Name_____

The Great Depression

The Great Depression began in 1929, in part, as a result of the crash of the stock market. As stock prices dropped, people lost the money they had invested. Others made a run on the banks to try to take out their money until the banks were forced to close due to lack of funds. Unemployment in America soared, and people found themselves with no way to support their families. Many lost their jobs and their homes.

President Hoover was in office during the beginning of the Depression. Hoover attempted to help the failing economy, but his efforts were not enough. As people were forced to live in makeshift homes, they began calling these places Hoovervilles. Anxious for a new leader and hopes for a better future, Americans voted in Franklin D. Roosevelt, or FDR, as the new president.

Roosevelt was what the American people needed. He communicated to Americans through radio talks known as "fireside chats," and he used these weekly conversations to build confidence in his ideas for America. The president offered his idea of a New Deal for the people. The New Deal was designed to bring relief, recovery, and reform to the struggling country. Roosevelt's programs helped the nation's economy and helped citizens find work. However, the start of World War II would be the eventual turning point in the economy as materials and items were needed as the country went back into war.

Text Questions

1. Which adjective best describes the economy during the Great Depression?
   a. strong
   b. struggling
   c. steady
   d. corrupt
2. What can the reader infer about Roosevelt's ability as a leader?
   a. He elicited confidence in the American people.
   b. He was often unsure of his next move.
   c. He relied heavily on his advisors.
   d. He was not as charismatic as President Hoover.
3. Which event most likely contributed to America's economic growth?
   a. the crash of the stock market
   b. the election of President Hoover
   c. the constructing of Hoovervilles
   d. the start of World War II
4. Which paragraph from the text helps you to explain your answer for question three?
   a. first paragraph
   b. second paragraph
   c. third paragraph
   d. none of the paragraphs
5. Why did people begin calling their makeshift homes Hoovervilles?
   a. They wanted to honor President Hoover.
   b. They hoped President Hoover would help them if they named their makeshift housing after him.
   c. They blamed President Hoover for their lack of jobs and homes.
   d. They believed only President Hoover could help them.

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