She was the first African American to head a government agency.
III. African Americans During the Depression (con’t)

D. Often, Roosevelt followed the advice of the Black Cabinet. However, when African American leaders pressed him to support an antilynching law, he refused. He feared losing the support of southerners in Congress.

E. Many black leaders called on African Americans to unite to obtain their civil rights—the rights due to all citizens. Slowly, they made a few gains but the fight for equality would last for years to come.
IV. Other Minorities During the Great Depression

Hard times often created fear and insecurity among Americans, sometimes leading to violence and discrimination against minority groups.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Mexican Americans</th>
<th>1. Mexican American farmworkers in the West and Southwest faced discrimination in education and jobs and at the polls.</th>
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<td>2. In good times, employers encouraged Mexicans to come north to work. When hard times struck, many Americans wanted Mexicans sent back to Mexico. More than 400,000 people were rounded up and sent to Mexico. Some of them were American citizens.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Asian Americans</td>
<td>1. Some Americans resented Asian workers who competed with them for jobs.</td>
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<td>2. The government sought to reduce the number of Asians in the United States. In 1935, FDR signed a law that provided free transportation for Filipinos who agreed to return to the Philippines and not come back.</td>
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## IV. Other Minorities During the Great Depression

### C. Native Americans

1. In 1924, Congress made all Native Americans citizens. Still, most lived in poverty.
2. In the 1930s, Congress passed a series of laws known as the **Indian New Deal**. The laws gave Native American nations greater control over their own affairs.
3. **John Collier**, new head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, ended the government policy of breaking up Indian landholdings.
4. In 1934, Congress passed the **Indian Reorganization Act (IRA)**. It protected and even expanded landholdings of Native American reservations.
5. The Roosevelt administration let Indian reservations organize corporations and develop their own business projects.
6. The government set up the **Indian Emergency Conservation Work Group**, which employed Indians in soil-erosion control, irrigation, and land development.