

Dorothea Lange and the FSA Photographers

Directions: Read the passage below. Then, answer the questions that follow.

During the Great Depression, many workers in America lost their jobs. The government started a program called the Farm Security Administration, or the FSA, to help those that needed it. As part of the program, they sent out a team of photographers to take pictures of struggling families, and later, of daily life during World War II. Many of the photographers were women.



"Migrant Mother" (1936)

The most famous woman on the team was Dorothea Lange. Her photograph, "Migrant Mother," is the most famous photo taken during that time. Her work helped show the consequences of the Great Depression.

Marion Post Wolcott was another FSA photographer. Before she started with the FSA, she had been working as a newspaper photographer. She was frustrated with her work because she was always being asked to photograph "ladies' stories," like fashion shows. However, her photographer friends believed in her, and convinced the FSA to hire her.

A similar thing happened to Louise Rosskam. When she and her husband, also a photographer, both applied to a magazine, they hired him but refused to hire her. They both later found jobs with the FSA. Ann Rosener liked to take photos of women working in factories and other "men's" jobs to support their families.

The women that worked for the FSA showed the world that photography could do more than just make people look pretty — it could be used to reveal real problems in the world. Exposing problems can help change peoples' minds about important issues.

1. Complete the graphic organizer below. *Student answers will vary, but may include:*

What is important? Record the important information in the boxes.	Why? Explain why the information is important.
During the Great Depression, many workers in America lost their jobs.	This information provides context for the rest of the passage. It tells us about what was happening during this time in history.
The government started a program called the Farm Security Administration, or the FSA, to help those that needed it.	This is important because it is one of the focal points of the text. We need to know what the FSA is.
The women that worked for the FSA showed the world that photography could be used to reveal problems in the world and help change peoples' minds about important issues.	This is the main idea of the text. It shows the women's impact as they worked as photographers.

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2. What quote from the text can you use to support the conclusion that women were influential during the Great Depression?

"The women that worked for the FSA showed the world that photography could do more than just make people look pretty – it could be used to reveal problems in the world and help change peoples' minds about important issues." (Paragraph 5)

3. What can you infer from the sentence below?

"She was frustrated with her work because she was always being asked to photograph 'ladies' stories,' like fashion shows." Student answers will vary, but may include:

Marion Post Wolcott wanted to show more than simple events with her photographs. She wanted to be able to showcase more serious topics about what life was really like at the time.

4. Complete the graphic organizer below with the main idea and details from the text.

Main Idea:

The women photographers of the FSA showed the real problems in the world during the Great Depression.

Detail:

The FSA hired photographers to document what life was like for struggling families.

Detail:

Dorothea Lange's work showed the consequences of the Depression.

Detail:

Ann Rosener liked to take photos of women working in factories and other "men's" jobs to support their families.