



K-W-L Chart Example

In this example, the teacher piques the curiosity of his students by showing them a documentary video about the **New Deal** enacted by the Roosevelt administration in 1933 in response to the **Great Depression**.

He writes 'Great Depression' on the board. Underneath the title, he draws three columns and writes 'What We Know' in the first column. He explains to the students that they are going to be using a K-W-L chart to help them with a reading about the Great Depression that will follow. He explains that it is important to first find out what they think they know.

"This might help us think of ways that the author organizes the information. Another thing that we will do is to generate some questions about what you would like to know about the effects of the Great Depression. Then, during our reading, we are going to make notes to see if we are able to answer our questions, and we might be able to jot down other new important information as well. We will probably still have some unanswered questions, but we can address these later."

Then he asks his students how many have heard of the Great Depression or have read anything about it in literature, such as Steinbeck's **The Grapes of Wrath**. He asks students to share some of the facts that they think they know about the Great Depression. As they brainstorm information, the teacher writes their ideas on the board.

K – What We Know		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• stock market crash• 1929• unemployment• banks closed• suicide rate increased• the 'dust bowl'• not all are the same• too many immigrants without jobs		

The teacher recognizes that not all of his students' ideas are correct. However, he includes their answers on the chart. In order for them to think critically about their responses he asks questions about where and how they learned their information. When the students have completed their reading, he will clear up any misconceptions that the students have not self-corrected.

After the teacher records his students' responses, he holds up a book. He says to his students, "The title of this book is **The Great Depression and the New Deal**. We are going to read the first few chapters about how economic policies after the first World War contributed to the financial collapse. What kinds of information do you think the author might have included in this?"

He writes a new heading under the What We Know column, and records their ideas.



K – What We Know		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stock market crash • 1929 • unemployment • banks closed • suicide rate increased • the 'dust bowl' • not all are the same • too many immigrants without jobs 		
Categories of Information We Expect to Use:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • definition of economic depression versus recession • why the banks failed • what happened as World War II approached • who was to blame • the reliance on gold • social policy • the homeless • what we can do to prevent a recurrence 		

The teacher reminds his students that books such as the one he is holding about the Great Depression are written to provide information that they might need or want. He asks them to think about what they would like to know about government policy and its impact on the economy. *"What are some things that you don't already know or aren't quite sure of?"*

He labels the middle column 'What We Want to Know' and records their questions.

K – What We Know	W – What We Want to Know	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stock market crash • 1929 • unemployment • banks closed • suicide rate increased • the 'dust bowl' • not all are the same • too many immigrants without jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What causes recession? • How do countries finance their government programs? • Why was the war a factor? • How does this compare to more recent economic events? • What are some things we can do to ensure it doesn't happen again? 	



The teacher conducts a read-aloud of the first few pages of the book, pausing to state what he is thinking about as he reads, and prompting questions from students.

Before distributing copies of the book to the students for further reading, the teacher writes 'What We Learned and Still Need to Learn' in the third column of the chart.

K – What We Know	W – What We Want to Know	L – What We Learned and Still Need to Learn
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stock market crash • 1929 • unemployment • banks closed • suicide rate increased • the 'dust bowl' • not all are the same • too many immigrants without jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What causes recession? • How do countries finance their government programs? • Why was the war a factor? • How does this compare to more recent economic events? • What are some things we can do to ensure it doesn't happen again? 	
Categories of Information We Expect to Use:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • definition of economic depression versus recession • why the banks failed • what happened as World War II approached • who was to blame • the reliance on gold • social policy • the homeless • what we can do to prevent a recurrence 		

The teacher says, "Now that you have thought about what you know and what you would like to know, we are going to see how many questions we can answer and what other important information about the Depression there are in the first few chapters of the book. I'm sure we will learn all kinds of interesting facts."

The teacher gives students copies of the book, and their own K-W-L chart to complete. They are asked to fill in as much as they deem important before the next class.

At the next class, when they have completed their reading, he returns to the chart on the board.

"How many of the questions were you able to answer? Was some of our information inaccurate?"

The teacher writes down the information the students have learned and corrects any misinformation. For example, one student raises her hand and states, "It was the first time in modern history that more people left America than arrived here from other countries."

"Good work, I guess we need to erase the line about immigrants from our chart. Is there anything else?" he asks.

"Yes", another student responds, "it wasn't caused by the war, it was because of how the economy was managed after the war."

"Good information! You are fantastic investigators."