

The Dust Bowl



Teaching Suggestions

A series of dry years and poor land use in the Great Plains led to devastating drought and terrible dust storms in the area that came to be called the “Dust Bowl.” Many farm families lost their land because of high debts. This map shows the extent of the Dust Bowl and other drought-stricken areas.

- 1.** Have students color the Dust Bowl and the other drought areas different colors. Remind them to create a legend for their maps. Suggest that they use colors that bring to mind “heat” and “dryness.”
- 2.** Have students label the states that were in the Dust Bowl.
- 3.** Have students label the other states that were hit by drought.
- 4.** Many families who lost their farms in the Dust Bowl and elsewhere in the Great Plains went to California to seek work in the rich agricultural lands there. Have students draw an arrow to show this migration. Have them label the states through which the migrants would travel.
- 5.** Some of your students might enjoy reading John Steinbeck’s novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, which tells the story of a family forced to move from the Dust Bowl to California. Have them trace the family’s route on the map and label the places mentioned in the book.