

Dorothea Lange and Dust Bowl Migrants in Chandler Lesson Plan

Grade Level: 7th

Lesson Length: 2 class periods

Lesson Overview

Students will use Dorothea Lange photographs taken in and around Chandler, Arizona in 1937, 1938, and 1940 to learn about Dust Bowl migration. This lesson is part of Chandler Museum's Use Local, Teach National lesson plan series.

Essential Questions

- How is Chandler connected to events in national history?
- How do photo journalists tell a story with images?
- How did the government provide aid during the Dust Bowl and Great Depression?

Materials

All resources are available on "Dorothea Lange and Dust Bowl migrants in Chandler" page in the "Lesson Plans" section of "For Teachers" on ChandlerpediA

(http://chandlerpedia.org/For_Teachers/Lesson_Plans/Dorothea_Lange_and_Dust_Bowl_migrants_in_Chandler)

- Dorothea Lange photographs in and around Chandler, photographs broken into four topics, twenty-eight photographs total, one per student, duplicate if needed
- Worksheets A and B
- [Crop It Tool](#)
- Scissors
- Background Information on [Social Documentary Photography](#) from the Getty

Activity

1. Discuss general history of Dorothea Lange, the Dust Bowl, and the Great Depression as a class.
2. Distribute a Crop it tool to each student. Students cut out their crop it tool.
3. Distribute one Dorothea Lange photograph to each student. Make sure all four topics are distributed amongst the class. Students make observations of photograph and use their crop it tool to focus on the details. Encourage students to break the photo into quadrants and study one quadrant at a time. Set a timer for 30 seconds per quadrant.
4. Distribute Worksheet A. Students answer questions based on their photograph, caption, and prior knowledge.
5. Students find classmates whose images match their series. Once all students have found their group, students put their images together and share observations. Students may find information from other images or captions in the series that helps inform their own image. Distribute Worksheet B and ask groups to discuss and answer questions together. Provide background information as needed. The Migratory Family and Farm Security Administration Cooperative Farm groups could be split in half to improve group dynamics.

6. As a group, students present their topic to the rest of the class. Groups should share the topic of their photograph series, the content of their photos, when and where the photos were taken, how the photographs inform Dust Bowl and Great Depression history, and how the photographs inform Chandler history.

Background

Dorothea Lange was hired by various government agencies to photo document the 1930s and 1940s. Her photographs have become iconic images of the Great Depression with *Migrant Mother* being her most popular photograph. Over the years Lange's work documented the poor living and working conditions of migrant laborers and Dust Bowl refugees as well as the efforts by the government to provide better living and working conditions.

Dorothea Lange photographed in and around Chandler, Arizona during projects with the Farm Security Administration (FSA) and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics (BAE) in 1937, 1938, and 1940. The photographs Lange took in Chandler feature four categories:

- Migratory family
- Housing for Mexican field laborers and drought refugees
- Auto camp for cotton pickers
- Farm Security Administration Cooperative Farm

Migratory family

(ARC Identifier 522203, 522204, 522205, 522206, 522263, 522526, 522527, 522528, and 522529)

These images are similar to the Lange's best known photograph, *Migrant Mother*. The photographs of the family in Chandler feature a series of images that capture the family from a distance, showing their shelter and family members, then come closer with shots of the children in the doorway, and finally include close-up shots of the grandmother with the baby. The family came to Chandler from Amarillo, Texas to pick cotton and planned to return to Texas at the end of the cotton picking season in Chandler. They had also spent time picking cotton in Roswell, New Mexico before they travelled to Arizona. They lived in a trailer in an open field with no water or sanitation services. Some of the images from this family are part of Lange's "Children in a Democracy" series.

Housing for Mexican field laborers and drought refugees

(LC-USF34-016790-C, LC-USF34-016791-C, LC-USF34-016792-C, LC-USF34-016797-C)

Dorothea Lange photographed the Mexican and drought refugee workers south of Chandler in 1937. Lange did not record the exact location, but it seems that these photographs were taken at the barracks that were built in 1917/1918 by Goodyear Rubber and Tire Company south of Chandler (now Ocotillo). Lange noted that drought refugees were "mingling with and supplanting" the Mexican field laborers across the Southwest.

Auto camp for cotton pickers

(ARC Identifier 522532, 522533, 522534, 522241, 522546, 522547)

This series of photographs shows the auto camp for cotton pickers in Chandler in 1940. The camp featured sixteen one-room cabins. The cabins rented for \$1.00 per week, but no water or sanitation services were available at the camp. People living in the camp used water and the toilet of an abandoned service station/grocery store a quarter of a mile away. The auto camp was located about one mile from the Farm Security Administration Cooperative Farm.

Farm Security Administration Cooperative Farm

(ARC Identifier 522176, 522178, 522195, 522197, 522478, 522479, 522480, 522531 and LC-USF34-018233-C)

The Farm Security Administration built a place for migrant workers to live and work north of downtown Chandler in 1936. Dorothea Lange photographed the camp in June 1938 and November 1940 and Russell Lee, another photographer hired by the government, photographed the location in 1936 and 1940. The 320 acre farm had chickens, produced eggs, and worked with a nearby dairy farm. The housing consisted of four units with eight apartments each. The apartments were two stories. In 1938 twenty-seven families lived on the farm. In 1940 residents rented apartments for \$9-\$13 per month plus \$6 for utilities.

Additional Resources

- Bill Robinson in "Interview about coming to California" from Library of Congress *Voices From the Dust Bowl: The Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin Migrant Worker Collection, 1940-1941*.
- *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck (book) or John Ford's *The Grapes of Wrath* (film)

Lesson Extensions

- Compare and contrast Dorothea Lange's series of photographs from the family featured in the Migrant Mother image to those of the family in Chandler.
- Research wages and rent costs in other areas during the Great Depression and compare them to laborer wages and rent costs in Chandler 1938-1940.
- Make a photo essay. Capture multiple images that tell a story when grouped together. Choose a topic to photo document and capture a series of 6-12 photographs that relate to that topic.

Curriculum Connections

- Historical Connections: Great Depression, Dust Bowl, Farm Security Administration, Works Progress Administration, Cotton, Local history
- Civics Connections: the New Deal
- Economic Connections: Personal finance, government role in economic recovery
- Geography Connections: The Dust Bowl, western migration
- Literary Connections: *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck
- Art Connections: Photography

Standards

Arizona State Social Studies Standards- 7th Grade

Grade 7, Strand 1, Concept 1, PO 4	Formulate questions that can be answered by historical study and research.
Grade 7, Strand 1, Concept 1, PO 6	Determine the credibility and bias of primary and secondary sources.
Grade 7, Strand 1, Concept 8, PO 2	Determine the impact of natural and manmade crises (e.g., unemployment, food lines, the Dust Bowl and the western migration of Midwest farmers) of the Great Depression.
Grade 7, Strand 1, Concept 8, PO 3, a-b	Describe how the following New Deal programs affected the American people. a. works programs (WPA, CCC, TVA) b. farm subsidies
Grade 7, Strand 4, Concept 4, PO 3	Describe the effects of human migration (e.g., imperialism, quota system, changing of political boundaries, multiculturalism) in the U.S. and regions of the world).
Grade 7, Strand 4, Concept 4, PO 4	Analyze how social (e.g., family), physical (e.g., good climate, farmland, water, minerals), and economic (e.g., jobs) resources influence where human populations choose to live.
Grade 7, Strand 5, Concept 2, PO 10	Describe the government's role in economic recovery for the individual (e.g., farm subsidy, securities, Social Security, exchange regulations).
Grade 7, Strand 5, Concept 5, PO 1	Describe how scarcity influenced the historical times studied.
Grade 7, Strand 5, Concept 5, PO 2	Describe how scarcity influences personal financial choices (e.g., buying on-margin, budgeting, saving, investing, credit.)
Grade 7, Strand 5, Concept 5, PO 3	Describe how income for most people is determined by the value of the goods and services they sell.

Arizona College and Career Ready Standards- English Language Arts, 7th grade

SL.7.1c-d	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grade 7 topics, texts, and issues</i> , building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. a. Pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas that bring the discussion back on topic as needed. b. Acknowledge new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modify their own views.
RH.6-8.7	Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
RH.6-8.8	Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.