

Document 1

... This is not an issue as to whether the people are going hungry or cold in the United States. It is solely a question of the best method by which hunger and cold can be prevented. It is a question as to whether the American people on the one hand will maintain the spirit of charity and of mutual self-help through voluntary giving and the responsibility of local government as distinguished on the other hand from appropriations out of the Federal Treasury for such purposes. My own conviction is strongly that if we break down this sense of responsibility, of individual generosity to individual, and mutual self-help in the country in times of national difficulty and if we start appropriations of this character we have not only impaired something infinitely valuable in the life of the American people but have struck at the roots of self-government. Once this has happened it is not the cost of a few score millions, but we are faced with the abyss of reliance [trap of relying] in [the] future upon Government charity in some form or other. The money involved is indeed the least of the costs to American ideals and American institutions. . . .

Source: President Herbert Hoover, Press Statement, February 3, 1931

What is the source (is it creditable or not)? : _____

What is the main point of the excerpt: _____

What connections can be made to prior Knowledge? : _____

Document 2

... Kentucky coal miners suffered perhaps the most. In Harlan County there were whole towns whose people had not a cent of income. They lived on dandelions and blackberries. The women washed clothes in soapweed suds. Dysentery bloated the stomachs of starving babies. Children were reported so famished they were chewing up their own hands. Miners tried to plant vegetables, but they were often so hungry that they ate them before they were ripe. On her first trip to the mountains, Eleanor Roosevelt saw a little boy trying to hide his pet rabbit. "He thinks we are not going to eat it," his sister told her, "but we are." In West Virginia, miners mobbed company stores demanding food. Mountain people, with no means to leave their homes, sometimes had to burn their last chairs and tables to keep warm. Local charity could not help in a place where everyone was destitute. . . .

"No one has starved," Hoover boasted. To prove it, he announced a decline in the death rate. It was heartening, but puzzling, too. Even the social workers could not see how the unemployed kept body and soul together, and the more they studied, the more the wonder grew. Savings, if any, went first. Then insurance was cashed. Then people borrowed from family and friends. They stopped paying rent. When evicted, they moved in with relatives. They ran up bills. It was surprising how much credit could be wangled. In 1932, about 400 families on relief in Philadelphia had managed to contract an average debt of \$160, a tribute to the hearts if not the business heads of landlords and merchants. But in the end they had to eat "tight." . . .

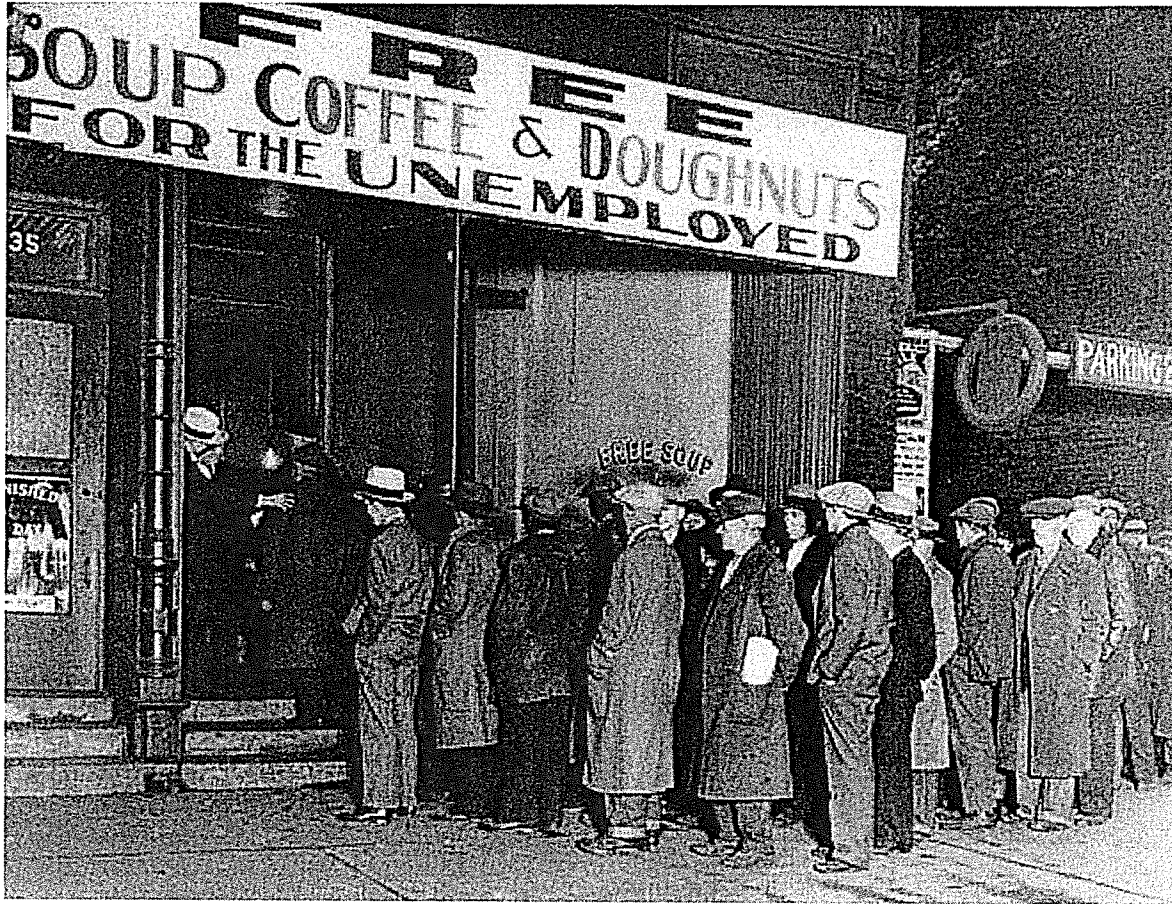
A teacher in a mountain school told a little girl who looked sick but said she was hungry to go home and eat something. "I can't," the youngster said. "It's my sister's turn to eat." In Chicago, teachers were ordered to ask what a child had had to eat before punishing him. Many of them were getting nothing but potatoes, a diet that kept their weight up, but left them listless, crotchety [cranky], and sleepy. . . .

Source: Caroline Bird, *The Invisible Scar*, David McKay Company

What is the source (is it creditable or not)?: _____

What is the main point of the excerpt: _____

What connections can be made to prior Knowledge? : _____



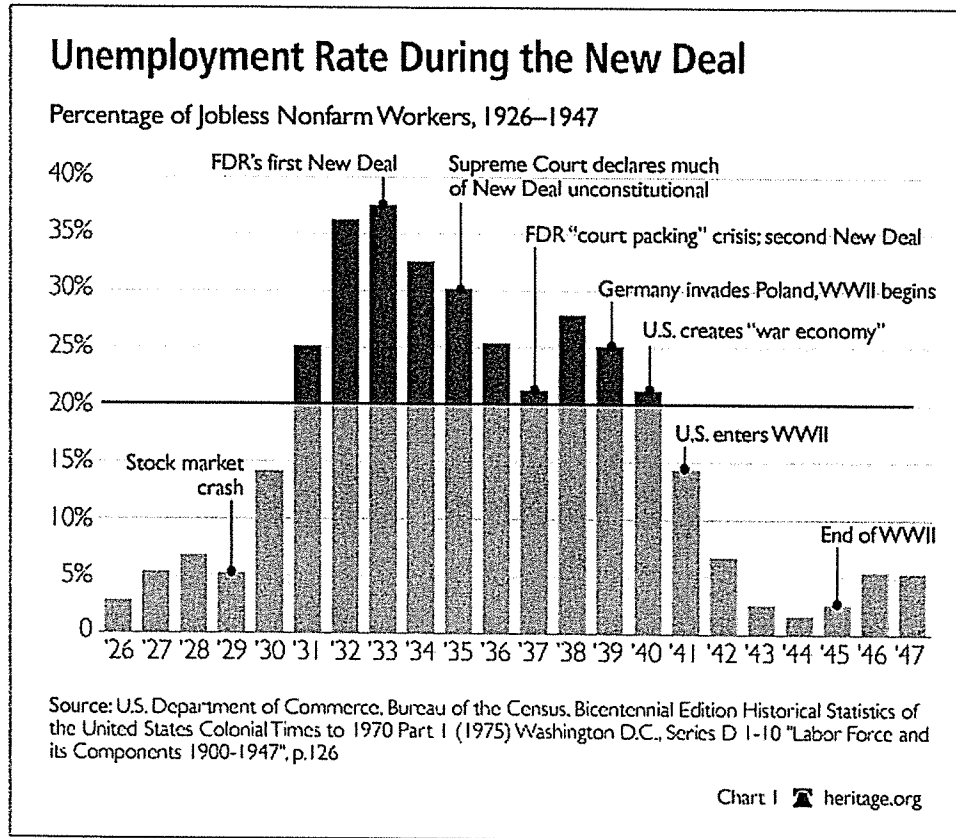
Depression Era Soup Kitchen, Circa 1932

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Document 5

Document Based Question

Social Security

Referring to the Social Security Act, Frances Perkins recalled, "Nothing of the sort had ever come before the Congress of the United States." The act altered many Americans' ideas about the government's responsibility to ensure the welfare of citizens. Since its beginning in the 1930s, the program has expanded to cover children, people with disabilities, and many others. Social Security also manages numerous other welfare programs, including subsidized school lunches. Providing monthly pensions to retired people or their survivors is the best-known Social Security program. Ida May Fuller of Ludlow, Vermont, was the first person to receive a monthly Social Security pension. Her first check, for \$22.54, arrived January 31, 1940.

Over time, the monthly payments have risen along with the cost of living. At the same time, more people are covered by Social Security. Although many people feared that this situation would eventually force the Social Security program into bankruptcy, legislators have long been reluctant to alter the system. Finally, in the late 1990s Congress enacted several measures to reform Social Security and guard it for future generations.

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Document 6

. . . For black people, the New Deal was psychologically encouraging (Mrs. Roosevelt was sympathetic; some blacks got posts in the administration), but most blacks were ignored by the New Deal programs. As tenant farmers, as farm laborers, as migrants, as domestic workers, they didn't qualify for unemployment insurance, minimum wages, social security, or farm subsidies. Roosevelt, careful not to offend southern white politicians whose political support he needed, did not push a bill against lynching. Blacks and whites were segregated in the armed forces. And black workers were discriminated against in getting jobs. They were the last hired, the first fired. Only when A. Philip Randolph, head of the Sleeping-Car Porters Union, threatened a massive march on Washington in 1941 would Roosevelt agree to sign an executive order establishing a Fair Employment Practices Committee. But the FEPC had no enforcement powers and changed little. . . .

Source: Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*, HarperCollins Publishers

What is the source (is it creditable or not)?: _____

What is the main point of the excerpt: _____

What connections can be made to prior Knowledge? : _____



Dr. New Deal, Circa 1935

What is the source (is it creditable or not)?: _____

What is the main point of the excerpt: _____

What connections can be made to prior Knowledge? : _____

Document 8

Lorena Hickok, a former Associated Press reporter, was hired by Harry Hopkins (head of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration) to travel throughout the United States and send Hopkins private reports on the state of the nation and effects of the New Deal programs. This is an excerpt from one of those reports, dated January 1, 1935.

... Only among the young is there evidence of revolt, apparently. These young people are growing restive [restless]. Out of some 15 weekly reports from industrial centers all over the country, hardly one omitted a paragraph pointing out that these young people may not tolerate much longer a condition that prevents them from starting normal, active, self-respecting lives, that will not let them marry and raise families, that condemns them to idleness and want. At present there is no leadership among them. College men are shoveling sand, checking freight cars, working in filling stations. High school graduates are offering themselves to industry "for nothing, just experience"—and are being accepted. Boys who normally would be apprentices in the trades are tramping [wandering] the pavements, riding the freights back and forth across the country, hanging about on street corners. One day in November a 21-year-old boy in Baltimore walked 20 miles, looking for work. "I just stopped at every place," he said, "but mostly they wouldn't even talk to me." ...

Source: Lowitt and Beasley, eds., *One Third of a Nation*, University of Illinois Press, 1981

What is the source (is it creditable or not)? : _____

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What connections can be made to prior Knowledge? : _____

