

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

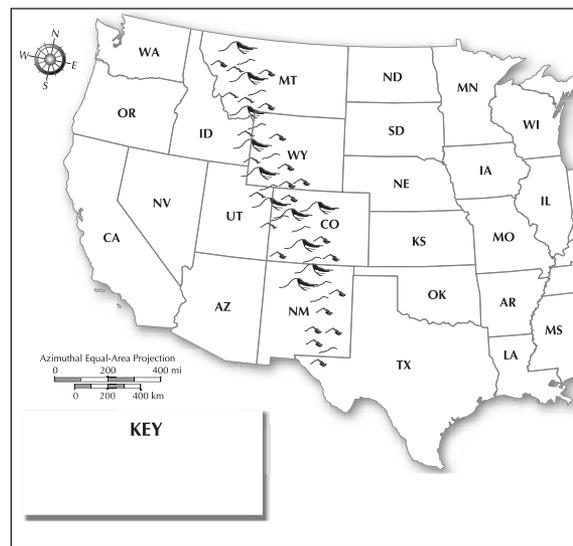
Geography and History

In the mid-1930s, drought and wind churned the Great Plains into the Dust Bowl and drove hundreds of thousands of people from their farms and homes. Most of the people who left traveled west, and many traveled along Route 66, one of the major highways that ran from the Great Plains to California. ♦ *Read the following passage in which John Steinbeck describes the travel along Route 66. After you have read the passage, use an atlas to draw Route 66 and label the landforms that Steinbeck mentions on the map below. Add a symbol for your route to the legend. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow. You may review the map and information on migration in your text.*

The Dust Bowl

“Highway 66 is the main migrant road. 66—the long concrete path across the country, waving gently up and down on the map, from the Mississippi to Bakersfield—over the red lands and the gray lands, twisting up into the mountains, crossing the Divide and down into the bright and terrible desert, and across the desert to the mountains again, and into the rich California valleys.

66 is the path of people in flight, refugees from dust and shrinking land, from the thunder of tractors and shrinking ownership, from the desert’s slow northward invasion, from the twisting winds that howl up out of Texas, from the floods that bring no richness to the land and steal what little richness is there.”



Mapping Specialists Limited

—John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*

Questions to Think About

1. According to this passage, why did people from the Great Plains head west?
2. About how many miles did people living in Iowa have to travel to reach California? people in Oklahoma?
3. **Draw Inferences** How do you think geography and environment might have affected the travels of the Dust Bowl migrants?