We have a new Web site! If you have visited our site in the last couple of weeks, you will have noticed the changes. With our new site, we are striving to improve the organization of our materials to make browsing easier. We are still working on updating our materials to reflect new URLs as well as updated curriculum standards. If you have questions or need assistance in finding resources on the site, please feel free to contact Kira or Stacey.

Are you looking for an affordable, high-quality conference geared to history teachers? Join TPS-MTSU at the Tennessee Council for History Education conference on September 26 in Nashville at Scarritt-Bennett Center. For registration information, visit www.tnche.com.

**NEWS**

- We have a new Web site! If you have visited our site in the last couple of weeks, you will have noticed the changes. With our new site, we are striving to improve the organization of our materials to make browsing easier. We are still working on updating our materials to reflect new URLs as well as updated curriculum standards. If you have questions or need assistance in finding resources on the site, please feel free to contact Kira or Stacey.

- Are you looking for an affordable, high-quality conference geared to history teachers? Join TPS-MTSU at the Tennessee Council for History Education conference on September 26 in Nashville at Scarritt-Bennett Center. For registration information, visit www.tnche.com.

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- **September 14** (Murfreesboro) - “Causes of the Great Depression: Economic and Historical Perspectives” workshop in partnership with Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, Nashville Branch and the MTSU Center for Economic Education at Middle Tennessee State University from 9 to 3:30 p.m. To register, email Jackie Morgan.

- **September 21** (Knoxville) - “Addressing Social Studies Practice Standards through Inquiry” workshop from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET at East Tennessee History Center. To register, email Lisa Oakley.

- **September 28** (Memphis) - “Examining Tennessee’s Story: Resources and Strategies for Social Studies Teachers” workshop in partnership with East Tennessee Historical Society. From 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Shelby County Schools teachers may register through their district.

- **September 29** (Brownsville) - “Examining Tennessee’s Story: Resources and Strategies for Social Studies Teachers” workshop in partnership with East Tennessee Historical Society. At Dunbar-Carver Museum from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. To register, email Lisa Oakley.

If you ask students what caused the Great Depression, they would probably point to the stock market crash of October 29, 1929, called “Black Tuesday.” But the stock market did not just crash on its own. A host of factors contributed to the collapse of financial markets that led to the Depression. Short-sighted policies in the areas of tariffs, wages, consumer credit, agricultural production, and banking all contributed to the perfect storm of economic, social, and political consequences.

The best place to start looking for primary sources on this topic is *Prosperity and Thrift: The Coolidge Era and the Consumer Economy*, a collection documenting the consumer practices and policies of the 1920s. For more, see the Links box on page 2.

**“AWESOME” SOURCE OF THE MONTH:**

*Wife of Texas tenant farmer [May 1937]*

Economic hardships were experienced by farmers long before the stock market crash. What do you notice about the subject’s clothing and the tool she is using? How would you describe the landscape?

Content created and featured in partnership with the TPS program does not indicate an endorsement by the Library of Congress.
LESSON IDEA—FARMING AND THE GREAT DEPRESSION

During World War I, the United States supplied its allies, and eventually its own armies, with large amounts of military supplies and foodstuffs. This increase in agricultural production meant that when the war ended there was a surplus of agricultural products, driving the price of the products down. In turn, farmers increased their production to make ends meet, further feeding the surplus and driving down the prices even more. When the stock market crashed in 1929, the situation only worsened, and many farmers lost their land and farming operations.

Begin by having students define “surplus” and share their definitions. After a consensus has been established on the definition, ask them what the implications of a surplus means for producers. What are the implications for the consumer? The economy?

Divide your students into groups and give them copies of The Day Book, April 27th 1917 pages one and two (up to “Senate Begins Final Work”). You may choose to have students complete the Primary Source Analysis Tool to better guide their analyses while they read. Have students report out about their findings. What are the main objectives laid out in the article? Who do you think it is written for? Reflecting on the previous discussion of a surplus, how do you feel about this proposed plan? Based on background knowledge of the Great Depression, can you predict what might happen next? After reporting out, assign them this article from Iowa Pathways. Were your predictions correct? Why or why not? How were they different? How would you have handled agricultural issues leading up to the Great Depression?

This lesson idea meets state standards for high school U.S. History & Geography (US.45).

LESSON IDEA—TRACING THE ROOTS OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Although we often tie the beginning of the Great Depression to the 1929 stock market crash, the Great Depression did not begin on Wall Street and its impact was not localized to the United States. The economic policy of each administration from the end of WWI to the New Deal contributed to amplifying the economic devastation of the Depression. In this activity, students will research the three administrations that held office in the 1920s—those of Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover—and determine how their economic policies contributed to conditions leading up to the Great Depression.

Begin by asking students how the national and global economies were impacted by WWI. You may wish to create a bullet-point list of important points during this discussion for students to reflect on throughout the remainder of the activity. Divide the class into three groups with each researching a different president and his administration’s policies using the primary and secondary sources below. Depending on time, you may also have the groups identify other sources to contextualize the state of the economy and the impact of that president’s economic policies. Each group will present their findings. Then have the class discuss how each contributed to the Great Depression.

This activity can be adapted to meet Tennessee curriculum standards in high school U.S. History & Geography (US.45, US.46) and World History & Geography (W.36, W.37).

Harding:
- Liberty under the law
- Readjustment
- “McCormick Issues Keynote”

Coolidge:
- Today in History
- “Coolidge Faces New Task at Outset of His Own Term”
- Address to the American Society of Newspaper Editors

Hoover:
- “Barkley Defends Attack on Tariff”
- Veterans March to Washington
- Today in History

IMPORTANT LINKS:
- Primary Source Set: Causes of the Great Depression
- TPS-MTSU Newsletter Idea: Great Depression (Multiple Perspectives)
- TPS-MTSU Newsletter: The 1920s
- Primary Source Set: Depression and New Deal
- Prosperity and Thrift: The Coolidge Era and the Consumer Economy
- Themed Resources: The Great Depression
- Progressive Era to New Era, 1900-1929 (American Memory Timeline)
- Stock Market Crash (PBS)
Lesson Idea— Bank Runs of the 1930s

After the stock market crash of 1929, Americans began to distrust financial institutions, spend less, and withdraw their assets from banks. When a Nashville bank collapsed in November 1930, an entire series of bank runs was sparked throughout the region, leading to an unprecedented economic crisis.

Begin class by asking students to analyze this 1931 photograph. Before discussing its subject and caption, have students make predictions. Where do you think this photograph was taken? What year do you think it might be? What can you assume about the group by the way they are dressed and the signs they are carrying? The crowd does not seem phased by the weather; what might have been so important to them that they were willing to stand in the rain? Next, explain the context of the photograph and the bank panics that occurred during the early 1930s. Listen to this excerpt, “The Role of Bank Failures and Panics,” and discuss how the federal government took steps to insure banks. Play this one-minute audio clip of FDR encouraging people to leave their money in banks for safekeeping. Why did the president address citizens via the radio? What points did he make during this fireside chat?

Split the class into groups to read excerpts related to the banking crisis. The following three articles are from The Independent of Elizabeth City, North Carolina. The August 23, 1929 edition explains a “narrowly averted” bank run. On December 26, 1930, the paper describes the city’s “first bank run in half a century,” and on June 9, 1933 the paper details how banking practices in Elizabeth City shifted from conservative to liberal, and back again during the early 1930s. Ask groups to describe their excerpt to the rest of the class. Discuss the role of newspapers during the Great Depression. How successful were newspapers at calming the fears of readers? How do these newspaper articles relate to FDR’s fireside chat? Ask students to create their own newspaper article, pamphlet, or video informing the public about bank runs.

This lesson idea meets state standards for high school U.S. History & Geography (US.45), Economics (E.45, E.52), and English/Language Arts (11-12.W.TTP.2).

Featured Feature— Using Economic Data to Connect to History

By Dr. Maria Edlin King, MTSU Center for Economic Education, and Jackie Morgan, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta – Nashville Branch

We tend to look at historical events and time periods through the economic data lens. Using primary sources centered in economic data is yet another way to dig deeper and understand, provide context, and answer essential questions related to key periods in history.

Some of the economic data sources for obtaining primary source data include the following:

- The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is the principal federal agency responsible for measuring labor market activity such as the unemployment rate, working conditions, and price changes in the economy as they relate to inflation.
- The BLS’s Inflation calculator provides perspective on the value of goods and services for the past 105 years.
- The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) is the principal federal agency responsible for measuring economic data such as gross domestic product, consumer spending, and international transactions.

A variety of free resources are available for integrating economic and financial content into your classroom:

- MTSU Center for Economic Education offers hands-on lessons include the Heart Transplant, the Value of Stuff, a Manufacturing Simulation, and College GPS personal finance curriculum.
- The Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta offers economic and financial infographic posters (available to order or download as pdf) with related activities as well as other economic and finance lessons.
- Lessons, activities, online interactives, e-books, and more are available through Federal Reserve Education and EconEdLink.

Professional development programs focusing on economic and financial concepts are conducted by both MTSU Center for Economic Education and the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta – Nashville Branch. All of our programs provide a real world lens to view economic and historical content.
Increased spending on consumer products and luxury items during the “Roaring Twenties” was commonplace, but not all purchases bought with credit were frivolous. During the 1920s and 1930s, some Americans had no choice but to buy necessities using credit. What can you predict about this couple based on the caption of this photograph? How might using credit “with no reserve of resources” lead to recurring financial problems for individual families? What about for banks and the nation as a whole? Ask students to brainstorm tips about using credit safely in the modern era.

As the agriculture sector mechanized in the 1920s, how did this impact the daily lives of farm owners? What about tenant farmers and sharecroppers? Many pro-mechanization arguments touted increased productivity and profits. Did these arguments prove correct? How did mechanization impact the agriculture economy?

The availability of credit helped fuel the economic boom of the 1920s. A variety of new products entered the market and radically changed daily life and American popular culture. What is the argument about the short- and long-term impacts of credit? What are the benefits and consequences? How did the predictions here compare with what actually happened?

Increased spending on consumer products and luxury items during the “Roaring Twenties” was commonplace, but not all purchases bought with credit were frivolous. During the 1920s and 1930s, some Americans had no choice but to buy necessities using credit. What can you predict about this couple based on the caption of this photograph? How might using credit “with no reserve of resources” lead to recurring financial problems for individual families? What about for banks and the nation as a whole? Ask students to brainstorm tips about using credit safely in the modern era.

As the agriculture sector mechanized in the 1920s, how did this impact the daily lives of farm owners? What about tenant farmers and sharecroppers? Many pro-mechanization arguments touted increased productivity and profits. Did these arguments prove correct? How did mechanization impact the agriculture economy?

The availability of credit helped fuel the economic boom of the 1920s. A variety of new products entered the market and radically changed daily life and American popular culture. What is the argument about the short- and long-term impacts of credit? What are the benefits and consequences? How did the predictions here compare with what actually happened?

The Smoot-Hawley Tariff was passed in 1930 to help protect American companies after the market crash. This high tax on imports meant less trade between America and other countries, in addition to economic retaliation from trading partners, further hurting the economy. Why do you think Cordell Hull met with the agricultural committee to discuss lowering tariffs? How might increased tariffs hurt or benefit the United States? Can students think of modern issues regarding tariffs?