

Sample DBQ Essay
The Great Depression

Performance Task: Hoover's V.S. Roosevelt's Viewpoints

The stock market crash of 1929 proved to be one of America's greatest meltdowns in the history of the United States. The Great Depression, a more longer and severe recession, caused epidemic suffering to the nation. Businesses failed, farmers lost they're land due to a drought that hit the nation, and millions of Americans were left jobless and homeless. This Depression happened to take place during the 1932 presidential election, where you had Republican candidate, Herbert Hoover, and Democratic candidate, Franklin D. Roosevelt running against each other. Both candidates had very contradicting approaches to the Great Depression. Herbert Hoover, the current president at the time of this depression, believed that the U.S economy's problems were the cause of this and felt that there was no need for the government to get involved. This contrasts to Roosevelt, who felt that it was the government's duty to try to get the people of this nation out of the depression, especially in a time where they felt that they could no longer support themselves.

Hoover's declaration as president had only been a couple of months since the 1929 stock market crash. He speculated that problems like these were beyond the governmental control and felt that Americans should try to give themselves relief. A quote to support this statement is in *Document 1 of The Great Depression and The New Deal*, which states "My own conviction...that if we break down this sense of... individual generosity... we have not only impaired something infinitely valuable in the life of the American people but have struck at the roots of self-government." Hoover is trying to claim that people should make an effort of giving themselves aid and support because if not, than Americans will

become more reliant on the federal government to solve they're problems, rather than trying to fix them on their own, which is what Hoover initially wanted. His work was mainly focused on giving indirect relief from individual states and from private sectors as *Document 4 of The New Deal Homework Assignment #7* states, "He didn't want the government to set the minimum wage laws, or to employ people themselves. Instead, he called many business leaders and got them to promise to keep workers' wages high." Hoover attempted to keep a high and steady wage for workers without the use of governmental enforcement, in the hopes of bringing recovery to the nation. However, this was not the case because many Americans started to see a stalemate and demanded change in the way they saw society. The graph in *Document 2 of The Great Depression and The New Deal* shows how the year 1931, was the first year when more than 10% of the labor force was unemployed, the year that Hoover was still in office.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, the 32nd president of the United States, won the 1932 presidential election by a landslide, defeating his competition, Herbert Hoover. He knew what Americans what were looking for, which was change, and gave that to them. Roosevelt offered relief, reform, and recovery with his series of federal programs known as The New Deal. *Document 3 of The Great Depression and the New Deal* states, "The first is the enrollment of workers... for such public employment can be quickly started..." Roosevelt's proposal as a step towards unemployment relief was to immediately put people to work. Not only did he get the government to help solve this unemployment situation in America with these series of programs, but also tried to boost the morals of people. Another citation from *Document 3 of The Great Depression and The New Deal* states "More important... than the material gains will be the moral and spiritual value of such

work.” Besides money, Franklin is saying that people, who are getting the chance to work, will be able to feel more enthusiastic of going there for their personal standards and principals. Such programs of Roosevelt helped bring the nation out of this depression. For example, the Social Security Act, which provided payments for workers when they retired, gave benefits to the unemployed, along with providing aid to the blind and physically disabled. *Document 7 of The Great Depression and The New Deal* states “Among there was, and is, the security of the men, women, and children of the Nation against certain hazards and vicissitudes of life.” This Act was passed to help Americans feel secure about situations like this, giving them confidence that they will no longer have to be worry about future depressions.

Overall, it is clear that the 1932 presidential election caused a dramatic shift to the economy of the United States. Candidates Roosevelt and Hoover tried to respectively end this issue with different minds sets. They’re strategies on how to end this depression were the key to helping people prosper and make something good out of this depression.