

Depression Era Relief Efforts

Directions:

1. **FIRST**, with your partner, read through the New Deal slideshow that's posted in Google Classroom. Fill out the accompanying note sheet.
2. **THEN**, please read the profiles of fictitious Americans below and with your partners, make a list of the issues that each person/family would be concerned about during the Depression.
3. Once you've made a list of the issues, consider which programs would be the most useful to each family. I would like you to do is to make a recommendation as to which programs you think would most benefit this person/family based on what you know about who they are, their concerns, economic situation, etc..

Please know that there is not necessarily a right or wrong answer. Your recommendations will depend largely upon what you consider to be the most important aspect of each person/family's identity. Later, we will discuss your recommendations as a class.

DEPRESSION ERA PROFILES

PROFILE #1: Judy is a 15 year-old African-American woman from Trenton, NJ. She is the first generation in her family NOT to grow up in the South. Her great-grandparents were slaves and her parents and grandparents were raised as sharecroppers. When Judy was an infant, her parents moved Judy and her older brother, Johnny, up north to the promise of a better life. Life in the North has been a bit harder than her parents anticipated. Her father worked at odd jobs before finally finding work at a local factory. When the Depression hit Trenton, however, most local factories began laying off workers and unfortunately for her dad, the commonly accepted practice was to lay off black men first. Her mom works as a laundress, and after school hours, Judy often helps her mother. At the moment, Judy and Johnny are both still in school but with dad out of work and mom's laundry business experiencing a downturn, both kids have been quietly discussing the idea of dropping out of school to help support the family. Judy heard from a friend about a domestic service job in the city - while she doesn't want to move, it would provide free room and board and pay a salary. Johnny doesn't know what he'd do for work but he's young, able bodied and willing to work hard - there's gotta be something out there for a young man like him, right?

What issues will matter most to this person/family? (LIST)

Which programs do you think this person/family would most benefit from? WHY? (Try to consider all 3 Rs (relief, recovery and reform) in your response.)

PROFILE #2: Joyce is a 36 year-old mother of 2. Joyce's husband is a hard worker and a good provider. He had grown up working in the family business (a local soda shop just outside of Milwaukee) and just a few years ago assumed ownership of the family business when his father passed. With the income generated by the shop, Joyce has had the flexibility to stay home with the kids like she wanted. In recent years, as the kids have gotten older, she's begun teaching dance part-time which she loves. Their two children, Jay and Lois, are 17 and 7 respectively. They're great kids, hard workers and actively in their school's sports and clubs. In spite of all of the good in their lives, the past few years of financial troubles have taken a real toll on their family. At first, after the Crash, people cut back on entertainment and eating out, which meant cuts to the staff at the shop. However, as the financial situation got worse, the absence of customers and increasing demands from the bank for repayment of their loan forced Joyce and her husband to make the hard decision to shut down the shop. 75 years in operation and 3 generations of ownership and it was all gone. Joyce's husband was devastated and unfortunately for them, the hardship hadn't stopped there. With the bank unable to sell the shop as repayment for the loan, they are now coming after their house!

What issues will matter most to this person/family? (LIST)

Which programs do you think this person/family would most benefit from? WHY? (Try to consider all 3 Rs (relief, recovery and reform) in your response.)

PROFILE #3: Billy is a 18 year-old athlete and honors student in his senior year of high school just outside of Nashville, TN. Billy currently lives at home with his mom, a part-time seamstress, and his father, a factory worker. He also has two younger sisters, ages 15 and 7, who while tolerable, also drive him crazy a lot of the time. Before the Depression hit, Billy was on track with his dream of getting a full athletics scholarship to college. Since the Crash, however, that dream is getting further and further away as it has become clear that his dad alone is not going to be able to support the family. His dad was laid off from the factory 2 months ago and despite his many hours in the unemployment line, has been unable to find any permanent work. At the moment, the only income his parents have is the little bit of money his mom brings in through her small seamstress business but that's not enough to make ends meet. As much as Billy would like to leave this godforsaken town behind for a new life, his sense of obligation to his family is too strong and he knows that even if he gets that scholarship, he needs to stay closer to home to take care of his mom and sisters and contribute to his family earnings.

What issues will matter most to this person/family? (LIST)

Which programs do you think this person/family would most benefit from? WHY? (Try to consider all 3 Rs (relief, recovery and reform) in your response.)

PROFILE #4: Chuck is a 38 year-old shop foreman at a furniture factory just outside of des Moines, Iowa. Before the Depression hit, his family was fairly stable economically. In addition to his full time earnings, Chuck occasionally supplemented his income working as a handyman around town. His wife also worked part-time as a receptionist/nurse for the town's doctor. Her income, while small, was enough to help pay for many of the family's smaller incidentals (clothes, food, insurance, etc..) Chuck has 3 children - two sons, who are 7 and 17 respectively, and a daughter who is 15. As a rule, each child was expected to work part time once they hit high school. While they were taught that their focus should be on school first, work second, this little side income helped to cover their own spending habits (date money, food, etc.) Since the Depression began, the Taylors have faced quite a bit of financial hardship. The part-time jobs their kids had come to rely on for spending money have dried up, Chuck's wife was laid off and Chuck himself has faced significant cutbacks at work. While he hasn't yet been fired, his team has been decimated and Chuck himself has experienced a pay cut of nearly half of his income and is expecting a pink slip any day now. Oh and that \$200 Chuck had painstakingly saved in the bank over the past 10 years? Well, it's all gone now with the town bank out of business!

What issues will matter most to this person/family? (LIST)

Which programs do you think this person/family would most benefit from? WHY? (Try to consider all 3 Rs (relief, recovery and reform) in your response.)

PROFILE #5: Maxwell is a 48 year-old doctor who used to practice out of his home. Before the Depression hit, he was economically well-off and as a result, was the head of one of the wealthiest families in town. His wife did not work and his three children not only didn't have to work, they attended the nicest private school in the area. Dr. Maxwell also employed many people in his home/business. Once the Depression hit, however, he started practicing medicine at the county hospital since most of his home practice patients could no longer pay and there's only so many people you can take IOUs from and still feed your family! With his reduced patient load, Dr. Maxwell also had to make some cuts to the outside help they previously employed for their household. Goodbye to the cook, cleaning lady, driver, gardener, babysitter and receptionist! I mean there's only so much charity you can afford to extend to others when you yourself are hurting, right?! With those cuts, Maxwell's wife began to work as his assistant so he wouldn't have to pay another person to do so. Before the stock market crashed, a portion of the family's money was invested in stock while the rest of their savings was in the local bank. With the Crash and the ensuing rush on the banks, they no longer have any savings. Dr. Maxwell's 17 year-old son had planned to go to college in the fall but is now worried that things aren't financially stable enough to do so. Maxwell's two daughters are also now a little worried about money for the first time in their lives but have not gone so far as to start looking for jobs of their own.

What issues will matter most to this person/family? (LIST)

Which programs do you think this person/family would most benefit from? WHY? (Try to consider all 3 Rs (relief, recovery and reform) in your response.)