The Great Depression Research Project

We will be starting the *To Kill a Mockingbird* novel unit soon, so in order to help you better understand the history, events, characters, and culture of the novel, you will complete a research project on the time period the novel is set in, the Great Depression.

Below you will find a list of the three main research topics with sub-topics and research questions to get you started on your research. First read through the three main topics and choose ONE of the nine sub topics to focus on.

As you conduct your research, remember to assess your sources and differentiate between valid and reliable sources versus useless and unreliable sources. So, to avoid stumbling into "unreliable" sources, use the links I am giving you to get started. Please note that you are not limited to using just the links I provided and should certainly take a look at other sources such as the school library’s databases. These links are posted for you under "TKMB Research Project LINKS" on the left side of my website.

Remember that you are required to use in-text parenthetical citation in the body of your paper and include a works cited. As such, you must keep track of your sources and take careful notes on each source.

**Topic 1: Life for Blacks in the South After the Civil War** –


- Explain what Jim Crow Laws were and how/where/why they originated. Who was Jim Crow? What were the original laws/policies?
- What impact did Jim Crow laws have on African Americans and what rights did they violate? How did whites/states defend Jim Crow laws?

**Sub-Topic 2. The Ku Klux Klan: Its History and Its Methods of Instilling Fear** –

- Explain where the Ku Klux Klan originated in the United States. What was their mission and who were its members? Provide significant historical facts about the group.
- What impact did the KKK have on life in America (particularly on African Americans and minorities)? What methods did they use in order to promote their agenda?
- What influence did the KKK have on local governments and people in power?

**Sub-Topic 3. Lynching and Lynch Mobs** –

- Give a brief history of lynchings in America and the origins of the lynch mob. What influence did they have on local governments/people in power?
- How did they come to represent white hatred of blacks? Why were so many white people supportive of them? At their peak, how frequent were lynchings of black people by white lynch mobs in America? Where in the country were they most prominent? What were sundown towns? How were they connected to lynchings?
**Topic 2: America and the World in the 1930s:**

**Sub-Topic 4. The Stock Market Crash: The Impact on Economic Prosperity for Blacks and Whites in America**

- What was “Black Tuesday? What caused the stock market to crash? Had it happened before? Where/when? Could the stock market crash have been prevented? How?
- What impact did the stock market crash have on Americans and life in America? Explain some of the tragic events that occurred immediately after the Crash?

**Sub-Topic 5. The Great Depression: The Impact on Economic Prosperity for Blacks and Whites in America**

- Explain what the Great Depression was and its importance/prominence in American history. Who was President during this time and what policies affected the Great Depression?
- What factors led to the Great Depression? What was life like for Americans during the Great Depression? Who was hardest hit and how?

**Sub-Topic 6. The Dust Bowl: The Impact on Economic Prosperity for Blacks and Whites**

- What was the Dust Bowl? Where did it take place and when? Who was directly affected by it?
- What impact did the Dust Bowl have on life in America? How is it connected to the Great Depression? Could it have been prevented? If so, how? Have we done things since then to prevent it from happening again or could it still happen?
- How did Herbert Hoover deal with this natural disaster and the people involved? What were “Hoovervilles” and why were they called that? Who were the “Okies”? Explain the problems that arose in the country in places like California as a result of the Dust Bowl, the “Okies,” and migrant farming.

**Topic 3: Education for Blacks in the Early 20th Century**

**Sub-Topic 7. W.E.B. Dubois and the NAACP: Fighting Against Scientific Racism**

- Who was W.E.B. Dubois? Give important biographical facts of his background. Why was he so important/why is he a historical figure?
- What ideas did W.E.B. Dubois promote that focused on improving life for African Americans in America and supporting their rights? What is scientific racism and what were his views on it? Who were his main supporters and who were his main opponents?
- What is the NAACP? What was W.E.B. Dubois’ connection with the NAACP? What was the purpose or mission of the NAACP with Dubois’ help?
- What impact did Dubois have on the education and the general welfare of Blacks in America? Do you agree with his views? Why or why not?

**Sub-Topic 8. Booker T. Washington and the Tuskegee Institute: Up From Slavery**

- Who was Booker T. Washington? Give important biographical facts of his background. Why was he so important/why is he a historical figure?
- What was the Tuskegee Institute? Who founded it and what was its purpose? What role did Booker
T. Washington have at Tuskegee and what did he accomplish while he was there?
- What ideas did Booker T. Washington promote that focused on improving life for Blacks in America and supporting their rights? Who were his main supporters and who were his main opponents?
- What impact did he have on things such as education and the general welfare of blacks in America?


- Explain/summarize what the case was (i.e. who was involved, what the main points of the case were, when it occurred, what the final decision was, etc.) What problems did Linda Brown encounter in Topeka that eventually resulted in this case?
- What were “segregated schools”? Why were they created? What right does the Fourteenth Amendment give citizens?
- Why was Brown v. Board of Education such a significant case in terms of its impact on education and the rights of Blacks?
- How did Brown v. Board of Education change the legal definition of “equality” and advance the Civil Rights Movement for Blacks?

TKMB Research Paper Writing Assignment:

Write a 3 – 4 page research paper on the topic you have chosen that answers the essential questions you have been given. Your paper should include a clear introduction with a thesis statement, a well-organized body separated by paragraphs, and a distinct conclusion which confirms that you have answered the essential questions that you have been given.

Paper Format:

Paper should be typed, double-spaced, and 12-point Times New Roman font. Margins should be 1-inch on all sides.

Information from your sources should be properly cited using parenthetical citations (see handout for assistance with this section).

You will also turn in a works cited. Your works cited must reflect at least 4 different sources. I will be cross-checking your in-text parenthetical citations with your works cited - they should be congruent. Please use Noodlebib to create your works cited and make sure it is in MLA format!

*NOTE - if you do not have in-text parenthetical citations, 50% of your final grade will be reduced. If you do not have a works cited page, your paper is a zero!!!!!!!

ROUGH DRAFT Research Paper Due Date: __________ __________

FINAL DRAFT Research Paper Due Date: ______________________