

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Period: \_\_\_\_\_

*Brighton Beach Memoirs* by Neil Simon  
Group Research Project

Directions: For this assignment we will be working in groups. We will spend one class period working in groups and using our cell phones to research what life was like in the 1930s. Each group must thoroughly research their topic and present it to the class in a presentation. Each group will have a different topic.

Topics:

1. The Great Depression.
  - When did it start?
  - Why did it start?
  - What problems did it cause in the U.S.?
  - When did it end?
  - Why did it end?
  - What was life like during The Great Depression?
  - What were the employment rates in this time-period?
  
2. America in the 1930's.
  - How did people dress in this time-period? (try to find pictures to show the class)
  - What kind of music was popular?
  - How much money did the average American family make?
  - The popular game Monopoly was invented in this decade. Describe how the public reacted to this game.
  - What was it like to live in Brighton Beach Brooklyn during the decade?
  
3. Politics of the 1930's
  - What were Hoovervilles?
  - What was The Social Security Act?
  - What was The Wagner Act of 1935?
  - Who were the Presidents of the United States? How did the public feel about them?
  - What was The Dust Bowl? How did it affect America?
  - What was the Civilian Conservation Corps?

4. Famous people of the 1930's: Red Ruffing, Lou Gehrig, Mel Ott, Ring Lardner, Gary Cooper, William Powell, Myrna Loy
  - How were these people important to the decade?
  - What made them famous?
  - Additional historical allusions in the text: the Cossacks, Kaiser Wilhelm, the Fighting 69<sup>th</sup>
5. World War II
  - Briefly discuss the causes of the war.
  - What year did the war begin?
  - What year did America enter the war?
  - How did America get involved?
  - What happened in the U.S. while the war was going on?
  - How did the war end?
  - What was America like before and after the war?
6. The Holocaust
  - When did it start?
  - When did it end?
  - Why were the Jews singled out for extermination?
  - How did the Germans define who was Jewish?
  - What were the first measures taken by the Nazis against the Jews?
  - What is a death camp?
  - What was the "Final Solution"?
  - How many Jews were murdered during the Holocaust?
  - Did the Allies and the people in the United States know about the events going on in Europe?
  - How many Jews were able to escape from Europe prior to the Holocaust?