Students will write a 25-35-page research paper based on primary source materials, such as newspapers, private papers, diaries, government documents, and oral interviews. They shall choose a county, town or city in New Jersey (many students elect to study their hometowns) as their subject. I expect students to investigate in municipal archives where they are available.

We are interested in the impact of the Great Depression on the local level. Students might explore such topics as how the depression affected daily life, how local governments helped the unemployed and the poor, how people’s attitudes toward government changed, how municipal governments and individuals interacted with the state and federal governments, and how the incursion of the federal government affected people’s notions of citizenship. They also might investigate how the depression affected different segments of the population, different types of businesses, and gender relations.