

Reading Questions for *Down and Out*

What are these sources, where do they come from, who is doing the writing, and to whom?

What are the strengths and the limitations?

How are these letters different than what might have come earlier?

How do they identify themselves?

What is the general attitude about poverty?

Why are people poor?

Do some people deserve to be poor and other don't?

Should Americans receive relief?

Who or what gets blamed for the depression?

Do people hate FDR or local administrators or capitalists?

What does the government owe them?

What do they think about FDR and Eleanor?

How do letter writers think about their relationship to FDR and the first lady?

What did they think the government could and should do to help their conditions?

What do they reveal about how Americans think about their government?

Do they want a revolution?

Assignment

In addition to your **weekly reading response**, go to the web-link for [American Life Histories](#) and look at oral histories from your home state (or anywhere you want). In the search, try plugging in words like "unemployment" so that appropriate recollections come up.