The John and Annie Glenn Historic Site

presents

a study guide

for

The Great Depression Era

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Edited and Designed by: Catherine Borkoski
# The Great Depression Study Guide

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This guide may be used by teachers and visitors at all age levels, however, we have organized it by specific grades and topics. Feel free to adapt for different age levels.

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This guide was created to give information concerning the Great Depression to allow visitor's to the historic site to better understand the living history presentation. The information is divided into 4 categories:

   Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science

There is information with some possible activities at all levels for your use.

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify some of the everyday experiences and sacrifices of the people during the Great Depression.

2. Compare the Great Depression to our current economic and social conditions.

3. Develop skills of comparison using mathematics, science and studies along with their reading and writing skills.

4. Discuss the role of family members in maintaining their lives within the community during the Great Depression.

5. Analyze the historic background of this time period in America with that of today.

6. Synthesize the information in this guide concerning the Great Depression to predict future occurrences of difficult economic and social time
Depression Alphabet

A is for Apron

B is for Butter

C is for Canning

G is for Gardening

H is for Hobo

J is for Jar (Mason Jar)

T is for Tinker Toys

V is for View Master

Read Aloud from the 1930s: Dr. Seuss And to Think I Saw it on Mulberry Street
Dick and Jane Series
Kit Kittredge American Girl "Tree House"
Lesson Ideas for Math for Depression Era

Compare the prices of a few items now and then

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Today’s Price</th>
<th>1937 Price</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>$3.69 (gallon)</td>
<td>$.50 (gallon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread</td>
<td>$1.89 (loaf)</td>
<td>$.09 (loaf)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td>$1.69 (dozen)</td>
<td>$.18 (dozen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch</td>
<td>$15.29</td>
<td>$.98</td>
</tr>
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<td>Tinker Toys</td>
<td>$19.99</td>
<td>$.60</td>
</tr>
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Depression Era Social Studies
Then and Now

Do you know anyone who is 70 years or older? Ask them what it was like when they were your age. Looking at these pictures, do you see any difference in the “olden” things compared to “todays” things?

House Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1937</th>
<th>Today</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Yard Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1937</th>
<th>Today</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Washing Clothes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1937</th>
<th>Today</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Bathing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1937</th>
<th>Today</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How do you think things will look 70 years from now? Please turn over to draw your ideas. What do you think these will look like:

Cars?

Homes?

Clothes?
Depression Era Science

Do you know what a “port-a-let” is?

During the Depression many homes did not have indoor plumbing and bathrooms. They had to go out of the house in all kinds of weather to a little wooden building called a”privy” to use the restroom. The toilet was simply a board seat with a hole in it. The toilet paper was often catalogs or newspaper. The waste was not “flushed” but simply fell into a very deep hole.

Aren’t you glad that you have a bathroom in your house?
Tell about the bathroom in your home and turn over to draw your bathroom.
John Glenn's Boyhood During the Depression

John was 11 years old in 1932. To help the family he worked the three gardens, which the family owned. John's job was to hoe and weed the _______. When the crops were ready, he loaded his _______ and went throughout the village selling the food to those people who could afford to buy it.

During _______ ________, John would take his two beagle dogs _____ ____, hunting for rabbits. Two rabbits would make a _______ for the family of four.

John also washed cars for 50 cents and saved the money to buy a _______. With the new bike John could have a _______ _______ to earn money.

In 1932, John and his friends formed a club similar to the Boy Scouts and named it the _______. Club meetings were held above a chicken hatchery until the members built a campsite near the creek. There, on hot summer days after they finished their chores, they could swim, cook over the campfire, and sleep in _______. They built a flagpole from a tree and raised and lowered the flag each time they were there. John played his _______ for the ceremony.

There was little money during this time but families found ways to help each other and themselves through _______ ________ and _______ what they had. John's father, a _______, was fortunate to have enough work to care for his family.

Put these answers on the lines in the story:

1. paper route  7. gardens
2. bugle  8. hard work and sharing
3. wagon  9. dinner
4. Rangers  10. hunting season
5. tents  11. bicycle
6. Mike and Ike  12. plumber
During the Depression the cost of many common items was significantly less than it is today. These problems will take you back to 1937.

1. Your mother is sending you to the grocery store for a quart of milk, two loaves of bread, a dozen eggs, and a box of crackers. How much will you owe? If your mother gave you a dollar, how much change will you get?

   The milk comes in a glass bottle, so be careful carrying it home. If you get your milk from a local farmer it will not be pasteurized or homogenized. What do these words mean? Who was Louis Pasteur?

2. Your mother needs a new apron. The cotton material she wants costs $.16 a yard. She needs 1 ½ yards of fabric plus a card of rickrack to decorate the apron. This costs $.07. How much will the apron cost?

   She will sew the apron on her treadle sewing machine. What powers the machine? She’ll use the leftover fabric to make your sister’s doll a dress and give the rest of the fabric to your grandma who can use it for the quilt she is making.

3. Your parents, your sister and you are going to the movies to see Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in “Shall We Dance”. Adult ticket prices cost $1.15 each and children’s tickets are $.10. How much will your dad pay for the tickets?

   If he gives the ticket seller a $5.00 bill, how much will he get back?

   If popcorn costs $.05 a box, how much will he pay for a box for each of you?
What is a Hobo?

A hobo is a homeless man or woman who travels from town to town, often in empty train cars, looking for work, money, and shelter. He sometimes lives in hobo camps hidden from towns with others who also have the same problems. Hobos have a code of good behavior with rules such as:

1. Stay Clean
2. Help children if they are in need
3. Do not cause problems in a train yard
4. Always try to find work

Hobos have a coded sign language. Can you match the code with the sign?

1. I ate
2. Dog
3. Gentlemen
4. Work available
5. Police officer lives here
6. Sit down food
7. Help if sick
8. Jail
9. Get out fast
10. Danger
Depression Era Soup Kitchens

Soup kitchens started in America in 1929 when the effects of a growing depression began to be felt. The need for soup kitchens was felt even more acutely when the tailspin in the economy worsened in 1932, leaving about 12 million Americans (about 25%) of the workforce, out of work.

When soup kitchens first started, they were run by churches or private charities. The Capuchin Services Center in southeast Detroit served 1,500 to 3,000 people per day. That center opened on November 2, 1929. The Volunteers of America organization was also important in setting up soup kitchens all over America.

In the mid-1930s the state and federal governments were operating the soup kitchens across America. At the outset of the Depression, Al Capone, the notorious gangster from Chicago, established the first soup kitchen there to clean up his “shady” image. Capone’s kitchen served three meals a day to ensure everyone who had lost a job could get a meal.

Soup kitchens were mainly soup and bread because it was economical to add water to the soup to serve more people. Every city and town had their own soup kitchen. If a hungry person happened to be out in the country, they would travel to the nearest town where there was a soup kitchen. These kitchens were run in churches, cafeterias, service centers or outdoors.

Today soup kitchens still exist for homeless persons and struggling families across America. Some organizations have expanded their services to include child and adult daycare, elder housing, correctional and emergency services.
Many people during The Great Depression had a garden to “make ends meet”. They would grow a variety of vegetables, have fruit from an orchard, pick berries and nuts provided by “Mother Nature”. Those families with small farms would also raise animals such as chickens, hogs, cows, etc. In order to have food during the winter months, their harvest needed to be preserved. Common methods were canning, drying, and curing.

A. Why would canning fruits and vegetables keep them from spoiling? Name some fruits and vegetables which can be canned.

B. Why would drying fruits and vegetables keep them from spoiling? Name some fruits and vegetables which can be dried.

C. Meat can also be canned and cured. What mineral was used for curing meat?

D. Today people still preserve food for later use. What methods can be used today which were not used then?
During the Great Depression many families had radios and would listen to the news and weather reports. It was very important for our farmers to know about weather conditions. Families also used Mother Nature in forecasting weather conditions.

Explain how the following would help predict the weather:

A. A wooly worm?
______________________________________________________________________
B. Animal fur?
______________________________________________________________________
C. Rain on Easter Sunday?
______________________________________________________________________
D. The groundhog?
______________________________________________________________________

Name three weather instruments which we use today to forecast the weather:

A.
______________________________________________________________________
B.
______________________________________________________________________
C.
______________________________________________________________________
The Great Depression: A Brief Overview

America’s “Great Depression” began with the dramatic crash of the stock market on “Black Thursday”, October 24, 1929 when 16 million shares of stock were quickly sold by panicking investors who had lost faith in the American economy. At the height of the Depression in 1933, nearly 25% of the Nation’s total work force, 12,830,000 people, were unemployed.

Wage income for workers who were lucky enough to have kept their jobs fell almost 43% between 1929 and 1933. It was the worst economic disaster in American history. Farm prices fell so drastically that many farmers lost their homes and land. Many went hungry.

Faced with this disaster, families split up or migrated from their homes in search of work. “Hoovervilles” (named after President Hoover -- as an insult), shanty towns constructed of packing crates, abandoned cars and other cast off scraps sprung up across the Nation. Gangs of youths, whose families could no longer support them, rode the rails in box cars like so many hoboes, hoping to find a job. “Okies”, victims of the drought and dust storms in the Great Plains, left their farms and headed for California, the new land of “milk and honey” where they believed all one had to do was reach out and pluck food from the trees. America’s unemployed were on the move, but there was really nowhere to go. Industry was badly shaken by the Depression. Factories closed; mills and mines were abandoned; fortunes were lost. American business and labor were both in serious trouble.

Unable to help themselves the American public looked to the Federal Government. Dissatisfied with President Herbert Hoover’s economic programs, the people elected Franklin D. Roosevelt as their president in 1932. Roosevelt was a bold experimenter and a man of action. Early on in his administration he assembled the best minds in the country to advise him. This group of men were known as the “Brain Trust.” Within one hundred days the President, his advisors and the U.S. Congress passed into law a package of legislation designed to help lift the troubled Nation out of the Depression.
The Great Depression: A Brief Overview

Roosevelt’s program was called the “New Deal.” The words “New Deal” signified a new relationship between the American people and their government. This new relationship included the creation of several new federal agencies, called “alphabet agencies” because of their use of acronyms. A few of the more significant of these New Deal programs was the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) which gave jobs to unemployed youths and to improve the environment, the WPA (Works Progress Administration) gave jobs to thousands of unemployed in everything from construction to the arts, and the NRA (National Recovery Administration) drew up regulations and codes to help revitalize industry. Later on came the creation of the Social Security System, unemployment insurance and more agencies and programs designed to help Americans during times of economic hardship. Under President Roosevelt the federal government took on many new responsibilities for the welfare of the people. The new relationship forged in the New Deal was one of closeness between the government and the people: a closeness which had never existed to such a degree before.

Although Roosevelt and the New Deal were criticized by many both in and out of government, and seriously challenged by the U.S. Supreme Court, they received the overwhelming support of the people. Franklin D. Roosevelt was the only president in U.S. history to be elected for four terms of office.

Despite all the President’s efforts and the courage of the American people, the Depression hung on until 1941, when America’s involvement in the Second World War resulted in the drafting of young men into military service, and the creation of millions of jobs in defense and war industries.

The Great Depression tested the fabric of American life as it had been seldom tested before or has since. It caused Americans to doubt their abilities and their values. It caused them to despair. But they weathered the test, and as a Nation, emerged stronger than ever, and we are all better today for their strength and their courage.
Depression Era Presidents: Hoover and Roosevelt

Herbert Hoover became the 31st President of the United States in 1929. Within months of his election the stock market crashed and the Nation spiraled downward into depression. After the crash, President Hoover announced that while he would keep the Federal budget balanced, he would cut taxes and expand public works spending. In 1931 repercussions from Europe deepened the crisis, even though the President presented to Congress a program asking for creation of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to aid business, additional help for farmers facing mortgage foreclosures, banking reform, a loan to states for feeding unemployed, expansion to public works and drastic governmental economy. At the same time he reiterated his view that while people must not suffer from hunger and cold, caring for them must be primarily a local and voluntary responsibility.

Assuming the Presidency at the depth of the Great Depression, Franklin D. Roosevelt helped the American people regain faith in themselves. He brought hope as he promised prompt, vigorous action, and asserted in his Inaugural Address, “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”

By 1935, the Nation had achieved some measure of recovery, but businessmen and bankers were turning more and more against Roosevelt’s New Deal program. They feared his experiments, were appalled because he had taken the Nation off the gold standard and allowed deficits in the budget and disliked the concessions to labor. Roosevelt responded with a new program of reform: Social Security, heavier taxes on the wealthy, new control over backs and public utilities, and an enormous work relief program for the unemployed. In 1936 he was re-elected by a top-heavy margin. He pledged the U.S. To the “good neighbor policy” and continued to work on the United States economy.
This puzzle uses some of the important vocabulary words used when touring the 1930s home of John Glenn.

At this time “waste not want not” was a very important phrase along with the following vocabulary. Mrs Glenn, John’s mother, was an expert on saving in her household. She used many substitutions for foods not readily available such as her “Mock Apple Pie” made from Ritz crackers.

During the Depression, the government tried to help the unemployed with two programs: the WPA which gave adults work and the CCC which gave young men work. We have many buildings and projects constructed by these men in our own community, such as the Muskingum University gym and our elementary school buildings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annie Castor</th>
<th>Aprons</th>
<th>Barter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>Hobo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Box</td>
<td>John Glenn</td>
<td>Judy Garland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mock Apple Pie</td>
<td>Mortgage</td>
<td>Polio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President Hoover</td>
<td>President Roosevelt</td>
<td>Radio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REA</td>
<td>Substitution</td>
<td>Tarzan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuberculosis</td>
<td>Violets</td>
<td>WPA</td>
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</table>

This puzzle uses some of the important vocabulary words used when touring the 1930s home of John Glenn.

At this time “waste not want not“ was a very important phrase along with the following vocabulary. Mrs Glenn, John’s mother, was an expert on saving in her household. She used many substitutions for foods not readily available such as her “Mock Apple Pie“ made from Ritz crackers.

During the Depression, the government tried to help the unemployed with two programs: the WPA which gave adults work and the CCC which gave young men work. We have many buildings and projects constructed by these men in our own community, such as the Muskingum University gym and our elementary school buildings.
A metaphor is a figure of speech. A metaphor compares two things with something in common but does not use the word like or as. Below are some common metaphors that were used during the Depression years. Choose one of the metaphors and write in your own words how it applies to the Great Depression.

1. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure
   It is better to try to avoid problems rather than trying to fix them once they arise

2. A stitch in time saves nine
   A little timely effort will prevent work later.

3. Beggars can't be choosers.
   If you beg (or ask) for anything or favor, then you shouldn't complain about what you get

4. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
   It's better to have a small advantage than the chance of a great one

5. Don't bite the hand that feeds you
   Don't be ungrateful or turn against a benefactor.

6. Half a loaf is better than none.
   Something is better than nothing

7. Here today, gone tomorrow
   You say this when something disappears very quickly or suddenly

8. A penny saved is a penny earned.
   It's good to save money, rather than spending or wasting it.

9. Waste not, want not
   If you don't waste things, you are less likely to end up lacking.

10. You ave to take the good with the bad.
    Accept that everything may have a bad as well as a good side.

11. Haste makes waste
    If you do something too quickly (“too hastily”) you might do it badly and actually “waste” time or money. This means that you should take your time and do things carefully.
**Depression Era Mathematics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1937</th>
<th>Today</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Dollar</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$_______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Income</td>
<td>$1,789</td>
<td>$_______</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Possible thought questions:

In 1937 an average family home cost $4,100 - $6,222. Today, in 2009 an average family home costs $125,000 to $150,000. What is the difference in 2009 dollars in the cost of a home?

In 1937 the cost of an automobile was $625. What would be the cost of an automobile today that your family would drive on a daily basis?

Compare the cost of gasoline in 1937 at $.10 a gallon to the price of gasoline today.

Some examples of food costs in 1937 are listed below. Please fill in the 2009 food cost:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1937</th>
<th>Today</th>
<th>% Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>$.06 per pound</td>
<td>__________</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamburger</td>
<td>$.12 per pound</td>
<td>__________</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken</td>
<td>$.12 per pound</td>
<td>__________</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Oral Histories

Doing Oral Histories is a wonderful way for students to learn firsthand about The Great Depression, 1929-1941. Ask students to prepare an oral report based on an interview with a person who lived during The Great Depression. You may want to work with a retirement center to identify people to interview. Students may not have a grandparent, neighbor or friend that lived during the Great Depression years. Have the students take notes and/or tape record their interview. Tape recording the interview will be most helpful to the student for reviewing the actual responses of the person interviewed. Here are some sample questions for them to ask:

1. How old are you?
2. Do you remember the Great Depression?
3. Where did you live during the Great Depression?
4. How old were you during the Great Depression?
5. How did you get to school or work during the Great Depression?
6. Did you know anyone who lost their job during the Great Depression?
7. Did you know anyone who worked for one of the federal programs like the Civilian Conservation Corps?
8. Who was in your family during the Great Depression?
9. What was the hardest part of living then for you?
10. What did you usually eat during a day?
11. What did you do for fun?
12. Did you or your parents use barter in exchange for goods or supplies that you needed? Work with students to develop their own additional questions.

What do you throw away every day? Could something be done with what you throw away?
Electricity

Electricity is the flow of the electrical power or charge. The electricity we use in our homes comes from a primary source like oil, nuclear power, coal, natural gas, the sun, or other natural resources. Water and wind are other sources of energy called mechanical energy. We use electricity every day for heat, light, and power.

Benjamin Franklin was the first person to help people understand the principles of electricity and Thomas Edison changed the world with his invention of the electric light bulb.

In the 1930s President Franklin Delano Roosevelt saw the solution of the hardship of the rural people in our country not having electricity. He viewed it as an opportunity to create new jobs, stimulate manufacturing, and being to pull the nation out of despair and hopelessness of the Great Depression. On May 11, 1935, he signed an executive order establishing the Rural Electrification Administration (REA). One of the key pieces of Roosevelt’s New Deal initiatives, the REA would provide loans and assistance so that rural cooperatives, basically groups of farmers, could build and run their own electrical distribution systems.

The model for the system came from an engineer. In 1935, Morris Llwellyn Cooke, a mechanical engineer who had devised efficient rural distribution systems for power companies in New York and Pennsylvania, had written a report that detailed a plan for electrifying the nation’s rural regions. Rural electrification became one of the most successful government programs ever enacted. Within 2 years it helped the 48 states. By 1939 the cost of a mile of rural line ad dropped from $2,000 to $600. Almost half of all farms were wired by 1942 and virtually all of them by the 1950s.

Possible thought questions:

1. Do you get your electricity from Ohio Power or Guernsey-Muskingum Co-op?

2. What do you use electricity for? How would your life be different without it?
Depression Era Science

Tuberculosis and Polio were two of the terrible diseases which affected people living in 1937. Other diseases which were common at one time in our history are measles, mumps, and scarlet fever. Medical science has developed cures for these diseases and almost totally eradicated them in the United States.

1. What are some diseases which currently affect people in our country?

2. How are these diseases treated?

3. What research is being done to eliminate these diseases?
How much did toys and clothing cost during the Great Depression of the 1930s? What would they cost today?

Look at the Then and Now: Prices table to the left. In the left column is a list of women's clothing, men's clothing, games and toys and household goods. In the middle column, the price of each of these items is listed based on advertisements from 1932. Look through a current copy of your local newspaper to find out what it would cost to buy the same item today. Write that amount in the right column.

Some of those 1930s prices look pretty low compared to today's costs don't they? Why? Look at the Then and Now: Wages table on the right. Do people earn more or less now than they did in the 1930s? How do the prices compare to the wages? How many weeks would it take to buy each of the items on the table of prices? If an item costs less than a week's wages, divide the week's wages by 40 to estimate the hourly wage and figure out how many hours it would take to earn the money to buy the item.
Answer Key for The Great Depression Study Guide

Depression Alphabet: Informational page for discussion only

Depression Math: Answers will vary

Depression Social Studies: Answers will vary

Depression Science: Answers will vary

John Glenn's Boyhood:

1. gardens  2. wagon  3. hunting season  4. Ike and Mike  5. dinner  6. bicycle  7. paper route

Depression Era Math:

1. You owe $.63. Change of $.37
2. The apron will cost $.55
3. The tickets cost $.50. Change from $5.00 would be $4.50.
   Popcorn would $.20

Hobo Signs

Soup Kitchens: An informational page to compare our “soup kitchens” today

Feeding the Family: A. Fruits and vegetables will keep indefinitely when canned in the usual methods used for canning: cold water bath, and pressure cooking.
   Fruits canned include: apples, peaches, pears, cherries
   Vegetables to be canned include: beans, corn, carrots, beets
   B. Fruits and vegetables can be dried which eliminates the moisture which can cause them to spoil if not dried or canned.
   Fruits to be dried include: apples, oranges, strawberries, grapes
   Vegetables to be dried include: onions, peppers, zucchini
   C. To cure meat you must use a form of salt
   D. Freezing is a common method used today

Forecasting the Weather:

   Wooly worms: the narrower the brown strip the milder the winter
   Animal fur: if it is thick, it will be a hard winter
   Rain on Easter Sunday: It will rain the next 7 Sundays
   If the groundhog sees its shadow, there will be 6 more weeks of winter.

   Instruments to forecast the weather: thermometer, wind vane, barometer

Depression Overview: An informational page for background concerning the Depression
Depression Word Search :

Adages: An information page to explain commonly used adages.

Depression Math: Cost of homes difference is $120,900 - $143,778.
Cost of automobile average price today $10,000 - $15,000
Cost of gasoline today $3.50 per gallon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Then</th>
<th>Today</th>
<th>% increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>$0.06</td>
<td>$0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamburger</td>
<td>$0.12</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicken</td>
<td>$0.12</td>
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</tbody>
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Electricity: Answers will vary.

Science:
Diseases which affect people in our county include measles, mumps, flu, cancer.
Diseases are treated with immunizations when effective. Cancer is treated with chemicals and radiation.
There is ongoing research in the field of diseases which affect our population. Some hope to eliminate these diseases entirely, others hope to cure them.