

The Gold Rush



INTERACTIVITY

Participate in a class discussion to preview the content of this lesson.

Unlock The BIG Question

I will know how the Gold Rush affected California, its people, and the world.

Vocabulary

miner
entrepreneur
foreigner
tax
claim
prospector
lode
boomtown

Academic Vocabulary

discover
individual
erode

Jumpstart Activity

Play a class game in which someone thinks of an exciting bit of news and whispers it to a classmate. Then, that classmate whispers it to someone else, and so on until everyone in the class has received the news. How fast does the news travel to everyone in your class?

Gold miners came to the American River near Sacramento to mine for gold. They brought picks, shovels, and pans.



In 1848, California changed forever. That was the year gold was discovered at a place near Sacramento. Soon, thousands of gold miners rushed to California from all over the world.

Miners are people who dig in the ground for minerals and metals, like gold. For newcomers and those who already lived in California, life would never be the same again.

The Discovery of Gold

James Marshall was a carpenter. He was hired by John Sutter to build a new sawmill in Coloma, California, next to the American River. You have already read about John Sutter, the immigrant from Switzerland who built Sutter's Fort. On January 24, 1848, Marshall was checking the progress on the sawmill when he looked down into the water and saw a small, shiny rock. Sutter tested the tiny nugget and found that it was gold. Gold was a valuable metal in those days, as it is today.

Sutter did not want Marshall to tell anyone that gold had been **discovered**. Sutter swore Marshall and other employees to secrecy, but the secret soon got out. As the news spread, people rushed to Sutter's Fort. They ruined Sutter's land and stole his cattle. Sutter never benefitted from the discovery of gold.

Samuel Brannan was an **entrepreneur**. An entrepreneur is someone who starts a new business. He ran a general store in what is now Sacramento, near the spot where the gold was discovered. Brannan saw the discovery of gold as an opportunity. He ran through the streets of San Francisco with a bottle of gold dust for proof, telling everyone about the discovery. Brannan wanted people to come to find gold so they would buy their tools and equipment from him.

By the end of 1849, word of the discovery spread and thousands of people from around the world rushed to California seeking gold. These gold seekers became known as forty-niners because of the year, 1849.

HSS 4.3.1, 4.3.3, 4.3.4, 4.4.2
ELA L.4.4, RI.4.1, RI.4.2, RI.4.3,
RI.4.4, RF.4.4



INTERACTIVITY

Explore the key ideas of this lesson.

Academic Vocabulary

discover • v., to find

1. **✓ Reading Check** Use **Evidence From Text** Identify and underline two facts about Samuel Brannan.

News of Gold Spreads

During the first summer of the Gold Rush in 1848, most of the miners were either Californios or California Indians paid to work for them. There were also some California Indians mining for themselves. People from Sonora, in northern Mexico, were also among the first miners. Many Sonorans were already experienced miners. American and European sailors who arrived in San Francisco left their ships and went to look for gold.

A ship carrying California gold reached a port in Chile, a country in South America, in August 1848. Chileans began finding ways to sail to California. Some sold all they owned to afford travel, while others paid by working on the ship. As more ships carried the news of gold around the Pacific Ocean, gold seekers came from Australia. Ships brought news of a "gold mountain" to China, and the first Chinese miners arrived in San Francisco in 1848. Europeans came as well. Of course, Americans came too, traveling by the routes you read about in the last lesson.

By 1849, more than 80,000 people had rushed to California in search of gold. This big increase in the population created new problems that California's government was not prepared to handle. Crime and violent conflict became common.

This poster from 1849 is advertising a trip aboard a fast boat called a clipper. Clippers took people from New York to San Francisco during the Gold Rush.

Primary Source

A NEW AND MAGNIFICENT CLIPPER FOR SAN FRANCISCO.

MERCHANTS' EXPRESS LINE OF CLIPPER SHIPS!

Loading none but First-Class Vessels and Regularly Dispatching the greatest number.

THE SPLENDID NEW OUT-AND-OUT CLIPPER SHIP



CALIFORNIA

HENRY BARBER, Commander, AT PIER 13 EAST RIVER.

This elegant Clipper Ship was built expressly for this trade by Samuel Hall, Esq., of East Boston, the builder of the celebrated Clippers "SQUAM," "GLADSTONE," "JOHN GILLEN," and others. She will fully equal them in speed! Unusually prompt dispatch and a very quick trip may be relied upon. Engagements should be completed at once.

Agents in San Francisco,
Messrs. DE WITT KITTLE & CO.

RANDOLPH M. COOLEY, 88 Wall Street, Tontine Building.

Remember that the United States had recently taken control of California. American miners claimed that this meant they should benefit most from the gold discovery. They did not like that miners were coming from other countries.

Americans mistreated **foreigners**, or people from other countries. They forced foreign miners to leave, attacking and robbing those who refused.

California's government treated foreign miners differently from Americans. It began charging a foreign miners' **tax** in 1850. A tax is money paid to a government. Anyone who was not an American had to pay \$20 a month to mine for gold. A second tax of \$3 per month was passed in 1852. It was aimed at Chinese miners.

American miners used violence against foreign miners. They attacked Spanish-speaking miners from Mexico and Chile. They burned down the houses of Chinese miners, and killed some. As a result of all this, Chinese miners left the mines and began working other jobs. Thousands of Mexican miners returned to their homes because of unfair treatment.

Life as a Miner

As soon as miners arrived, they would "stake their claim." A **claim** is an official right to own something, such as an area of land. Miners had the right to mine for gold on their claim. Miners were also called **prospectors**. A prospector is someone who looks for a natural resource.

Searching for gold was hard, physical work. Miners wrote of moving large rocks for hours, digging in dirt, and wading in ice-cold streams all day. They had to use heavy shovels and picks. They lost fingernails and had their fingers crushed.

Panning is one way of finding gold buried in the dirt beneath a river. Miners would scoop up dirt and water from the river in a flat-bottomed pan and swirl it around. The heavier gold would stay in the bottom of the pan and everything else would wash over the side.

2. Reading Check

Identify and underline one way that the government treated foreign miners differently.



Today, tourists can learn how to pan for gold, just like the Gold Rush miners did.

Word Wise

Root Words Root words can help you understand unfamiliar words. For example, the root of the word *hydraulic* is *hydr-* which means “water.” Can you think of another word with this root? Hint: where does a firefighter get the water used to put out a fire?

Academic Vocabulary

individual • *adj.*, single, separate

3. ☒ Reading Check

Underline and **identify** the impact of hydraulic mining on the environment.

Few miners got rich. Some miners ended up with just a pinch of gold dust. A “pinch” was what a person could squeeze between their thumb and forefinger. During the Gold Rush, miners paid for things using gold. If a miner was lucky enough to have found gold nuggets, shopkeepers used scales to weigh them.

A **lode** is a deposit of gold or other metal or mineral trapped in rock. A large area rich in minerals is called a mother lode. There was an important mother lode that ran through the Sierra Nevada.

Hydraulic mining became popular in the 1850s, especially in the mother lode area. This was a way of mining under mountains using water from rivers and streams. Large areas could be mined quickly with fewer miners this way, but it ruined farmland, rivers, and streams.

Prospectors could pan for gold by themselves or in small groups. But it took big companies with lots of money to set up hydraulic mines. **Individual** miners could not compete with them. Some of these frustrated miners simply went home when they realized they were not going to get rich. Some were unable to leave California because they could not afford to travel. Some stayed because they found other opportunities.

California's Mother Lode





Cities and the Economy Grow

The Gold Rush brought sudden wealth to California, and to its major cities in particular. However, California's economy was not ready to meet the needs of thousands of newcomers.

Entrepreneurs Profit

The miners needed everything from mining supplies to tents, food, and clothing. California did not have enough of everything to go around. Prices rose, and miners ended up spending much of what they earned to pay for their supplies. For example, a dozen eggs might cost \$90 in today's dollars!

Entrepreneurs saw an opportunity. They started new businesses to support the miners. They opened restaurants and hotels, and produced and sold supplies and clothing. Levi Strauss, a German Jewish immigrant, did not strike it rich as a gold miner. But his tough denim pants with metal rivets were very big sellers with the miners. His company's jeans are still popular today!

San Francisco: The Golden Gate

Even before the Gold Rush, John C. Fremont named the entrance to San Francisco Bay the "golden gate" because he saw the bay as "a golden gate to trade" with countries in Asia across Pacific Ocean. That was in July of 1846.

San Francisco grew rapidly during the Gold Rush and was a busy, bustling city by 1849.

Quest Connections

Study the picture of San Francisco. In what ways does it show how California changed because of the Gold Rush?



INTERACTIVITY

Study a quote from the Gold Rush era.

In 1847, San Francisco was still a small village with 800 people. The discovery of gold turned it into a city almost overnight. Since it was the main port for travelers coming by ship to the gold fields, it filled up with people from all over the world. By December of 1849, it had 25,000 people.

San Francisco during the Gold Rush was a city dotted with shacks and tents instead of houses. Gambling houses, restaurants, and hotels made plenty of money, so these buildings were nicer than others. Politicians and law enforcement tried to gain control over crime and the growing population.

4. **✓ Reading Check**

Turn to a partner and **discuss** how Sacramento changed during the Gold Rush.

This photo shows a way the Gold Rush impacted California's environment. Trees were cut down for lumber and to make room for mining camps.

Sacramento: Supply Center

In 1841, John Sutter built his fort in what is now Sacramento. But the city did not exist at that time. It was founded in 1849, fueled by the Gold Rush. Miners stopped there to buy supplies as they went into the mother lode area. The economy grew as stores, hotels, and warehouses for supplies were built. Because the city was located on the American and Sacramento Rivers, supplies could be sent easily by boat.

Negative Effects of the Gold Rush

While a few newcomers to California grew rich from the Gold Rush, Northern California's Indians suffered. Natural resources that provided food and shelter were ruined by mining. Miners forced Indians from their homes. If they refused to leave their land, miners burned down their homes and even killed them. Some Indians fought back and raided mining towns and settlements.



In 1850, California passed the Indenture Act. An indentured person is forced to work for someone else for a set period of time. Under this act, California Indians, mostly young people, were forced to work for landowners.

About 100,000 Indians lived in California in 1848 when the Gold Rush started. By 1860, only about 30,000 Indians were left in California. Many died from disease and starvation. Most died from violent attacks.

The Gold Rush hurt the environment. Hydraulic mining **eroded** large areas, turning mountainsides into stones, sand, and mud. These were carried down into valleys by melting snow. Rivers and streams became clogged and polluted. Flooding became a serious problem, hurting farmers. Fish that lived in the rivers died.

Miners needed lumber to build camps, to set up mines, and to build up cities and towns. They cut down trees in the Central Valley to get what they needed.

Academic Vocabulary

erode • v., to gradually destroy

5. ☒ **Reading Check** Fill in the chart by **identifying** the effects of the Gold Rush.



Effects of the Gold Rush

How the Gold Rush Affected...	Effects
San Francisco	
California Indians	
the environment	

Gender During the Gold Rush

Most of the forty-niners were men, but women came to California, too. At this time, many jobs were usually done only by men. But because so many men were involved in mining, women in California often did these jobs. Women mined, owned businesses, and became entrepreneurs.

Sarah Royce came to California in 1849 by wagon train with her husband and two-year-old daughter. When they arrived in California, they were unable to make money from mining and struggled. Royce became a school teacher and published a book called *A Frontier Lady* based on a diary she kept.

Biddy Mason was an entrepreneur. She was an enslaved African American born in Mississippi. She moved to California in 1851 and won her freedom there in 1856. She worked as a nurse and eventually became one of the first African American women to own land in Los Angeles. She became wealthy and used her money to help the poor. She helped found Los Angeles's first African American church.

One person who was born female but lived as a man, worked as a stagecoach driver. Charley Parkhurst was one of the best stagecoach drivers in the business and was well-known throughout California. Stagecoaches are a type of wagon used to carry passengers, goods, or mail. Parkhurst survived more than one robbery and even killed a thief. After driving a stagecoach for almost 30 years, Parkhurst died in 1879.

In 1849, Louise Clapp and her husband moved to San Francisco. They lived in two very rough mining camps that

grew quickly into **boomtowns**.

Boomtowns are towns that suddenly grow because of new business and population. Very few women lived in boomtowns. Clapp wrote letters to her sister describing her life that are still important to historians.



Biddy Mason was a successful entrepreneur.

Stagecoaches were an important way for people to travel and communicate.



Another woman whose writing is considered a valuable historical resource is Maria Angustias de la Guerra. She was a Californio who lived through the Mexican-American War and the Gold Rush. In *Occurrences in Hispanic California*, she describes her experiences during these years.



The writings of Maria Angustias de la Guerra have helped people learn more about life during the Gold Rush.

6. **✓ Reading Check** Imagine you are going to interview a woman who lived during the Gold Rush. **Identify** questions you have about what it was like to live during the Gold Rush. Then turn to a partner and ask them.

✓ Lesson 2 Check

HSS 4.3.3, 4.4.2 **ELA** RI.4.1, RI.4.2, RI.4.3, RF.4.4



INTERACTIVITY

Check your understanding of the key ideas of this lesson.

7. **Distinguish Fact From Fiction** Re-read the section called "Life as a Miner." **Identify** one fact about a miner's daily life.

8. **Evaluate** whether the Gold Rush was a positive or negative event for California. Cite facts to support your answer.

9. **Understand the Quest Connections** **Describe** one event that happened during the Gold Rush era that changed California.

The Great Depression and Migration

**INTERACTIVITY**

Participate in a class discussion to preview the content of this lesson.

**Unlock
The BIG
Question**

I will know how the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl affected life in California.

Vocabulary

stock
depression
unemployed
migrant worker
drought

**Academic
Vocabulary**

represent
create

Jumpstart Activity

Look at this picture, which shows what life was like during the Great Depression. Write three words on index cards or small pieces of paper to describe what you see. Share with a partner and discuss the words you both wrote. Write a caption for the photo using some of the words you and your partner wrote down.



In the early 1900s, California's industries grew. Businesses boomed across the country. In fact, the 1920s are sometimes called the Roaring Twenties, because of how much businesses grew during this period. People had more money to spend on new inventions, such as radios, telephones, cars, and more. They also had money to go to movies and dance halls. But this period of good times came crashing to an end in 1929. What happened? How did it all go wrong?



HSS 4.4.5, 4.4.9
Analysis CST.4, RE.1, HI.3
ELA RI.4.3, RI.4.7



INTERACTIVITY

Explore the key ideas of this lesson.

The Stock Market Crashes

During the 1920s, some Americans bought and sold **stocks**, which are shares or portions of ownership in a company. People buy stocks and then if the company does well, they can sell the stock at a higher price. The stock market is the system through which stocks are bought and sold.

In California, many farm workers and their families lived in camps like this one during the Great Depression.

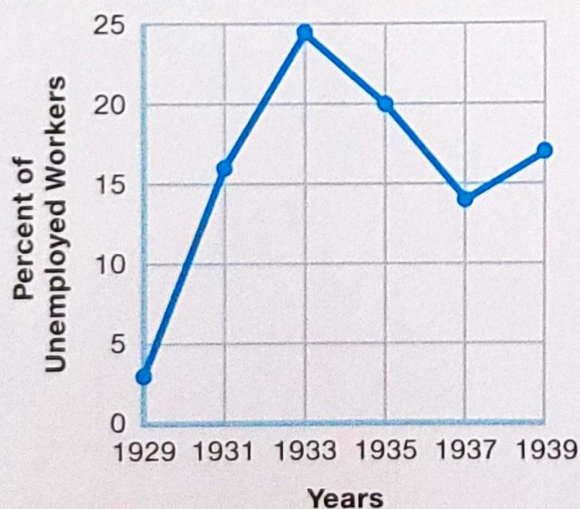




This California newspaper reported on the 1929 stock market crash like most newspapers in the country.

1. **✓ Reading Check** Analyze the graph. Circle the year with the highest unemployment. Talk with a partner about what caused such high unemployment.

Unemployed Americans, 1929–1939



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

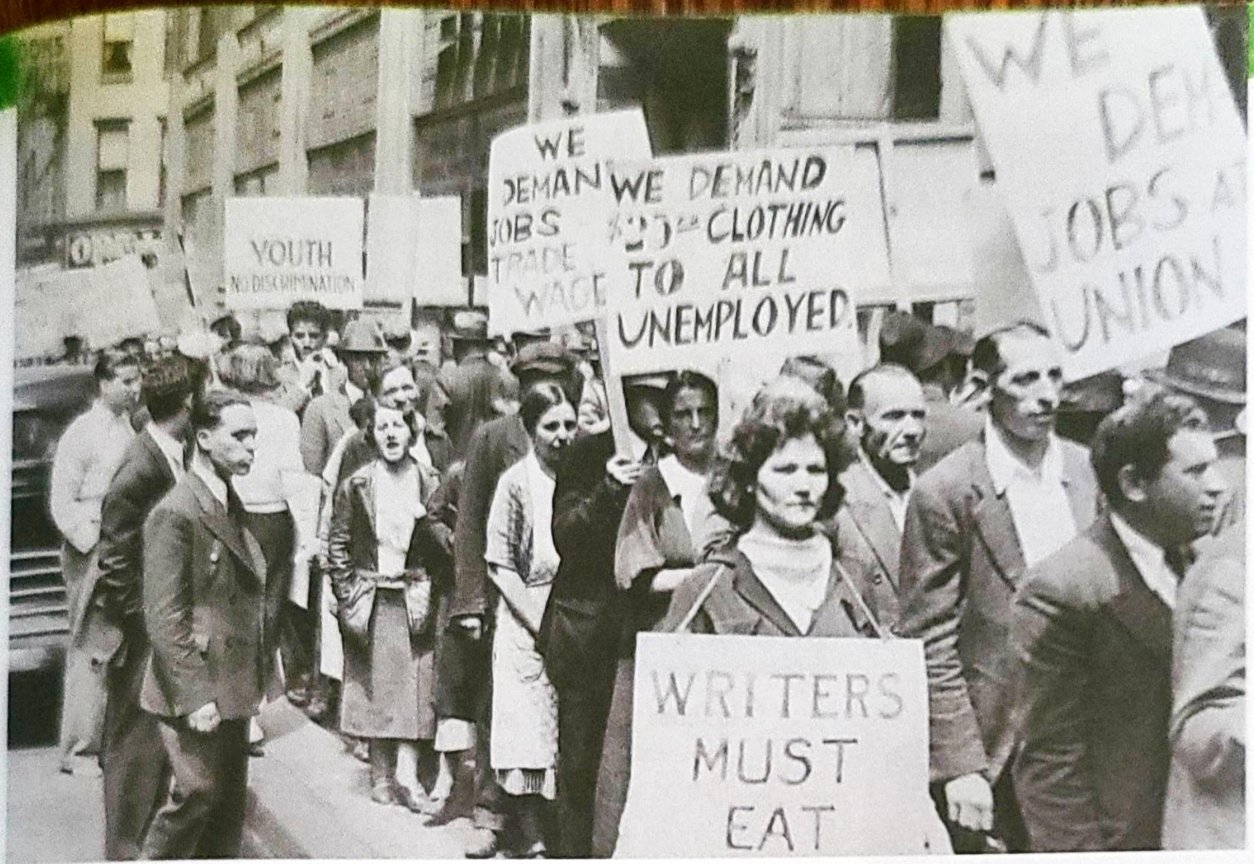
In October 1929, the stock market crashed. Prices dropped sharply and quickly. People rushed to sell stocks that no longer had any value. This crash began the Great Depression. A **depression** is a period of time when business activity slows down.

In California and across the country, banks and businesses closed after the stock market crashed. People lost their jobs and became **unemployed**, or without a job. The unemployment rate, a measure of unemployed workers, rose. Many people lost their savings and could not pay back loans. This led to even more businesses closing and more workers losing their jobs. Many Americans lost their homes and farms. The hard times became worse and worse.

The Great Depression in California

California's workers suffered during the Great Depression. Many lost their jobs. Some Californians blamed the hard times on immigration.

Many government officials and non-immigrant workers believed immigrants were taking the few jobs that were available. They also believed the government should not spend money helping poor immigrants. The state had many large farms that hired **migrant workers**, or people who move from place to place for work. Many Mexican and Filipino immigrants had come to California to find jobs as migrant farm workers.



Citizens protest against unemployment during the Great Depression.

The federal government worked with state governments to force some 1 million Mexicans and Mexican Americans to leave for Mexico in the 1930s, including 400,000 from California. The children of Mexican immigrants, who were United States citizens, were deported along with their parents. In 2005, the government of California issued an apology for the illegal removal of Mexican Americans in the state during the Great Depression.

In 1935, Congress passed the Filipino Repatriation Act. It paid for the transportation of Filipinos in the United States back to the Philippines.

During this period, migrant workers, including Mexicans and Filipinos, fought against discrimination. They participated in strikes. As the Depression worsened, unions, such as the Teamsters, grew and became more successful. Unions are organizations of workers that **represent** their members. They argue for higher wages and better working conditions. In the 1930s, the Teamsters represented mostly truck drivers delivering goods for companies.

Academic Vocabulary

represent • v., to speak for someone

Academic Vocabulary

create • v., cause something to happen

Families from Dust Bowl states moved west to find jobs and a better life.

The Dust Bowl

In the mid-1930s, much of the Great Plains region in the middle of the country experienced a terrible **drought**, or a time of very little rain. The drought **created** serious problems for farmers in Oklahoma, Kansas, and neighboring states. Without rain, the topsoil, or top layer of soil, quickly dried out. When winds blew across dry farmlands, that topsoil blew away and led to huge dust storms. Dust filled the air and settled in thick layers on farms and even inside homes. Farmers could no longer grow crops. The area affected by these dust storms became known as the Dust Bowl.

Primary Source

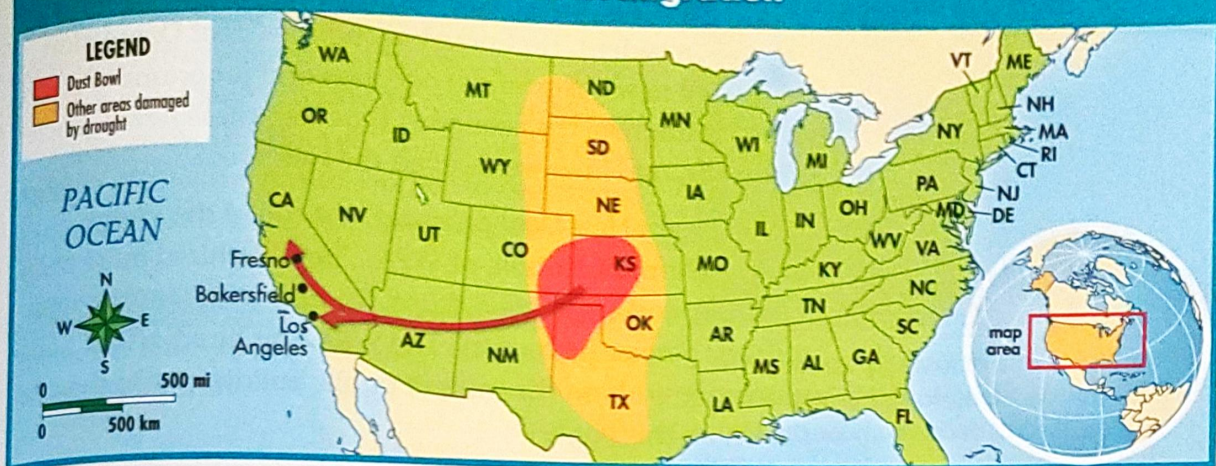
"The land just blew away; we had to go somewhere."

—Kansas preacher, June 1936

A dust storm strikes on the Great Plains



Dust Bowl Migration



2. **Reading Check** Study the map. Which parts of California did people migrate to during the Dust Bowl?

Many farmers in the Dust Bowl area left to find new jobs and homes. By 1940, more than 2 million people had moved out of the Great Plains. About 200,000 of them moved to California to find work on farms and in cities. Whole families packed up and migrated, looking for a new start. They faced tough times. Many did not receive a warm welcome when they arrived. Many could find jobs only as migrant workers. They were paid very little money for the cotton or fruit that they picked. Many migrant workers lived in shacks with no plumbing and few comforts.

The conditions of migrant workers during the Great Depression inspired John Steinbeck to write *The Grapes of Wrath*. This novel told the story of a fictional family's migration from Oklahoma to California. Steinbeck described poverty and homelessness during these years. His story helped readers understand the struggles of this period in American history.

Quest Connections

How do you think children who moved to California because of the Dust Bowl might have felt? Share your response with a partner.



INTERACTIVITY

Study the map and historical photo to learn about a family responding to the challenges of the Dust Bowl.

The New Deal

In 1932, Americans elected Franklin Delano Roosevelt as the new president. He worked to end the Great Depression. He started new government agencies and programs to create jobs and improve the economy. Together, these new agencies, programs, and laws were called the New Deal.

The largest New Deal program was called the Works Progress Administration, or WPA. The WPA hired more than 8 million workers to build dams, bridges, roads, parks, and airports across the country. The WPA also hired artists. Some painted murals on the walls of public buildings, like the one shown on this page.

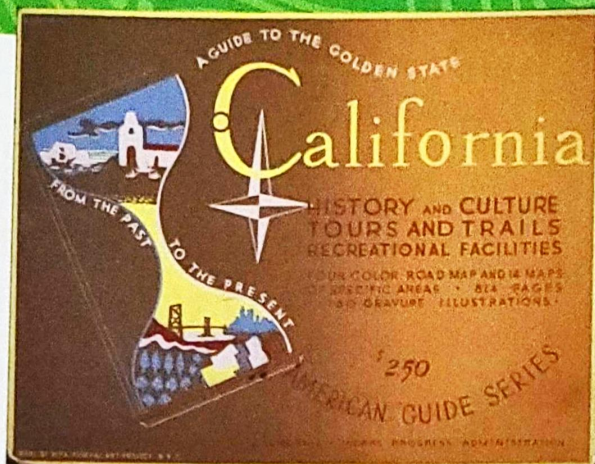
You have already learned about two New Deal projects that helped California, the Central Valley Project and the Hoover Dam. Many dams, canals, and reservoirs were built as part of the Central Valley Project. They provided water for farms, homes, and factories. The project employed many people. It let farmers grow more crops and farm in new areas. The Central Valley Project played a key role in California's economic recovery.

Murals painted by the WPA often focused on work and the economy, like this image of farm workers at Coit Tower in San Francisco.



Thousands of workers helped build the Hoover Dam in these years. The Hoover Dam includes a major power plant that turns waterpower into electricity. Although it is on the Nevada/Arizona border, it provides electricity for Los Angeles, 266 miles away. The Hoover Dam project is an example of how the nation worked to overcome the challenges of the Great Depression.

3. **✓ Reading Check** **Summarize** Discuss with a partner the purpose of the New Deal. Why did President Roosevelt start it?



Artists created posters to advertise New Deal programs and projects, such as this poster attracting tourists to California.

✓ Lesson 2 Check

HSS 4.4.5, 4.4.9 **Analysis** HI.1, HI.3
ELA RI.4.3



INTERACTIVITY

Check your understanding of the key ideas of this lesson.

4. **Cause and Effect** How did the Great Depression affect life in California and the United States?

5. **Summarize** What did Steinbeck write about in his novel *The Grapes of Wrath*? What might you learn from reading his novel?

6. **Understand the Quest** **Connections** Based on what you have learned, why did Dust Bowl Farmers move to California?
