

Hooverisms

As the Great Depression deepened, President Herbert Hoover continued to insist that the country's problems were only temporary and not as bad as some people claimed. "Conditions are fundamentally sound," Hoover declared late in 1929. Americans with no jobs, little food, no homes, and no money responded with ironic humor. They renamed the marks of Depression poverty with optimistic "Hoover" terms.



Directions: See if you can determine what each of the following things really is. Write your answers on the lines.

1. Hoover hog: _____
2. Hoover flag: _____
3. Hoover blanket: _____
4. Hoover car: _____
5. Hoover bag: _____
6. Hoover shoes: _____
7. Hooverville: _____

Al Capone, the notorious Chicago gangster, set up and paid for a breadline to feed unemployed people in his city. When Capone attended Chicago baseball games, the crowd cheered him. President Hoover saw federal breadlines and said, "Nobody is actually starving. The hoboes, for example, are better fed than they have ever been." When Hoover threw out the first ball at a major-league baseball game, the crowd booed him.

Extra Challenges:

- With classmates, make up your own "Hooverisms" for marks of Depression-era poverty.
- During the 1920s, the word "hoover" entered into the Finnish language. What did it mean? Why?

