

# TEACHER'S GUIDE

## Planning Your Classroom Approach & Models of Instruction

### MISSION 5: "Up from the Dust"

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*The creators of "Up from the Dust" have designed the game and accompanying classroom materials for educators and students to use in a variety of ways. The game's flexible format allows for use in the classroom, at home, in the library or media center, or anywhere there is a computer with an Internet connection. The game can be played in a one-computer classroom, a multiple-computer classroom, or in a lab setting. Students playing the game can work alone, in pairs, or in groups. Educators using the game can decide just much classroom time they wish to dedicate to gameplay, in-class activities, and accompanying assignments.*

*Your students will gain the most from "Up from the Dust" if their gameplay experiences are supported by classroom activities, discussions, and writing exercises guided by your teaching expertise. "Up from the Dust" curriculum available on the MISSION US website provides a wealth of materials to connect the game to your own goals and objectives related to teaching about the Great Depression and the numerous economic and environmental hardships Americans faced in the 1930s.*

*This document provides you with some planning questions to help you map out your classroom implementation of "The Hardest Times," as well as three different "models" for low, medium, and high utilization of the game and the accompanying materials.*



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#### **The Test of Time**

If a student were to sit down at a computer and play "Up from the Dust" from beginning to end without stopping, the entire gameplay experience would take 90 minutes to two hours. However, we do NOT suggest you use this approach with students. The game is divided into five separate "parts" (think of them as chapters in a historical novel). Your students' learning will be maximized if you take the time to use the gameplay as a "point of departure" or inspiration for classroom instruction.

*As a first step: Play the game yourself and briefly review the curricular materials available accompanying "Up from the Dust" on the MISSION US website. Think about how much classroom time you usually dedicate to the events and concepts presented in the game. What other curricular goals do the game and accompanying materials support? What are the dominant themes of your social studies instruction (vocabulary, writing and reaction, social issues, analysis of primary source documents)?*

*\*Make a rough estimate of how much classroom time you'd like to dedicate to "The Hardest Times."*

#### **Location, Location, Location**

As mentioned above, "Up from the Dust" can be played in a variety of settings with a variety of technology set-ups. Your students can play as a class, in small groups, in pairs, or individually, or you can mix and match these approaches. Depending on accessibility of technology, students can play in class, at home, or both – since their online accounts will save their game data wherever they play, and allow them to continue playing in any setting where a computer with an Internet connection is available.

*As a second step: Consider the technology available to you and your students. Do you want to play the game entirely in class? Assign some sections as homework? Split student play between in-class and at home? Ask your students to play the game entirely at home, and dedicate class time to activities?*

*\*Determine how and where you and your students will play the different sections of the game.*



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#### Classroom Activities, Discussion, and Reflection

The classroom activities accompanying "Up from the Dust" on the MISSION US website offer an extensive set of resources to support instruction. The activities roughly fall into four broad categories:

- Document-based Activities
- Vocabulary Activities
- Writing Prompts
- Review Questions

Other activities and resources provide additional primary sources, background information on the characters and setting, historical essays, and printable artwork from the game.

*As a third step: Review the available classroom materials and activities, and identify those most strongly aligned to your educational objectives and curriculum. Plan to use the activities "as-is," or make adaptations or changes to them. The resources provided may also inspire you to create your own "Up from the Dust" activities. If you do, please share them with the MISSION US team! Post your ideas, thoughts, and suggestions to the MISSION US Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/MissionUS](http://www.facebook.com/MissionUS), or to the MISSION US Twitter feed at [www.twitter.com/Mission\\_US](http://www.twitter.com/Mission_US).*

*\*Create a preliminary list of the activities you and your students will complete during your use of "The Hardest Times."*

#### Planning

Because of their flexibility, teachers may opt for low, medium, or high integration of the game and its accompanying materials. There is no "right" or "wrong" way to use "The Hardest Times." Below are some ideas on what the different levels of integration might look like in a classroom.

#### **"High" Integration (using the game as context for classroom learning)**

*Estimated Number of 45-minute class periods: 8-10 (excluding homework time)*

- Students play the different parts of "Up from the Dust" in the classroom or computer lab, individually or in pairs.
- Before, during, and after playing each part of the game, students process what they are doing through discussion, writing, and other activities facilitated by the teacher.



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A teacher working in this mode might *begin* a class by asking students to share what they learned in the prior part of the game about the main characters, what the keywords for the day mean, or what they predict will happen in the episode they are about to play.

*During* game play, the teacher might walk around and look over students' shoulders, asking them to explain a choice they've made, and perhaps pose a question to the room— "What items does Ginny's mother instruct her to trade for at the general store?" or "What city does the drifter hope to reach to join the Bonus Expeditionary Force?"

Right *after* game play and/or for homework, the teacher would engage students in one of the follow-up activities available on the *MISSION US* website— discussion and writing prompts, vocabulary exercises, or primary source analysis, or reviewing change and continuity— all of which deepen students' understanding of the period by connecting game experiences to more formal curriculum knowledge and skills. Students might end the unit by making presentations, drawings, writing, or completing other multimedia projects.

#### **Medium Integration (using the game as *supplement* to classroom learning)**

*Estimated number of 45-minute class periods: 5 (excluding homework time)*

- Students split game play between in the classroom or lab and as homework
- Game play is complemented with in-class and homework activities in which students write and talk about what is happening in the game, using materials from the website.
- Game play alternates with non-game-related classwork.

A teacher working in this mode might introduce students to the game via a class playing of Part 1 on a Friday afternoon, and asking students to play Part 2 for weekend homework.

A portion of the following Monday's class period would focus on student reactions and thoughts about the game, as well as a brief vocabulary activity. Students would be asked to play Part 3 of the game before class on Tuesday.

In Tuesday's class, students would complete a document-based activity related to Part 1, 2, or 3 of the game.

In Wednesday's class, students would be assigned to play Part 4 and respond to a writing prompt or review questions as homework.

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In Thursday's class, students would play Part 5, and complete one of the activities related to those portions of the game in class.

In Friday's class, students would review terms, phrases, and events from "Up from the Dust" and be assigned to respond to a writing prompt or review question as homework.

#### **Low Integration (using the game as an *extra* or *enhancement*)**

*Estimated number of 45-minute class periods: 1 (excluding homework time)*

- Teacher introduces the game to students (perhaps using a projector), and assigns students to play the entire game as homework, giving students several days to complete the task.
- Teacher assigns one or two of the "Up from the Dust" writing activities to students for homework, and/or holds a class discussion about the events in the game, connecting those events to what students are learning about through traditional study.

Follow MISSION US on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/MissionUS](http://www.facebook.com/MissionUS)) and Twitter ([www.twitter.com/Mission\\_US](http://www.twitter.com/Mission_US)) to share and discuss your experiences and learn how other educators are using the game in their classrooms across the country.

