

HOOVER ADDRESSES THE ISSUE OF THE ECONOMY

CONTEXT: In 1928, Herbert Hoover was elected president on a promise to ensure the country's booming prosperity. A little over a year later, the stock market crashed, and the country was plunged into a deep economic depression. In a meeting with railway executives in November 1929, Hoover spoke about the upcoming challenges facing the U.S.

"We have also to deal naturally with some unemployment in the semi-necessity trades. But the real problem and the interpretation of it is one of the maintenance of employment. This is not a question of **bolstering** stock markets or stock prices of anything of that kind. We are dealing with the vital question of maintaining employment in the U.S. and consequently the comfort and **standard of living** of the people and their ability to buy goods and proceed in the normal course of their lives. So that the purpose of this movement is to **disabuse** the public mind of the notion that there has been any serious or vital interruption in our economic system, and that it is going to proceed in the ordinary, normal manner, and to get that impression over not by **preachment** and talks but by definite and positive acts on the part of industry and business and the Government and others. As I said before, I do not believe that words ever convince a discouraged person in these situations. The thing that brings him back is courage and the natural sight of other industries and other men going ahead with their programs and business.

So I wanted you to get that background upon it all, because it seriously concerns the press to give the confidence to the public that the business fabric is now organizing itself, taking steps on its own responsibility to carry on; that it is going to go even farther and stretch itself to meet any possible condition of employment is the thing that will give courage to the public rather than to say to them every day that they should not be alarmed. So that I am trying to get this problem across by action in different industries and other groups rather than by too much talking, and, therefore, I don't want to talk about it. I want the action to speak for itself. These conclusions are not a statement from me. That is the conclusion of those men who were present."

**** from "The Economy and Public Confidence", by Herbert Hoover, November 19, 1929**

1. Determining Meaning: What is the central message of this speech? What is Hoover asking?

2. Analyzing: *Why does Hoover believe that maintaining employment will best benefit the American people? Which line of the speech best answers the question?*

3. Evaluating Evidence: *What type of document is this? How does this information help you understand the document? Be specific.*

4. Determining Context: *How does the setting and audience for the speech help emphasize Hoover's message?*

5. Civics: *How does this excerpt illustrate President Hoover's attitudes about the limits of the federal government and the U.S. economy? Explain.*

6. Determining Meaning: *What did President Hoover mean when he said, "I do not believe that words ever convince a discouraged person in these situations. The thing that brings him back is courage and the natural sight of other industries and other men going ahead with their programs and business"? Why might these words have been important? Explain.*

DIRECTIONS:

- 1) **Read** the context provided above the source.
- 2) **Number** each paragraph (if there is more than one).
- 3) As you read the source, **highlight** in **YELLOW** important information (main ideas, description of people or places, facts, or other evidence).
- 4) As you read the source, **circle** in **GREEN** key terms, dates, historical events, names, places, and words that signal relationship (“this led to…” or “as a result of…”). Words that are repeated for emphasis should also be circled. *If the phrase is longer than 3-4 words it should be highlighted in yellow not circled in green.*
- 5) As you read the source, **box** words in **ORANGE** with which you are unfamiliar. In the margins, **define** these words. Remember, this is an exercise in building your vocabulary. So, if you can use context clues to figure out what the word means, but can’t define it on its own, you need to box and define that word. **Words that are in bold MUST be boxed and defined! (Use a hard copy dictionary or www.merriam-webster.com)**
- 6) **Answer** the questions provided about the source. Your responses should be written in complete, thoughtful sentences. *Be sure to explain your responses where required!*