

# Dbq – what caused the dust bowl?

[Environment](#), [Disaster](#)



When huge dust storms come rolling through the Southern Great Plains, most people continue to tear through the dusty soil like soft butter. It's 1931 in the Southern Great Plains. The people were experiencing a massive drought as well as huge dust storms.

People wonder, clueless, about where all these destructive clouds of dust are coming from and why they are happening. They are determined to find the answer. After some time they have concluded that the dust storms were caused by the massive drought, the machinery, and the loss of the Shortgrass Prairie.

The first cause of the Dust Bowl was the huge drought that occurred in the late 1930s. In document E, it shows how much rain typically fell each year in the 1930s. The "Great Western Explorer" John Wesley Powell, stated that in the Southern Great Plains, crops need at least 20 inches of rainfall to grow.

Also in document E, it shows how much rainfall five Dust Bowl towns get each year. The average is about 17 inches. The actual amount of rainfall that Dallam County, Texas has gotten from 1931 to 1940 was nine years below what it should be. This document clearly explains that cities during the 1930s were not getting enough rain. This means that the soil will clump together and erode into dust.

The second cause of the Dust Bowl was the new mechanization or machinery constantly tilling the soil. In document C, there is a quote written by Timothy Egan. The quote mentions the new technology that farmers used in the 1930s.

This was important because without the new technology that companies produced, there would have been less dust storms, which would have made the Dust Bowl a little easier to live through. Also, in document D, the picture shows how much wheat was harvested from 1879 to 1929. The numbers went up almost 10 times as much. These documents can show that the new technologies were a major contribution to the Dust Bowl.

The last cause of the Dust Bowl was the loss of the shortgrass prairie. In document B, there is a quote that was said by a Texas sheepherder. “ Grass is what counts. It’s what saves us all - far as we get saved. Grass is what holds the earth together.” This quote is very important because it explains the importance of the grass. With all the new tractors, plows, combines, etc. constantly tearing at the soil, the animals are eating what little grass there is.

Without the grass, the soil has nothing to ground it. Also, in document C, there is a picture of Simon Fishman with a few other men on tractors and plows. There is a quote above that mentions a man named Fred Folkers. It says that he plowed nearly a square mile and rented land on another property and plowed up that land too. This explains how much land was plowed up in the 1930s.