

Name: _____

Date: _____

The First Measured Century

Lesson Plan 6 Handout

The Great Depression: What would it be like today?

Instructions

Use the following percentages of decline over a three-year period during The Great Depression to calculate what those same percentages of decline today would mean.

Changes during the decline phase of the Great Depression (1929 to 1933):

Marriage rate: down 15%

Divorce rate: down 25%

Gross National Product: down 50%

Dow Jones Industrial Average: down 90%

Total wages paid: down 60%

Other changes:

Unemployment rate: from 3% in 1929 to 25% in 1933

Total farm income: \$6 billion in 1929 to \$2 billion in 1932

New business investment in plants and equipment: \$24 billion in 1929 to \$3 billion in 1933

By 1933:

1,300 bankrupt counties and cities had defaulted on their obligations;

600,000 homeowners had lost their homes;

5,000 banks had failed;

Source: David Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Use the Statistical Abstract of the United States

(<http://www.census.gov/statab/www/>) to find out each of these statistics about America today. Calculate what would happen if the U.S. experienced an economic catastrophe of the same scale as the Great Depression over the next three years from this year. What would happen? What would be similar to the Great Depression? What would be different than in 1933?