



Dust Bowl

In the 1930s, a prolonged drought, combined with poor farming practices that loosened the soil, caused massive amounts of topsoil to be blown across the landscape. Whole farming communities were destroyed as thousands of acres of farmland became useless. The southern Plains became known as the Dust Bowl, although the name also refers to the tremendous walls of dirt that blew across the landscape, sometimes covering buildings, interfering with breathing, and burying livestock. John Steinbeck's novel, "The Grapes of Wrath," tells the story of families in the area affected by the conditions. The loss of so much valuable topsoil to wind erosion stirred the federal government of the United States to action. The government established the Soil Conservation Service, now called the Natural Resources Conservation Service, to protect the soils of the country.

ART: Question 1

What is happening in the picture?

Question 2

What do you think people living in the town thought when they saw the wall of dust coming at them?

Question 3

Describe three ways that dust might have affected people directly.

Question 4

Describe three ways in which nature (including animals, sunlight, and plants) might be affected by the dust.