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Activities

Parched Earth, Black Blizzards

Name: _____ Date: _____

What happens when the rains stop? If drought is severe enough, it can trigger a disastrous chain of events. Topsoil blows away. Winds kick up thick clouds of choking dust. Crops die. That's what happened during the Dust Bowl in the 1930s. You'll learn more about the disaster in this Planet Diary activity.

Directions

- No one described the Dust Bowl better than folksinger Woody Guthrie. Listen to his Dust Bowl Blues. Then answer question 1 in the Workspace.
- How widespread was drought in the 1930s? View these animated historical drought maps. Click the colored map on the right to see the drought year by year. Use the forward button or slider to advance to 1933. Notice the colors of the map. Advance one year at a time until 1940. Notice how drought conditions change in different parts of the country each year. Use the colors on the maps to answer question 2.
- Visit NOAA's North American Drought page. Read the quote from author John Steinbeck, then the three paragraphs below the quote. Answer questions 3 and 4.
- Take a closer look at the Dust Bowl Drought. Use the information to answer the last two questions.

Workspace

1. How does Mr. Guthrie describe the Dust Bowl conditions?

2. Which part of the country was hit hardest by drought in the years between 1933 and 1940?

3. How did the Dust Bowl affect the people of the Great Plains?

4. How do scientists learn about droughts that occurred in the past?

5. What caused the dust bowl effect?

6. What lessons were learned from the Dust Bowl drought?

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