

Overview

The student will explore the cause and effects of the dust storms as well as the changes resulting from the storms. Students will work with primary source documents, including a 1936 government film, to gather information. They will use this information to build an argument for or against the thesis statement, "The dust storms were good for Kansas." This lesson is written for two class periods.

Standards

Current standards can be found on kshs.org.

Objectives

Content:

- The student will identify the human and economic costs of the dust storms.
- The student will recognize changes in farm technology as a result of the dust storms.

Skills:

- The student will explain the cause and effect of agricultural practices leading to the dust storms.
- The student will compare and contrast farming practices before and after the dust storms.

Essential Questions

- Could the Dust Bowl happen again in Kansas?
- Who should decide what is best for the use of agricultural land--government, businesses, or landowners?

Activities

This activity uses the following *Read Kansas!* materials:

- **Recipe for Disaster**
- **Kansas Emergency Relief Commission film**
- **Irrigation/Irrigation Canals**
- **Water Conservation/Planting on Slopes**
- **Terracing Fields/Contour Plowing**
- **Strip Cropping/Listing Fields**
- **Building Shelterbelts/Stubble Mulch**
- **Changing Farming Practices/Reseeding**

Day 1

1. Introduce the topic of the Dust Bowl as a major turning point in Kansas history, especially in agriculture. Explain that students will be learning about agricultural practices before and after the dust storms of the 1930s. They will also be learning about the effects on the people who experienced the dust storms.
2. The first half of the lesson will focus on the events leading up to and including the period of the dust storms. Write the words “cause” and “effect” on the board.
 - a. Distribute a copy of the **Recipe for Disaster** *Read Kansas!* card to each student. There are four primary source entries on this card. As a class have students read one at a time and then lead a discussion on the cause for the dust storms identified in the primary source. You may wish to read each one aloud.
 - b. List the causes on the board under the word “cause.”
3. Next have the students watch the Kansas Emergency Relief Commission film. It can be found at either of these links: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIVFTEn858s>; <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/204928> (Chapter 9)
 - The video is 5:24 minutes in length. Students should watch the film to identify effects of the dust storms in Kansas. Show the film the second time and have students write down two examples of an effect as an exit ticket.
4. You will use the students’ exit tickets to create a master list and record that list on the board under the word “effect.”
5. If there is time students can begin creating their three-tab, concept map “Foldable.” See illustration in For the Teachers section.

Day 2

1. Review yesterday’s lesson on how the events leading up to and including the dust storms affected Kansas using the student-generated lists. Display the lists so all students can see them. As you review the causes and effects of the dust storms, students should take notes under the appropriate heading of their foldable “Foldable.” Allow time for discussion and additional ideas.
2. Then organize students in pairs. Each pair will work with one of the remaining six *Read Kansas!* cards. Make sufficient copies for the pairs. Also provide each pair with two **How farming changed as a result of the dust storms** worksheets. Each card will have a primary source on each side that illustrates how farming changed as a result of the dust storms. Allow time for students to read both sides,

Think-Pair-Share, and then complete the worksheet.

3. Regroup students placing together those who worked on the same *Read Kansas!* card. There will be six groups. Students will discuss their answers on the worksheet and create one summary for each primary source to share with the class.
4. Each group will pick two students to serve as presenters. Each presenter will use one primary source to teach the class about that agricultural change.
 - a. Provide time for the rest of the students to ask questions of the group.
 - b. During the presentations, have students take notes under the heading “Change” section of their “Foldable.”
5. Conclude the lesson with a discussion on the question “Could there be another Dust Bowl in Kansas?” Why or why not?
6. As a homework assignment, have students write a five-paragraph essay defending or opposing the thesis statement: “The dust storms were good for Kansas.” Students need to give three examples and defend them.

Extended Activity:

- Talk with an adult or bring in a news article about current land conservation issues in Kansas today. Discuss in class.
- Students can illustrate the top flaps of their Foldable with a cause, effect, and change they think is most important.

Assessment

1. Evaluate the students’ ability to identify two causes and two effects of the dust storms.
2. Evaluate the students’ ability to write a five-paragraph essay defending or opposing the thesis statement.

For the Teacher

If you are using the textbook, *The Kansas Journey*, you may use this lesson with pages 228-229.

The Kansas Emergency Relief Commission created this film in 1936. It documents the various work projects completed in Kansas during President Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal. It begins with an introduction to the Kansas Emergency Relief Commission personnel, starting with the executive director, John G. Stutz. It then shows the various projects across the state, including the construction of farm ponds and lakes as part of the Water Conservation Program, the renovation and construction of courthouses, schools, libraries, and other public buildings, and the weaving and sewing rooms that produced clothing for needy Kansans. It also includes footage of rabbit drives, dust storms, and women sweeping piles of dust out of their homes. There are 16 chapters to this film. For this lesson, use Chapter 9. The links can be found on YouTube or *Kansas Memory*.

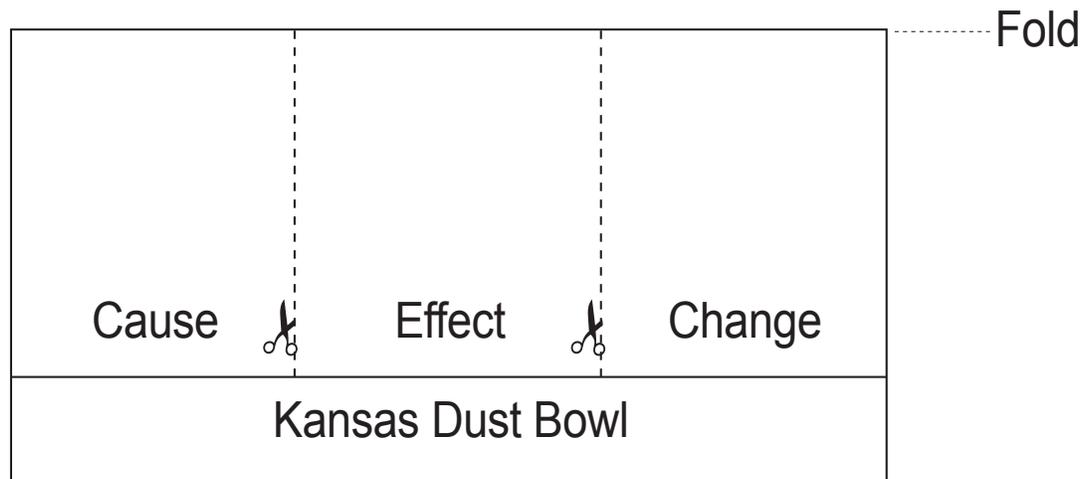
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIVFTEn858s>

<http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/204928> (Chapter 9)

Creating a Foldable:

(This activity is based on Dinah Zike’s video *Teaching Social Studies with Foldables*.)

- Fold an 8 1/2” X 11” sheet of colored paper lengthwise. Offset the fold so there is a 1” margin on one side.
- Fold the paper into thirds and cut along the valleys.
- Label the sections “Cause,” “Effect,” and “Change”
- Label the margin “Kansas Dust Bowl”



Definitions:

Fallow – left unplowed and unseeded during one growing season and planted the next; “fallow farmland”

Furrow – a long shallow trench in the ground (especially one made by a plow)

Row crop – Agricultural crop planted, usually with mechanical planting devices, in individual rows that are spaced to permit machine traffic during the early parts of the growing season

Contour plowing – Plowing furrows that follow the curves of the land rather than up and down the slopes; done to prevent water erosion.

Terracing – Construction of banks of earth following the contour of the field to help prevent erosion.

Tilling – Preparing the soil for planting by plowing or turning it over.

Answer Key: The Dust Bowl Foldable

Cause

- More land plowed up to support war effort in World War I
- Mechanization of farm equipment allowed farmers to plow more land to plant more crops
- Extremely high temperatures for long periods of time
- Lower than average rainfall causing drought conditions

Effect

- People developed sore eyes
- Food spoiled
- No gardens

- Cattle and other livestock died•
- Soil erosion
- Loss of top soil
- People developed lung problems from breathing dust-filled air
- People lost in dust storms
- People cannot keep dust out of the house
- Nutrients in soil depleted
- Lost income
- Rural depopulation

How farming changed as a result of the dust storms.

Title: Planting on slopes

Type of change: Planting on steep slopes

Benefit of change: Plant roots keep water from running off the fields that causes erosion and soil loss.

Title: Water Conservation

Type of change: State agency created to assist Kansans with drought

Benefit of change: Assistance provided for building wells, ponds, lakes, dams, canals and other devices that conserve water.

Title: Changing Farming Practices

Type of change: Use sandy soils in southwest for row crops, increase strip farming practices, leave fields fallow in summer, increase feed crops, and reseed range with native grasses.

Benefit of change: Make southwest better for growing wheat

Title: Reseeding

Type of change: Reseed land with native grass that was recently used to plant wheat

Benefit of change: Native grasses hold the land in place and provide more pasture acres for grazing

Title: Irrigation Canals

Type of change: Bring water to the fields; do not rely only on rainfall

Benefit of change: Steady supply of water for crops

Title: Irrigation

Type of change: Water pumped out of the ground and into the fields

Benefit of change: Able to grow crops that farmers could not grow before such as cantaloupes, honeydews and onions

Title: Listing Fields

Type of change: Farmers used listers to plow, plant and cover the seed

Benefit of change: Listers cut deep into the ground which helped hold rainfall in fields

Title: Strip Cropping

Type of change: Plant small grains between rows of larger plants

Benefit of change: Decreases run-off and erosion when it rains

Title: Contour Plowing

Type of change: Furrows cut with the slope rather than against the slope

Benefit of change: Crops planted with the slope help hold water in place long enough for absorption

Title: Terracing Fields

Type of change: Reshape the fields so they are terraced

Benefit of change: Terraces stops rain from washing soil downhill; it helps spread the rainfall over the field

Title: Building Shelterbelts

Type of change: Plant trees and shrubs in a row

Benefit of change: Stops blowing soil

Title: Stubble Mulch

Type of change: Leave part of the crop in the field after tilling the soil

Benefit of change: Prevents runoff and soil erosion

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Resources for this lesson are from:

- Kansas Historical Society collections
- Library of Congress
- Kansas State University, Wind Erosion Research Unit

Names _____

How farming changed as a result of the dust storms.

Side 1

Title:

Type of change:

Benefit of change:

Side 2

Title:

Type of change:

Benefit of change: