The Gilded Age Webquest

Introduction

- You are a member of a film production studio that has recently been hired to produce a documentary about the Gilded Age of American history.

- American novelist Mark Twain coined the term "Gilded Age" in an effort to illustrate the outwardly showy, but inwardly corrupt nature of American society during the industrialization of the late 1800's.

- The documentary will need to highlight the many aspects of society that made up the Gilded Age, including: technological innovationThe documentary will need to highlight the many aspects of society that made up the Gilded Age, including: technological innovation, big businessThe documentary will need to highlight the many aspects of society that made up the Gilded Age,

The Task

- You and your team will be responsible for producing one specific segment of the documentary. Each segment production team will be responsible to:
  - Research the theme for the group's segment;
  - collaboratively create a 3-5 minute documentary segment using Microsoft PowerPoint, Google Slides, Adobe Spark, iMovie, etc… (including appropriate images. voice-over narration, etc.);
  - preview the assembled documentary (including all five segments);
  - use segment study guides to informally assess the effectiveness of the documentary segments

The Process

1. Consult the grading rubric to make sure
2. Each member of the group conducts research in order to contribute materials essential to the production of your group's segment. Research should incorporate a variety of resources including text and review books, materials from the Media Center2. Each member of the group conducts research in order to contribute materials essential to the production of your group's segment. Research should incorporate a variety of resources including text and review books, materials from the Media Center, as well as Internet resources2. Each member of the group conducts research in order to contribute materials essential to the production of your group's segment. Research should incorporate a variety of resources including text and review books, materials from the Media Center, as well as Internet resources. A list of all of the research sources will be kept so that it can be incorporated into a written and PowerPoint slide-based Works Consulted list using proper MLA citation.
3. Divide up the four roles among your group members.
4. Read and follow the instructions for your role
you create the best possible documentary.
5. Organize the group's research and prepare it for use in the segment study guide and PowerPoint presentation.
6. Prepare a study guide and script to use for the narration in your documentary.
7. Construct your group segment collaboratively using PowerPoint.
8. Edit and fine tune your segment before submitting it to the teacher.

Documentary Segments

Technology Segment
Technology, and an abundance of natural resources, were the driving forces behind the Industrial Revolution in the United States. The telegraph, railroads, the telephone, and ultimately the use of electricity led to the shift from an agrarian to an industrial America.

- **Required Content:**
  - **Industrial Revolution**
  - **Use of Natural Resources:**
    - Iron
    - Coal
    - Oil
  - **Transcontinental Railroad**
  - **Inventors and their Inventions:**
    - Samuel F. B. Morse
    - Henry Bessemer
    - Alexander Graham Bell
    - Thomas Alva Edison

Documentary Segments

Big Business Segment
Laissez-faire capitalism ruled the day during the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in the United States. In this atmosphere of unbridled money-making, numerous types of business organizations gave rise to Big Business. Were the leaders of these companies Captains of Industry or Robber Barons? While some used ruthless business practices to wipe out their competition and earn large profits, others gave enormous sums of money to charities and their communities.

- **Required Content:**
- **Laissez-Faire Capitalism:**
  - Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*
- **Forms of Business Organization:**
  - Monopoly
  - Conglomerate
  - Pool
  - Trust
  - Holding Company
- **Entrepreneurs (Robber Barons or Captains of Industry?):**
  - Andrew Carnegie
  - John D. Rockefeller
  - J. Pierpont Morgan
  - Jay Gould
  - Henry Ford
- **Conspicuous Consumption**
- **Philanthropy**

Documentary Segments

Urbanization Segment

 Urbanization was a direct result of the Industrial Revolution in the United States. Burgeoning factories were centralized in cities which offered a central location for resources and workers to fuel their production. Immigrants and displaced rural workers flooded cities in the hopes of finding employment. Throughout the Gilded Age there were several positive, as well as negative, effects that can be attributed to urbanization.

- **Required Content:**
- **Negative Effects of Urbanization:**
  - Housing (tenements, slums, etc.)
  - Health (disease, sanitation, etc.)
  - Working Conditions (child labor, etc.)
  - Political Machines (Tamany Hall, graft, etc.)
- **Positive Effects of Urbanization:**
  - New Technologies (elevators, skyscrapers, street lighting, water and sewage systems, etc.)
  - Cultural Benefits (museums, theaters, parks, libraries, education, etc.)
- **Philosophies:**
  - Puritan Work Ethic
  - Social Darwinism (Horatio Alger, etc.)

Documentary Segments

Immigration Segment

The United States has always been a nation of immigrants. However, during the Gilded Age, immigration to America increased tremendously. Not only were more people coming to the United States than ever before, but they were also coming from different places, and in doing so they added to the culture of America. But was America becoming a "melting-pot," or a "salad-bowl" of differing cultures?

- **Required Content:**
- **Periods of Immigration:**
  - Colonial Immigration (time period, place of origin, difficulties, etc.)
  - "Old" immigration (time period, place of origin, difficulties, etc.)
  - "New" Immigration (time period, place of origin, difficulties, etc.)
- **Reaction Against Immigration:**
  - Nativism
  - Know-Nothing Party
  - Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 ("Yellow Peril")
  - National Origins Acts (1924, 1929)
- **Theories of Immigration:**
  - "Melting-Pot" Theory
  - Assimilation
  - "Salad-Bowl" Theory (Pluralism)

Documentary Segments

Reactions Segment

The Gilded Age was a period of immense change in the United States. All of the abuses and problems of the time generated many different reactions- most directed at reform. Slowly, government regulations began to reign in the abuses of big business. At the same time, social reformers actively sought to correct the problems evident in American cities.

- **Required Content:**
- **Granger Movement:**
  - Railroad Practices (pools, rebates, etc.)
  - Railroads=Public Utility
  - Bloc Voting
  - Granger State Laws
  - *Munn v. Illinois* (1877)
  - *Wabash Case* (1886)
  - Interstate Commerce Act (1887)
- **Sherman Antitrust Act** (1890)
- **Unionism:**
  - Collective Bargaining
  - Knights of Labor
  - American Federation of Labor
  - International Ladies' Garment Workers Union
- **Early Reformers:**
  - Thomas Nast
  - Jane Addams (Hull House)
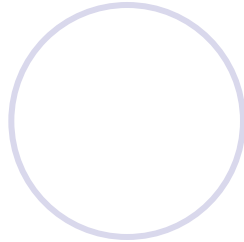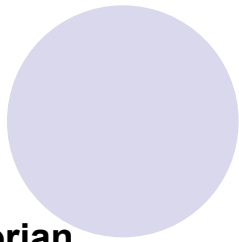
Group Roles Lead
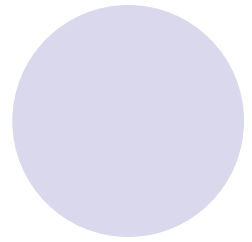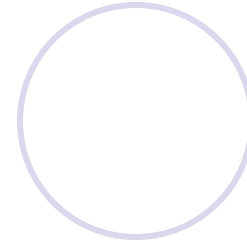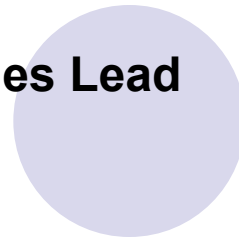
Historian

- The lead historian takes charge of organizing the research for their group's particular assigned segment. While the majority of the research will be the responsibility of the lead historian, it is not the sole responsibility of the lead historian.
- The lead historian will also assign and monitor the research activities of the other members. The lead historian will collect, categorize and filter the information that he/she and the other production team members collect. The lead historian will also keep records of the sources consulted for the segment. Finally, the compilation of the final Works Consulted list using MLA format will be his/her responsibility.
- **Main responsibilities:**
- Collection of historical data related to and relevant to the group's segment.
- Assignment of research activities to other group members:
  - It is also expected that the lead historian ensure that a variety of resources (book, periodical, encyclopedia, Internet, etc.) are being used in the data collection process by all group members.
  - The lead historian should also hold the other group members accountable for their efforts and ensure that the information collected is cited properly and of the highest possible quality.
- Verification of the accuracy of the collected data.
- Organization, collection, categorization of historical data acquired by other group members.
- Ensure that the information collected is presented in a clear and organized manner for inclusion in the final documentary.
- Compilation of the final Works Consulted documents (submitted in a written format in addition to appearing at the end of the final production) using proper MLA citation.
- Serve as a resource when needed in the other areas of production.

Group Roles Lead

- **Media Specialist**
As the media specialist, you will focus on acquiring the raw multimedia materials for inclusion in the PowerPoint documentary being produced by your group. The multimedia materials collected will include: pictures, graphics, audio and possibly video. Materials may be scanned in from print sources (scanning is your responsibility, see your teacher for assistance if needed).
- **Main responsibilities:**
- Collection of multimedia resources (mostly acquired via the Internet, scanning, etc.).
- Categorization and cataloging of multimedia resources.
- Organization of multimedia collected by other members of the production team:
  - The media specialist should also hold other group members accountable for their efforts and also ensure that group members are assisting in the collection of multimedia files. All of the materials collected should be authentic and of the highest quality.
- Serve as a production assistant to the PowerPoint engineer in the production of the final presentation.
- Serve as a resource when needed in the other areas of production.

Group Roles Lead

- **PowerPoint Engineer**
  The PowerPoint engineer will focus on the actual construction of the group's segment. The engineer will need to communicate with the other members of the group to ensure that the final product reflects the input of all members. The engineer will also work very closely with the media specialist to obtain the multimedia materials to be used in the creation of the final presentation, and to gain assistance in the final stages of production. It will be essential that the engineer begin the framework of the presentation as soon as possible (even while the other members are still researching information and acquiring materials) to ensure that the presentation is ready by the given deadline. The engineer will oversee the narration of the voice-over for inclusion in the final presentation and work with the other members of the group during the recording process (refer to the provided PowerPoint guide for assistance or get the instructor's aid if needed).
- **Main responsibilities:**
- Take the lead in the use of the PowerPoint program to create the documentary segment:
  - Utilization of materials acquired by the Media Specialist
  - Animation of the presentation so that it will run automatically.
  - Recording narration voice-over for the group's presentation.
- Direct other group members when they are providing assistance with the production of the documentary's PowerPoint slides and narration.
- Solicit input from other group members to ensure that all ideas and opinions are considered in the final production.
- Work closely with the Media Specialist so that the collected multimedia materials are effectively incorporated into the final PowerPoint presentation.
- Works closely with the Segment Producer on the production of the segment's narration.
- Serve as a resource when needed in the other areas of production.

Group Roles Lead

- **Segment Producer**
  The segment producer is mainly responsible for ensuring that a timetable for the production is set and adhered to by the group. This task involves the coordination of the entire team's efforts and overseeing many aspects of the planning and production phases. A key role of the segment producer will be also be designing, writing and editing the voice-over narration script for the final production. The segment producer in effect manages the production and keeps the group on-task during all stages of production. The segment producer will also be responsible for acting as liaison between the group and the instructor, if and when problems or concerns arise. The segment producer will be involved in all areas of the assignment, assisting in research, multimedia collection, and the final PowerPoint production and narration recording.
- **Main responsibilities:**
- 1. Manage the group's efforts during all phases of the production process. In order to do this, the segment producer will need to be aware of the roles and responsibilities of the other group members:
  - Media Specialist
  - PowerPoint Engineer
  - Lead Historian
- Set a production timetable for the timely completion of the assignment.
- Ensure that group members are meeting the goals established by the timetable.
- Oversee the individual and cooperative efforts of all group members to be sure that they are meeting their assigned responsibilities:
  - A written record of attendance and daily activities must be maintained, which will be used when the group determines its member's individual grades.
  - Write summaries or "Rushes" on group progress at assigned intervals to be handed in (TBA).
  - Coordinate the group's assignment of individual gradesCoordinate the group's assignment of individual grades based on the evaluation of the group segment.
- Inspire the group members to act cooperatively and effectively as a team.
- Coordinate the creation of the narration voice-over for the PowerPoint production segment:
  - Utilize all members of the group in the authoring of the voice over.
  - Edit the final text of the voice over for content and style.
  - Establish the role of each group member for the final recording of the voice-over narration.
- Coordinate the creation of the study guide for the PowerPoint production segment:
  - Utilize all members of the group in the authoring of the study guide.
  - Include a relevant primary source document, or ask questions about one that appears in the production segment.
  - Edit the final text of the study guide for content and quality.
- Voice the group's concerns, problems and needs to the instructor.
- Serve as a resource when needed in the other areas of production.

Online Resources

- **[OHS Online Writing Guide: Citation Guides](#) (T. Caswell & B. Richardson, Oswego High School)**-Provides information regarding appropriate MLA citation.

- **[AltaVista Photo Finder](#) (AltaVista)**- A [media specialist's](#) dream come true! This site provides a quick way to search for photos and images relevant to your group's segment. This resource can provide historical political cartoons, photographs, and other visual sources of information.

- **[American Memory: Historical Collections for the National Digital Library](#) (Library of Congress)**- The Library of Congress' web site devoted to presenting its ever-growing collection of digital records to the public. Users can search for materials by key word, time period, and by media type (i.e., photos and prints, documents, motion pictures, maps, and sound recordings).

- **[Prints Old & Rare: Thomas Nast](#) (Prints Old & Rare)**-Contains a small selection of Nast's political cartoons, including a few that focus on Tamany Hall.

- **[ThomasNast.com](#) (HarpWeek, LLC)**-A web site dedicated to Thomas Nast and his political cartoons that were featured in *Harper's Weekly*.

- **[Central Pacific Railroad: Photographic History Museum](#) (CPRR Museum)**-An incredible treasure trove of historic photographs relating to the development of railroads. Includes pictures of Chinese immigrants laying track.

Online Resources

- **Immigrant and Ethnic America** (HarpWeek, LLC)-Includes political cartoons by Thomas Nast and articles that appeared in *Harper's Weekly*. Topics include: culture; labor; anti-Chinese movement; politics; China and the world; ethnic comparisons; and immigration in different regions of the United States.

- **Child Labor in America: 1908-1912** (The History Place)- An archive of photographs by Lewis W. Hine dealing exclusively with child labor.

- **Primary Source Materials of the Gilded Age** (Scott Nelson, William and Mary)- A collection of electronic primary source materials from 1866-1901, including fiction, non-fiction, presidential writings, and much more. Authors include: Horatio Alger; Andrew Carnegie; Herbert Spencer; and many others.

- ***How the Other Half Lives* by Jacob Riis** (TenantNet)- An electronic hypertext edition of *How the Other Half Lives* by Jacob Riis. This site contains the complete text of the original book with many scanned photos and sketches based on Riis' original photographs as well.

Online Resources

- **Websites for the Gilded Age and Progressive Era** **(Robert W. Cherny, San Francisco State University)-** An organized collection of links which include: primary source materials, photographs, and other Internet-based reference resources. Organized by topic and theme (within the general era of 1865-1915).
- **Labor-Coal Mining in the 19th Century** **(Ohio State)-** A specific resource for lessons on the experience of coal miners during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. This site features personal accounts, and primary source photographs as well as other materials.
- **The Gilded Age and the Politics of Corruption** **(University of Wisconsin)-** A review outline of lectures from a 102-level introductory history course at the University of Wisconsin. This is lecture #4 and begins the 5 part series on the Gilded Age. These serve as excellent review materials (with photos, primary sources, etc.) as well as brief overviews of many topics (e.g., biographies of Gilded Age business leaders).
- **The American Experience: Andrew Carnegie** **(PBS)-** A web site about Andrew Carnegie, including: his life, a timeline, actions, successes, philanthropy, etc.
- **John D. Rockefeller & the Standard Oil Company** **(Francois Micheloud)**-An outline of a book that focuses on the life and times of Rockefeller and his infamous oil company.

Evaluation Individual Grading

- While cooperation and team work are key to this project, it is not uncommon for some group members to work to a lesser or to a greater degree than others. To address this concern, individual grades will be determined based on the points earned by the segment, and based on the group's evaluation of each of its members.

Project Grading

Based on the criteria that we developed in class, please keep the following grading rubric in mind as you collaboratively create your segment:

- **Criteria Score Factual Content-**The information included in the documentary is accurate and relevant to the topic, and includes all of the required items listed on the [Documentary Segments](#) page.
- **Use of Primary Sources**-Several relevant primary sources (e.g., photographs, Supreme Court rulings, Federal legislation, personal accounts, etc.) have been used to provide information about the content contained in the documentary segment.
- **Media Use**-The sounds, images, animations, and slide transitions that are used are both relevant and purposeful.
- **Organization**-The documentary segment is organized in a logical manner, making it easy to understand the information that is being presented.
- **Citation**-The last slide of the PowerPoint presentation contains an [MLA-style](#) Works Consulted listing all of the resources used for this project (e.g., textbook, review book, web pages, etc.).
- **Narration/ Interview(s)**-Narration and/or interview(s) are used as the primary means of transmitting information for the documentary. The narration and/or interview(s) are relevant and compliment the media selected for the documentary segment.
- **Study Guide**-The study guide acts as an outline of the documentary, providing students with a resource to review the material presented. The study guide should closely follow the presentation of the documentary.
- **Formatting**-The segment maintains the formatting required to create a uniform class documentary (e.g., background color, font size, font type, font color, etc.) and is between 10 and 15 minutes in length.

Project Grading

- Each of these criteria will be rated according to the following point scale:

- **Score Meaning:**

- 3 **Excellent**-This criteria has been met in every possible way, and may even exceed expectations.

- 2**Acceptable-**This criteria has been mostly addressed, however, there is room for improvement.

- 1**Sub par-**Some elements have been met, but most of the criteria fails to be addressed.

- 0**Incomplete-**This criteria has not been addressed in any meaningful way or has not been completed.

Conclusion

- After completing this WebQuest, you will understand the major concepts and themes of the Gilded Age in American history. Check your understanding of these ideas by considering the following essential questions:
- What conditions existed in the United States which allowed the Industrial Revolution to take root and flourish in America?
- How did laissez-faire capitalism influence the development of business organization in the United States?
- Were the leaders of Big Business "robber barons," or in fact "captains of industry?"
- How did some philosophies serve to support class division during the Gilded Age?
- How did the Industrial Revolution cause urbanization and a dramatic increase in the number of immigrants to the United States?
- What effect did urbanization and immigration have on the United States?
- Why have many historians considered the late 1800's in America to be a Gilded Age; a period which was outwardly showy, but inwardly corrupt?
- How did early reaction to the Gilded Age attempt to correct the abuses of the period?