

# Unemployment and Major Migration Routes, 1934

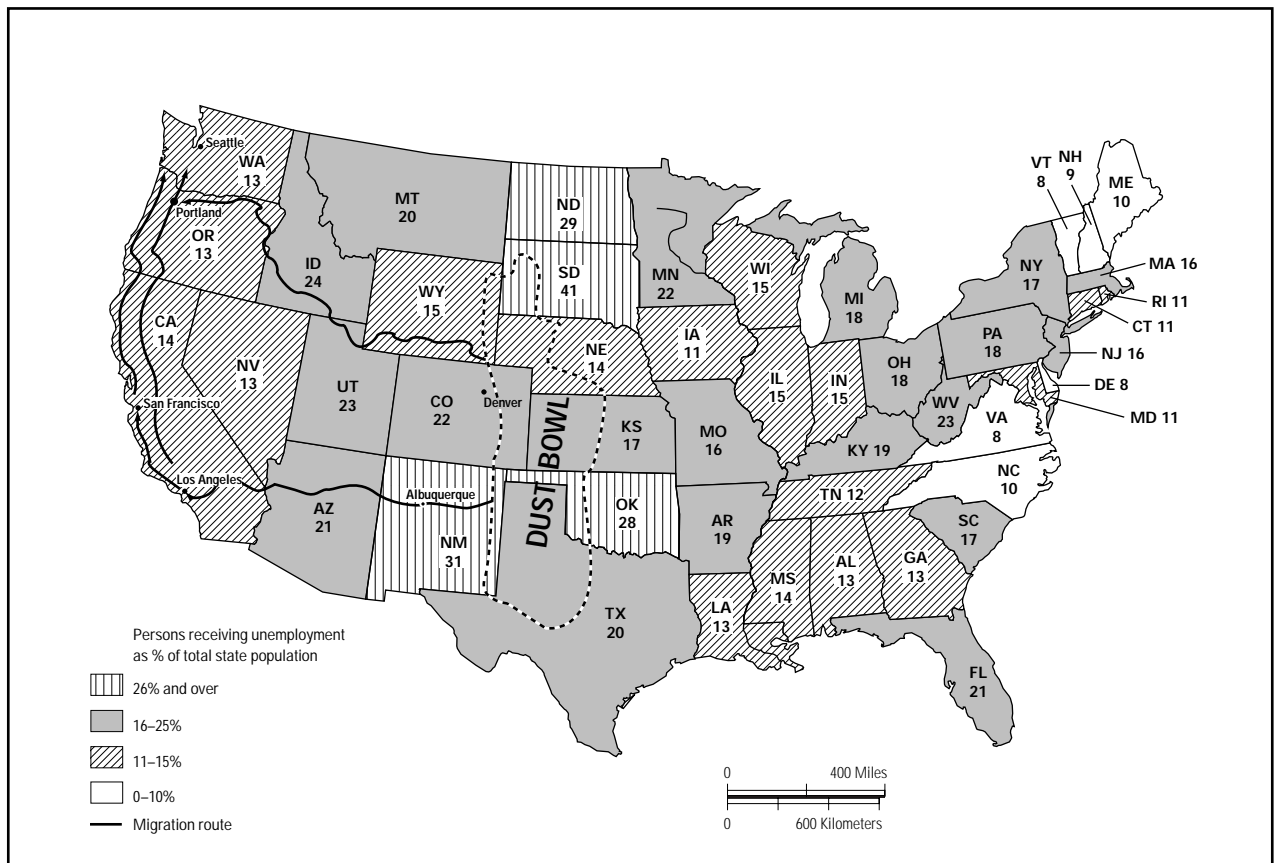
*Directions: Read the paragraphs below and study the map carefully. Then answer the questions that follow.*

The effects of the Great Depression were heartbreaking. In 1932, for example, not a single person was employed in 28 percent of the families in the United States. Widespread unemployment contributed greatly to the steep 40 percent fall in average family income in the four years 1929–1933. In 1933 nearly 13 million workers, about 25 percent of the U.S. total, had no jobs.

Rates of unemployment, though, were far from uniform across the country. Some states—with industries such as radio and airplane production—were relatively well off, so that at one point, in 1934, there was a 33 percent difference between the highest and lowest state unemployment rates.

This disparity in unemployment rates started people moving all over the country. At the begin-

ning, many unemployed city dwellers moved to the countryside, hoping that farms were better off economically than cities. But soon agriculture suffered just as much as other businesses, especially during the Dust Bowl drought that began in 1933. Tens of thousands of families in the hardest-hit states—North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma, and Texas—put everything they owned into cars and trucks and left home. (By 1936, some areas were ghostlike, with more than half of the houses abandoned.) By the end of the decade, all of the hardest-hit states except for Colorado and Texas had experienced population declines, even though the U.S. population grew by 9 million people during the decade.



## Interpreting Text and Visuals

1. Which four states had the highest unemployment rate in 1934?

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2. Which region of the country—east or west of the Mississippi River—  
was better off in 1934? \_\_\_\_\_

What statistics support your choice? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Which of the hardest-hit Dust Bowl states lost population in the 1930s?

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4. What was the main destination of most people leaving the northern part  
of the Dust Bowl? \_\_\_\_\_

Through which states did they travel? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What was the first destination of most people leaving the southern part  
of the Dust Bowl? \_\_\_\_\_

What does the migration northward from Los Angeles imply? \_\_\_\_\_

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