SECTION **1** GEOGRAPHY

GeoActivity

Use with North America Geography & History, Section 1.2, *in your textbook.*

Go to Interactive Whiteboard GeoActivities *at*
myNGconnect.com *to complete this activity online.*

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
School Publishing

1.2 THE GREAT PLAINS

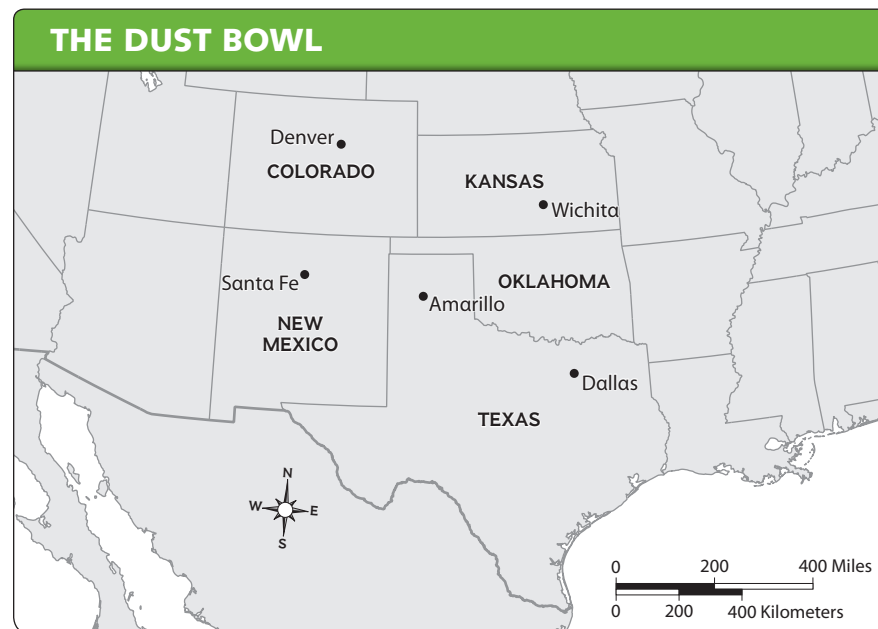## Analyze Causes of the Dust Bowl

Read the following information about the Great Plains. Then answer the questions.

Prairie Grasses Removed The Great Plains have fertile soil, but rainfall is uneven, with wet and dry years. Before settlers arrived in the 1800s, the strong roots of prairie grasses held the soil in place, even in dry years. However, farmers plowed the land to plant wheat and other crops. Herds of cattle grazed on the grasses. As more farmers came, they plowed and planted more acres. New machinery let them plow the land more deeply.

Years of Drought For most of the 1930s, the Great Plains suffered severe drought, with almost no rain. Dust storms blew across the flat land, picking up the dry topsoil in huge clouds that people called "black blizzards." Drought and wind erosion affected a wide area of land, from the Dakotas to the Texas Panhandle. The dust buried growing crops and killed farm animals.

The Dust Bowl The most seriously hit areas became known as the Dust Bowl. The heart of the Dust Bowl was an irregular circle including western Kansas, southeastern Colorado, northeastern New Mexico, and the Oklahoma and Texas Panhandles. The United States was already in a deep economic depression. Now, because of the drought and the Dust Bowl, thousands of families had to give up farming and move elsewhere.

1. **Create Maps** The map shows part of the Great Plains. Use information from the passage to shade the area of the Dust Bowl.

2. **Analyze Cause and Effect** Use information from the passage to list the human and natural causes of the Dust Bowl in the T-Chart. You may need to use a separate sheet of paper for your chart.

3. **Pose and Answer Questions** What other factors might have led to the Dust Bowl? Add them to the chart.

THE DUST BOWL

Causes of the Dust Bowl

Human Causes	Natural Causes