

# The Great Depression

*The Great Depression and  
World War II (1929–1945)*



Financial collapse

Political failures

The human cost

## Thematic Icons



Economics and business



Geography and environment



Historical concepts and questions



Politics, government and citizenship



Society and culture



War, diplomacy and foreign policy

**Icons:** For more detailed instructions, see the *User Guide*



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page



By the end of this section, you will know about the following aspects of the Hoover administration's failures to end the Great Depression:

- Government reassurances
- American resentment of Hoover
- Government reform efforts
- The Bonus Army.



“I see nothing in the present situation that is either menacing or warrants pessimism.”

– Secretary of the Treasury Andrew Mellon in December, 1929

At first, Hoover’s government assumed that the depression was a natural part of the economic cycle. Hoover told people to continue to spend normally.

Hoover believed that **welfare** systems made people reliant on the state and hindered their independence.

Instead, he encouraged private businesses not to fire employees and to organize relief efforts within their industry.



As the depression worsened, Americans began blaming Hoover for the crisis.

People who were evicted from their homes set up shanty towns nicknamed “**Hoovervilles.**” Stray newspapers became “Hoover blankets” and empty, turned out pockets were known as “Hoover flags.”



In the midterm elections of 1930, voters expressed their dissatisfaction by voting overwhelmingly for the Democrats.





Hoover soon realized that his policies were not working. He introduced several government programs in the hopes of reviving the failing economy, but these attempts turned out to be too little, too late.

Press the tabs to read more about Hoover's reforms.

Press **start** to begin.

**start**





# The Patman Bill



In 1924, Congress had approved a plan to pay \$500 bonuses to World War I veterans in 1945.

As the Depression set in, Congressman **J. Wright Patman** argued that the bonuses should be paid immediately.

In 1932, over 10,000 veterans and their families traveled to Washington, D.C. to support the Patman Bill.

They called themselves the Bonus Expeditionary Force, or **Bonus Army**.





# The Bonus Army

Hoover believed that most of the men in the Bonus Army were criminals looking for a handout, but he supported their right to peaceful protest.

He allowed them to create a shanty town outside the Capitol. However, when the bill was voted down, he ordered them to depart.



Approximately 2,000 people remained. On June 28, Hoover sent 1,000 troops to remove them. The soldiers tear gassed the Bonus Army and burned the shanties. Americans were shocked and angered by Hoover's actions.





Read the following opinions about government regulation of the economy and discuss how much you agree or disagree with them. When you have decided, drag the marker to the appropriate place on the slider scale.

Press **start** to begin.

**start**



How are your opinions relevant today?