**“Self-Help in Hard Times”: Research & Writing Project**

*Imagine that you were a member of the rapidly burgeoning middle-class in the 1920s. You are in your early teens as your family is experiencing an increase in their quality of life and believe that most of America is undergoing this very optimistic trend. Then the stock market crashes and like so many other families that built their dreams upon shaky investments, your middle-class consumer lifestyle comes to a grinding halt. Your father has lost his job, your family is at a risk of losing your home, and none of you – your parents and five brothers and sisters – has enough to eat or enough clothing to keep you warm during the winter. You decide to leave home so that your parents will have one less person to take care of. You promise your family to write often while you are gone, and to tell them where you are, what you are doing, what you are seeing, and how you are managing to keep yourself alive.*

* Your task is to compose five letters spanning the duration of your time away from home from the years 1932-1937. **Each letter must be at least 300 Words**
  + **RESEARCH**
    - Your letters need to be influenced by and grounded in documentary research. In addition to the materials used in class, you must find at least **three sources, with this being a combination of primary and secondary sources.**
      * You are limited to the following types of sources:
        + Print sources (books, newspaper articles, etc)
        + .gov or .edu sites – with the understanding that not all such sources are appropriate or legitimate
      * You must create a Works Cited page for **all** the sources used to write your letters
      * You must create an Annotated Bibliography for the four sources that were most helpful to you
  + **SOURCES**
    - Of course I want you to be creative, but I also want your ideas to accurately portray the time period and circumstance *–* you may not simply wing it**.Each letter must utilize at least one primary and/or secondary source found during research or used in class readings.** This means that you must demonstrate that the letters you are writing are based on your own research and/ or sources from class.
      * You must use at least four sources total for this assignment
      * You can use sources more than once during the writing process
      * You must cite sources using MLA format
  + **CONTENT**
    - **Historical Content & Themes**
      * **Implicitly or explicitly address at least two of these concepts**, preferably those which best fit the perspective you are trying to illustrate:
        + The conspicuous consumerist climate of middle-class America prior to the Depression
        + The causes and effects of the Stock Market Crash
        + Experiences with labor organization, with reference to oneof the following: 1) comparing and contrasting organizing efforts between men and women; 2) nativism and xenophobia; 3) suppression of Communists, Socialists, and/or Anarchists or people who sympathized with these views
        + Acknowledgement of racial tensions being further exacerbated by high rates of unemployment and stiff competition for work
        + A comparative assessment of Hoover and FDR’s role in the Depression and recovery
        + The New Deal (you can discuss this as a whole or based on individual programs) and its goal of creating an atmosphere of progress and improvement that ultimately restored the faith of many Americans in the political and economic system
    - **Biographical & Personal Information**
      * Name, age, gender
      * Region: Where you are starting from and ultimately where you go along the way
      * A little bit about your family, including what was going on before you left
      * A little bit about other people you meet during your journey
      * A sense of emotional transitions during the duration of your time away from home
      * A sense of transitional understanding about the country you live in, the people who are apart of it, the government’s role in society, and what the future will bring
* **ASSIGNMENT BASICS**
  + Due Thursday, 4/7
    - On this day, each student will do a brief presentation of sources used, as well as present one letter to the class
  + 65 points total. This is a portfolio project.
  + The rubric for project evaluation is attached. However, please keep in mind that I expect time, effort, and thoughtfulness to be put into this project and there is no rubric that can quantify this.
* **PROJECT SCHEDULE**
  + 3/31 & 4/2 In Class work time
  + 4/7 Letters due

**Research Project Source Suggestions**

* **Government/ National Documents**

The National Archives and Records Administration

<http://www.archives.gov>

The Library of Congress

[www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)

The National Parks Service

[www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)

The National Endowment for the Humanities

[www.neh.gov](http://www.neh.gov)

Smithsonian Collections

[www.si.edu](http://www.si.edu)

* **Online Journal Databases for Print Sources**
  + Project Muse
  + JSTOR
* **Newspapers**
  + *New York Times*
  + *Wall Street Journal*
  + *Washington Post*
  + *Boston Globe*
  + *San Francisco Chronicle*
  + *Miami Herald*
  + *Houston Chronicle*
  + *NPR*
* **Magazines**
  + *Atlantic Monthly*
  + *The Economist*
  + *Harper’s Magazines*
  + *The New Yorker*
* **The only .org allowed**
  + Public Broadcasting Service (*pbs.org*)

Self Help & Hard Times:

Project Rubric

The research project that you will be creating will be worth 65 points and will be placed in your portfolio as evidence of analytical and research skills. The breakdown for assessment is as follows:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ /50 (Five letters at 10 points each***) Any letter under 300 words will receive 0 points***

All letters will be assessed on content, creativity, and organization.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ /35 Historical Research

* Use of reliable and appropriate sources
* Incorporation of research into your letters
* Accurate portrayal of the era and circumstance
* Works Cited page
* Parenthetical citation

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ / 15 Six traits or writing:

* Organization
* Creativity / Ideas
* Voice
* Word Choice
* Style
* Conventions / Grammar / Spelling

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ /15 Annotated Bibliography

* At least four appropriate and recognized sources summarized, including an explanation of how information from each source was incorporated into your letters

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 65 pts total