

**WR.2**  
**INFORMATIVE**

**Lesson 5 Reading Sources**

**Introduction**

In this lesson, students read and analyze the article “Firing, Not Hiring” by Nancy Hayes, which describes the effects of the Great Depression on average Americans and explains some of its causes. Building on skills developed in previous lessons, students work in pairs or small groups to read and analyze the article. Students add to their Subtopics and Evidence Charts or their own organizing tools, recording the subtopics and evidence from the article “Firing, Not Hiring.” Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: Choose the subtopic that you think is best supported in the article. What evidence does the author use to develop the subtopic? Explain whether the evidence is relevant and sufficient to develop the subtopic.

For homework, students gather and review their annotations, notes, and charts for the texts they have read to prepare for the following lesson’s prewriting activity.

**Standards**

Assessed Standard(s)	
RI.9-10.3	Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.
Addressed Standard(s)	
W.9-10.5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
W.9-10.9.b	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.  b. Apply <i>grades 9–10 Reading standards</i> to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning”).

## Assessment

Assessment(s)
<p>Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson. Students respond to the following prompt, citing textual evidence to support analysis and inferences drawn from the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choose the subtopic that you think is best supported in the article. What evidence does the author use to develop the subtopic? Explain whether the evidence is relevant and sufficient to develop the subtopic.</li> </ul>
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify a subtopic (e.g., The subtopic that states how the Depression caused a “downward economic spiral” (par. 6) is the best supported subtopic in the article.).</li> <li>Identify the evidence used to develop the subtopic (e.g., The author describes how people went “without new clothes, furniture, and other goods,” which resulted in businesses that served these customers losing “confidence,” closing stores, and firing people (par. 6). Because people lost their jobs, they had even less money to spend on products, which made the situation even worse.).</li> <li>Explain whether the evidence is relevant and sufficient to develop the subtopic (e.g., Because the evidence is about the different aspects of the “downward economic spiral” (par. 6), it is directly relevant to the subtopic. By describing the circular effect in detail, the author uses sufficient evidence to develop the subtopic.).</li> </ul>

## Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>deflation (n.) – a decrease in the amount of available money or credit in an economy, causing prices to go down</li> <li>speculators (n.) – people who invest money in ways that could produce a large profit but that also involve a lot of risk</li> <li>stocks (n.) – shares of the value of a company which can be bought, sold, or traded as investments</li> <li>congregated (v.) – came together in a group or crowd</li> </ul>
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None.</li> </ul>

Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>credit (n.) – money that a bank or business will allow a person to use and then pay back in the future</li> <li>postponed (v.) – decided that something which had been planned for a particular time will be done at a later time instead</li> </ul>

## Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<b>Standards &amp; Text:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standards: RI.9-10.3, W.9-10.5, W.9-10.9.b</li> <li>Text: “Firing, Not Hiring” by Nancy Hayes</li> </ul>	
<b>Learning Sequence:</b>	
1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda	1. 5%
2. Homework Accountability	2. 20%
3. Reading and Discussion	3. 40%
4. Organizing Reading Notes	4. 15%
5. Quick Write	5. 15%
6. Closing	6. 5%

## Materials

- Copies of “Firing, Not Hiring” by Nancy Hayes for each student
  - Student copies of the Subtopics and Evidence Chart (refer to WR.2 Lesson 4) (optional)—students may need additional blank copies
  - Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to WR.2 Lesson 4)
  - Copies of FDR’s Second Inaugural Address for each student (optional) (<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5105/>)
- ① Consider numbering the paragraphs of “Firing, Not Hiring” and FDR’s Second Inaugural Address before the lesson.

## Learning Sequence

How to Use the Learning Sequence	
Symbol	Type of Text & Interpretation of the Symbol
10%	Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take.
no symbol	Plain text indicates teacher action.
	<b>Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.</b>
	<i>Italicized text indicates a vocabulary word.</i>
▶	Indicates student action(s).
☞	Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions.
ⓘ	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

### Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda. In this lesson, students work in pairs or small groups to read and analyze the article “Firing, Not Hiring” by Nancy Hayes. Students then organize their reading notes, identifying and charting the subtopics and evidence presented in the article.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

### Activity 2: Homework Accountability

20%

Instruct students to take out their responses to the previous lesson’s homework assignment. (Reread and annotate the entirety of “Digging In” by Robert J. Hastings, identifying the subtopics and evidence in the memoir.)

Instruct students to form pairs or small groups to share the subtopics and evidence they identified.

- ☞ Student responses should include:
  - **Subtopic:** The narrator’s family survived the Great Depression because of “Dad’s willingness to take any job and Mom’s ability to stretch every available dollar” (par. 2).
  - **Evidence:** The WPA, or Works Progress Administration, provided occasional work.
  - **Evidence:** Most of the jobs were “those you made for yourself” (par. 2).
  - **Subtopic:** The narrator’s family cut back on everything possible but did not lose their house.
  - **Evidence:** The family was able to keep their house by making a deal with “the loan company” and borrowing money to pay them (par. 6).
  - **Subtopic:** The family saved money in many different ways.

- **Evidence:** They turned off lights they weren't using and patched their shoes in the winter.
- **Evidence:** The narrator's mother would buy the narrator books from someone ahead of him in class.
  
- **Subtopic:** The narrator writes, "whatever was free was our recreation" (par. 14) which means that for fun, the family did things that did not cost money.
- **Evidence:** The narrator's father sang songs to him.
  
- **Subtopic:** The narrator's parents made sure they had enough money to survive.
- **Evidence:** When the "cupboard was literally bare of money," "Dad ... came out with a jar in which he had saved a few nickels and dimes for such an emergency" (par. 16).
- **Evidence:** The narrator's mother tells him that his father "always has a little dab of money put back somewhere" (par. 17).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Students may use their Subtopics and Evidence Charts to record the subtopics and evidence they identify and discuss.
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Instruct students to remain in their pairs or small groups and discuss the following question:

**Use evidence from "Digging In" to describe three ways the Great Depression affected people's lives.**

🗨 Student responses may include:

- This text shows in detail how difficult life was for people who lived through the Great Depression. Since there was no steady work, people had to show a "willingness to take any job" (par. 2) to make enough money to buy food to eat and keep the electricity running.
- This article shows that even though life was very difficult in the Great Depression, some people were able to keep hope and find enjoyment with each other by finding free entertainment and doing activities together, such as when the narrator says, "whatever was free was our recreation" (par. 14).
- People felt that they always had to have something extra stored away for difficult times, as when the narrator learns that his father "saved a few nickels and dimes for ... an emergency" (par. 16).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

### Activity 3: Reading and Discussion

40%

Instruct students to remain in their pairs or small groups from the previous activity. Distribute a copy of the article “Firing, Not Hiring” by Nancy Hayes to each student. Explain to students that this article, similar to the memoir “Digging In,” describes the effects of the Great Depression through the perspective of someone who lived through it.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If necessary to support comprehension and fluency, consider using a masterful reading of the article for the lesson.
- ① The following activity addresses the expectations of W.9-10.9.b.

Instruct students to read paragraphs 1–5 of “Firing, Not Hiring” (from “Sixteen-year-old Gordon Parks—who would later become” to “traded at a fraction of their worth”). Instruct students to annotate for items they find interesting and engaging, such as an unusual word choice, beautiful phrase, illuminating analysis, or surprising fact.

Provide students with the following definitions: *deflation* means “a decrease in the amount of available money or credit in an economy, causing prices to go down,” *speculators* means “people who invest money in ways that could produce a large profit but that also involve a lot of risk,” and *stocks* are “shares of the value of a company which can be bought, sold, or traded as investments.”

- ① Students may be familiar with these words. Consider asking students to volunteer the definitions before providing them to the class.
  - ▶ Students write the definitions of *deflation*, *speculators*, and *stocks* on their copies of the text or in the appropriate section of their vocabulary journals.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definition: *credit* means “money that a bank or business will allow a person to use and then pay back in the future.”
  - ▶ Students write the definition of *credit* on their copies of the text or in the appropriate section of their vocabulary journals.

After students read and annotate the section, post or project the following set of questions for students to discuss before sharing out with the class. Instruct students to annotate the article for subtopics and evidence as they discuss each question, remembering to include short notes or labels to record their thinking.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If the skill of annotation is new or challenging to students, consider posting or projecting the text and asking student volunteers to share their annotations for subtopics and evidence. Consider posting or projecting the volunteered annotations.

**Whose words are quoted in the second paragraph?**

- The words are from “sixteen-year-old” Gordon Parks, a man who “would later become an award-winning photographer, film director, musician, writer, and activist” (par. 1).

**What is this person’s reaction to the news reports he reads? What event changes his reaction?**

- At first, Gordon Parks “couldn’t imagine such financial disaster touching [his] small world” (par. 2). He believes that it will only affect “the rich” (par. 2). Then, the narrator finds himself “without a job,” which forces him to realize that the “Market Crash[.]” will affect him and “millions of others” (par. 2).

**Who says the words “We’re firing, not hiring” (par. 2)? What is the significance of this phrase?**

- Potential employers say, “We’re firing, not hiring.” Parks tells how the phrase was repeated “again” (par. 2), which shows that many employers were getting rid of their employees instead of hiring new ones. This demonstrates how severely the Great Depression affected people’s ability to get jobs.

**What was “Black Thursday” (par. 3)? What effect did it have on people’s lives?**

- Black Thursday was the day the stock market crashed, which happened because prices kept going “lower and lower” and people were selling stocks “for a small fraction” of what they had paid for them (par. 3). The author explains how on Black Thursday “many people ... lost large fortunes” (par. 3).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

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Instruct students to read paragraphs 6–14 of “Firing, Not Hiring” (from “It was not long before one person’s misfortune” to “the Depression left deep emotional, psychological, and physical scars on a generation of Americans”). Instruct students to annotate for items they find interesting and engaging, such as an unusual word choice, beautiful phrase, illuminating analysis, or surprising fact.

Provide students with the following definition: *congregated* means “came together in a group or crowd.”

① Students may be familiar with this word. Consider asking students to volunteer the definition before providing it to the class.

- ▶ Students write the definition of *congregated* on their copies of the text or in the appropriate section of their vocabulary journals.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definition: *postponed* means “decided that something which had been planned for a particular time will be done at a later time instead.”

- ▶ Students write the definition of *postponed* on their copies of the text or in the appropriate section of their vocabulary journals.

After students read and annotate the section, post or project the following set of questions for students to discuss before sharing out with the class. Instruct students to annotate the article for subtopics and evidence as they discuss each question, remembering to include short notes or labels to record their thinking.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If the skill of annotation is new or challenging to students, consider posting or projecting the text and asking student volunteers to share their annotations for subtopics and evidence. Consider posting or projecting the volunteered annotations.

**What is a “downward economic spiral” (par. 6) according to the article? What effect did this cycle have on the people who lived through it?**

- ☞ The author describes how people went “without new clothes, furniture, and other goods” and how the businesses that served these customers “lost confidence” and began closing stores (par. 6). So people lost their jobs and, therefore, had even less money to spend on products, which made the situation even worse.

**What is the author’s judgment of the effectiveness of Hoover’s response to the Great Depression (par. 7–8)? What evidence does the author use to support her claim?**

- ☞ The author writes that “Hoover ... felt that people should be self-reliant” (par. 7), and was therefore reluctant to provide government support. Hoover was criticized for “providing public funds to pay for food for farmers’ livestock” but not for people (par. 7). The author determines that Hoover’s “Organization on Unemployment Relief” had “little effect” on the people suffering during the Great Depression (par. 8).

**What evidence does the author provide in paragraphs 9 and 10 to demonstrate what people had to do because of the Great Depression? What overall sense does this evidence provide of the effects the Great Depression on the people who lived through it?**

- ☞ The author describes how some of the unemployed started selling apples on credit, and that “men, women, and children selling five-cent apples on street corners became a familiar sight” (par. 9). The author also describes how people “found themselves and their furniture on the sidewalk” because they were unable to make rent and therefore “constructed makeshift

‘homes’ of scrap wood” (par. 10). These details show how harsh were the effects of the Great Depression on the people who lived through it.

**In paragraphs 13 and 14, how does the author describe the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the effect he had on people?**

- The author states that 1932 was the “worst year of the Depression” and “people were ready for a change” (par. 13). The people “hoped that a new national leader might solve the riddle of the Depression” (par. 13). Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected because he “promised” to “solve the riddle of” or end the Great Depression (par. 13). The author states that “the new president’s efforts to end the Depression gave new hope to many people” even though the Depression continued into the “early 1940s” (par. 14).

**What were the lasting effects of the Great Depression on the people who lived through it?**

- The author states that “people never forgot the hardships they had suffered” (par. 14). She explains that the Depression left “deep emotional, psychological, and physical scars” on the people who lived through it (par. 14).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

## Activity 4: Organizing Reading Notes

**15%**

① The following activity addresses the expectations of W.9-10.5 and W.9-10.9.b.

Instruct students to remain in their pairs or small groups. Instruct students to identify and discuss the subtopics and evidence in the article “Firing, Not Hiring,” using their own organizing tools or their Subtopics and Evidence Chart to take notes.

- See the Model Subtopics and Evidence Chart at the end of the lesson for possible student responses.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses. Then, instruct student pairs or groups to discuss the relative importance of each subtopic. Instruct students to star the subtopics they think are particularly important or relevant to the topic of their own informative papers. Remind students that there are not necessarily right and wrong answers to identifying the relative importance of subtopics. Students should discuss what makes evidence relevant and sufficient to them.

## Activity 5: Quick Write

**15%**

Instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

**Choose the subtopic that you think is best supported in the article. What evidence does the author use to develop the subtopic? Explain whether the evidence is relevant and sufficient to develop the subtopic.**

Remind students to use the Short Response Rubric and Checklist to guide their written responses.

- ▶ Students listen and read the Quick Write prompt.

① Display the prompt for students to see, or provide the prompt in hard copy.

Transition to the independent Quick Write.

- ▶ Students independently answer the prompt using evidence from the text.
- ☛ See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.

## Activity 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to gather and review their annotations, notes, and charts for the texts they have read to prepare for the following lesson's prewriting activity for their own informative paper.

- ① Depending on the strengths and abilities of the class, consider assigning students the additional text, *FDR's Second Inaugural Address*.
- ▶ Students follow along.

## Homework

Gather and review your annotations, notes, and charts for the texts you have read to prepare for the following lesson's prewriting activity for your own informative paper.

## Model Subtopics and Evidence Chart

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Class:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<p><b>Directions:</b> Record the subtopics and evidence from each text in this chart. A <i>subtopic</i> is “a topic that is one of the parts or divisions of the main topic” and <i>evidence</i> is “the textual facts, events, and ideas cited to develop a topic or subtopic.” Place a star next to the subtopics you think are most important.</p>					

<b>Text:</b> “Firing, Not Hiring” by Nancy Hayes	
<b>Topic:</b> The effects of the Great Depression on people during that time	
<b>Claim:</b> The Great Depression “dramatically changed the lives of many people” (par. 3).	
Subtopics	Evidence
The Great Depression affected everyone, not only the rich.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“millions of [people] across the nation” were “without a job” (par. 2)</li> <li>Store owners said, “We’re firing, not hiring” (par. 2).</li> </ul>
“Black Thursday,” the day the stock market crashed on October 24, 1929, caused many to lose their fortunes (par. 3).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“As stock prices dropped lower and lower that day, speculators desperately cashed in their stocks for whatever they were worth.” (par. 3)</li> <li>“Many people who had invested heavily in the stock market lost large fortunes.” (par. 3)</li> </ul>
The Great Depression caused a “downward economic spiral” (par. 6).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“As people began to cut down on their expenses ... businesses that depended on these customers were affected.” (par. 6)</li> <li>“Owners and managers ... laid off employees or closed stores ... altogether.” (par. 6)</li> </ul>
Millions of people were unemployed and forced to find ways to survive without jobs (par. 9).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“For the next few years, men, women, and children selling five-cent apples on street corners became a familiar sight across the land.” (par. 9)</li> <li>“In larger cities, the homeless congregated in abandoned lots and constructed makeshift ‘homes’ of scrap wood.” (par. 10)</li> <li>Some people “wound up begging for food on street corners” (par. 11).</li> </ul>
The election of Franklin D. Roosevelt was a turning point in the Great	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roosevelt “promised” to “solve the riddle of the Depression” (par. 13).</li> </ul>

Depression.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roosevelt’s programs “gave new hope to many people” (par. 14).</li> </ul>
There were many negative effects of the Great Depression for the people who lived through it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “people never forgot the hardships they had suffered” (par. 14)</li> <li>• “The memories of the Depression left deep emotional, psychological, and physical scars on a generation of Americans.” (par. 14)</li> </ul>