Life in the Great Depression Station Guide

During the Great Depression (1929-1939), California photojournalist Dorothea Lange traveled throughout the country, documenting the lives of Americans. Her photos humanized the consequences of the Great Depression and play a significant role in documenting history. Today, you will be analyzing her photos to determine what life was like in the Great Depression.

Directions: Locate the sources for each station in the room. Analyze the source and answer the questions that follow.

Station 1: (Two photos of two men)

1. What would the two men in the photo be called?
2. Why are the two men in both photos walking?
3. Where do you think the men are going? Why?
4. How is Photo A ironic?

Station 2: (Three photos containing children/families)

1. Describe the children in the image.
2. What do you think life is like for children in the Great Depression?
3. Do you think these children are getting education, healthcare, enough food, etc? Why or why not?

Station 3: (Two photos of Migrant Mother, the wife of a destitute agricultural migrant worker in a California pea picking camp)

1. Photo A was taken right after the Migrant Mother sold the tires from their car in order to buy food for her seven children. What does this photo reveal about living conditions and attitudes in the Great Depression?

Station 4: (Two photos of a bread line sponsored by Al Capone and a soup kitchen)

1. What do you think is happening in Photo A?
2. What do you think is happening in Photo B?
3. What is the purpose of a bread line and a soup kitchen?
4. What type of people would have established these programs?

Station 5: (One photo of Seattle)

1. What do you see in this image? What is its nickname?
2. Why were these settlements established? Who lived in them?

Station 6: (Two images of signs)

1. Who is being targeted in the two photos?
2. Why is there a need to target this group?
3. What most likely happened to the people of this group?

Station 7: (Textbook pages and two photos)

1. What caused the Dust Bowl (long-term and short-term)?
2. Where did the Dust Bowl occur?
3. What were some of the consequences of the Dust Bowl?

Station 8: (one photo by Helen Levitt)

* + 1. Describe the house in the photo.
    2. What does this photo remind you of from another time period?
    3. How is this home different from yours?
    4. What do you think life is like for this woman and child?