

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Enrichment: Cover Story***Let Us Now Praise Famous Men***

During the summer of 1936, journalist James Agee and photographer Walter Evans spent six weeks with tenant farmers in rural Alabama. Originally, they were employed by *Fortune* magazine to write a brief article about southern sharecropping, but both Agee and Evans became so involved with their subjects that they combined their prose and photography into a much larger work, entitled *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. First published in 1941, the book included 31 photographs taken by Evans and a passionate account of the tenant farmers' lives written by Agee. At the time, many contemporary journalists criticized Agee's reporting as too subjective. Still, Agee's sympathetic investigation and Evans's naturalistic photos inspired many future journalists and photographers to delve more deeply into their subjects.

Your assignment: Research sharecropping and tenant farming during the Great Depression. Use the information you gather to write an objective magazine article like the one that was originally assigned to Agee and design a magazine cover for the article.

Suggested materials: computer and software or art supplies to assemble the magazine cover and article; note cards for organizing research

Suggested procedures:

1. On a sheet of paper or on note cards, write questions about tenant farming during the Great Depression that you want to research. Then use the library and school-approved websites to find answers to your questions.
2. Mark the information that you gather as facts or opinions so that you can prepare an objective article, and record the source for each piece of information that you collect.
3. Review and organize your note cards to see how they relate to one another. Assemble the note cards in the order in which you want to compose your article. Then write an outline.
4. Identify information that might work well as a graph, chart, map, or table.
5. Draft and revise your article. Be sure to include an introduction that will grab readers' attention and a conclusion that pulls together the rest of the article.
6. Examine modern magazines to see how their covers and inside pages are designed.
7. Select a photograph to use as the cover, and select or make any other images, such as charts and graphs, to use with the article. Use the storyboarding space on the next page to sketch a rough design for the cover and the article. Write a title for your article.
8. Reread your article and revise it. Ask yourself whether the article contains accurate, objective information and whether it conveys the information that you want to share. Make sure that you have attributed quotations, statistics, photos, and other information to the appropriate sources and that you have included captions for all images.

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Directions: Sketch a design for your cover and your article below. Be sure to include a title and mark any images that you want to include. Then, use a computer or art supplies to make the cover and format your article. Share your cover and article with the class, explaining why your article is more objective than Agee's book and why you think Agree took a more subjective approach to reporting on the lives of the tenant farmers.

