



## Dust Bowl Disasters

**Directions:** Read the nonfiction passage below. Pay attention to the **causes** (reasons something happened) and **effects** (results that followed). Answer the questions that follow.

### The Dust Bowl of the 1930s

During the early 1900s, farmers on the Great Plains plowed millions of acres of grassland to plant wheat. At first, the land seemed to produce endless crops. However, the natural grasses that once held the soil in place were gone.

When a severe drought struck in the 1930s, the dry, unprotected soil began to blow away in the strong winds. Massive dust storms, sometimes called “black blizzards,” swept across states like Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. The storms darkened skies for hours and buried homes, fences, and even tractors.

These harsh conditions destroyed farms and forced thousands of families to leave their homes in search of work and better living conditions. Many migrated west to California, hoping for new opportunities but often facing poverty and difficult labor.

1. Why was removing the natural grasses such an important cause of the Dust Bowl?
2. How did the drought make the situation worse?
3. What were two major effects of the dust storms on families?
4. Based on the passage, how might the Dust Bowl have changed farming practices in the future?