

Up from the Dust Prologue & Part 1 Teacher Guide

Guiding Question: What are some economic and natural forces that make farming difficult, and how did families in the 1920s cope with these challenges?

Mission Reflection

After completing the Prologue, “The Great Plow-Up,” & Part 1, “Boom to Bust,” review decisions from the **Decision Tracker** and discuss the questions below.

1. What were some of the chores Frank and Ginny were expected to complete each day? How are they similar or different to chores and other responsibilities you have at home?
2. What factors, natural and economic, made it difficult for Frank to succeed in running the farm?
3. When you visited Dalhart, TX as Ginny, you learned how various people in town were experiencing the Great Depression. What hardships were people having, and what role did they think the government played in the crisis?

Time: 15 minutes

Instructions

Take 5 minutes to have students use these questions to reflect on their gameplay, individually or in small groups. They may want to reference their **Decision Tracker** as they do this.

Family Responsibilities

The Prologue & Part 1 explore what life is like on a family farm in the Texas panhandle and the importance of the labor that children contributed to farm life. The discussion questions should draw out a sense of the responsibilities that young people had as well as their value to family farms.

In a 10-minute discussion, ask students to reflect on their experiences. If needed, use follow-up questions such as:

- How many people do you think it takes to run a farm?
- If children don't help out, how might all the work be done?
- What are some chores that you have to do on a daily basis, and how do they contribute to the well-being of your family?

In the discussion about chores today, the economic and social value of young people's assistance to family life can be compared with farm life. For instance, if young people take on cleaning or shopping chores, it may allow parents more time to work for wages.

Running the Farm

It is very difficult to succeed in the farming mini-game in Part 1, just as it was difficult to bring in a profitable crop during these years. Specifically, players discover that, between the unpredictable weather and the fluctuating price of wheat, even the most careful decisions about what and how much to plant often yield little or no profit at the end of the year. To make

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sure students understand these factors, you might include the following questions in your discussion:

- What are some factors that affect the price of wheat? What factors affect the quality of the harvest?
- Pa told Frank, "Farming is always a gamble." What did he mean by this?

Exploring Dalhart

In Part 1, students also explored the town of Dalhart, Texas, and learned about how others experienced and thought about the Great Depression. You can extend the discussion from a list of things that Ginny saw and heard by asking the following questions:

- What are some ways in which the life of the town was affected by farming and the weather? How might the life of farmers have been affected by the Depression differently than urban workers?
- Why do you think there were differing opinions on government aid among the people of Dalhart?