

**Guiding Question:** What actions did people take to cope with the economic hardship of the Great Depression?

## Decision Tracker Reflection

After completing all parts of the mission, reflect on your journey in the game by answering the following questions.

- 1. Reflection: What priority/priorities did you choose to guide your decisions?**
  - Which of the four priorities—maintaining the family farm, helping others, exploring America, or supporting the New Deal—did you choose to prioritize? Explain why you chose them.
- 2. Reflection: Did you act according to the priorities you chose in the game?**
  - How successful were you in staying focused on the priorities you chose?
  - What other factors guided your decisions in the game?
- 3. Reflection: What factors influence your choices in your life today?**

Given the time and place that Ginny and Frank lived, the choices they faced in their lives are different in many ways than the choices we face in our lives today. Yet, in other ways, the influences and pressures they experienced may also be very similar to our own.

  - What feels most similar between the choices Ginny and Frank faced and the choices you face in your life?
  - What feels most different?
- 4. Discussion: How well can we understand Ginny and Frank?**

Ginny and Frank were teenagers living and working on a farm in the 1930s, amid an economic depression and environmental disaster.

  - What makes it **hard** to understand Ginny's and Frank's experiences—how they thought and felt, and why they made the decisions they did?
  - What makes it **possible** for you to understand a 1930s teenager's experiences, despite all the differences?

**Time:** 20 minutes

## Instructions

In this activity, students review their decisions as Ginny and Frank throughout the game, reflect on the complexity of decision-making, and practice historical empathy.

The Decision Tracker Reflection provides a series of questions for students to respond to after completing the Decision Tracker documents from the Prologue and Parts 1, 2, and 3 of "Mission US: Up From the Dust." Consider giving students time for independent reflection and/or partner discussions in response to Questions 1-3. Since those questions ask students to consider their own priorities and experiences, they may not be comfortable sharing their responses with the whole group. Question 4 is designed for a whole class discussion.

Notes:

- This Decision Tracker Reflection takes the place of the Decision Tracker handout that appears in previous sections of this Teacher Guide. Since Ginny and Frank continue to experience tension between the four priorities students choose in the Part 2/Part 3 Decision Tracker, ***you might choose to have students continue recording and analyzing specific decisions while they play Parts 4 and 5.*** If so, simply provide them another blank copy of the Part 2/Part 3 handout. You could give students the option to choose a new

priority for their decision making in Parts 4 and 5.

- Question #2 asks students how successful they think they were in acting on the priorities they set for Ginny and Frank during the game. Keep in mind that many students may have played with *other* motives in mind (e.g., trying the most extreme choices, trying to make other characters angry, trying to “break” the game, or just choosing randomly). Therefore, #2 also asks students what other factors guided their choices. It’s good to acknowledge that games allow players freedom in how much they identify with characters.
- Question #4 asks students to consider both the importance and the limits of historical empathy. We hope that students will emerge with the conclusion that it is hard but still worthwhile to try to understand the experiences of Depression-era teenagers (and others from the past). Here are some reasons students may give:
  - They had to grow up much faster than most American kids today; it’s hard to know what it was like to be in such a different world.
  - Today, young people still face challenges due to climate change and economic hardships, but there are different options for addressing the issues. Help students draw out the similarities and differences between the 1930s and today.