

Depth Study M - The Impact of the Great Depression on Britain, 1929-1939

SOURCE A: Part of an interview with the wife of a shipyard worker broadcast on the wireless in 1935.

If only he had work, just think how wonderful it would be. In the twelve years since we were married my husband has worked eighteen months. When we were married he was really handsome, but now he's just skin and bones.

SOURCE B: A government table showing the increases in numbers of workers in some industries from 1930-39.

Car Manufacture	12%
Electrical	24%
Bicycles.....	22%
Chemicals.....	15%
Man-made fibres and materials.....	33%

SOURCE C: A photograph of unemployed men in 1936.



SOURCE D: Part of the book 'The Long Weekend', which was published in 1959 and described the 1930s.

It was a time of new roads and council houses, of Woolworths and Marks and Spencer. The price of a car fell by about a half and by 1939 there were more than 2,000,000 on the road. New factories sprang in many places, near Birmingham, Coventry and St Albans and around London. The cinema boomed with record attendances every week. In 1938 Billy Butlin opened his first holiday camp at Skegness to cater for the hundreds of thousands of people who could afford to go on holiday for the first time.

SOURCE E: Part of an interview with a shopkeeper in 1932, this was published in the book 'Hungry Britain'.

Last October I took £19.84 a week for bread. Last week I took £7.33. I now sell forty-eight packets of margarine a week; I used to sell twenty-four a day. I am not selling any cheese at all, nor hardly any tea. I used to sell ninety-six pints of milk a day. Now I sell about one pint a day.

SOURCE F: Part of an interview with the wife of an unemployed worker broadcast on the wireless during the 1930s.

My husband never changes his dole money, but although he doesn't keep a halfpenny pocket money, we still can't manage. And we don't waste nothing. There's no enjoyment comes out of our money – no pictures, no papers, no sports. Everything is patched and mended in our house.
