



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2015 Volume I: Literature and Information

Wandering Through The Bad Times: Children Making Their Way Through the Great Depression

Guide for Curriculum Unit 15.01.01, published September 2015
by Joyce Arnosky

This is a four-week interdisciplinary unit for fifth graders, but could be modified for middle school. The work centers on literacy and social studies and aligns with the CCSS Reading Literature and Reading Informational Text Standards. The goal of this unit is to help students strengthen and enhance their literacy skills as they do the work of historians – examining the lives of children during the Depression. Understanding the past requires a multi-faceted, critical approach and so is very much like what we want our students to do in terms of their reading and writing work. Historians can't simply rely on one account. They must consider and evaluate many sources in their search for clues and evidence of the past. In this unit students will do close readings and analysis of primary and secondary sources, literary nonfiction, memoir, and photographs. They will combine these sources of informational text with reading historical novels in book club format, poetry, and songs from the period. Students will also write across a variety of genres and for different purposes: journals, constructed responses, literary analysis, poetry, expository essays, and fiction.

(Developed for Literacy and Social Studies, grade 5; recommended for Literacy and Social Studies, grades 6-8)

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