



Teaching Guide

SEGMENT 7, WEBISODE 10

Please note: Each segment in this Webisode has its own Teaching Guide



Segment Overview



Let's Discuss

During his second administration, Grover Cleveland met the economic emergency by pursuing a conservative course in the midst of his own liberal Democratic party. The old economic platform of the Democrats had so over-valued silver relative to gold that it led to the near collapse and bankruptcy of the United States government. In his attempt to restore a sound economy, Cleveland supported a lower tariff and secured the repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act.

Still gold reserves dwindled. Much to the chagrin of some American citizens, President Cleveland turned to J.P. Morgan to shore up the government with gold from private banks in exchange for United States government bonds. This stabilized the currency, and prosperity returned. Much political debate of the 1890s centered on money, whether gold should remain the only standard, or both gold and silver should back American currency.

Teacher Directions

1. Display the following quotation on the chalkboard, chart paper, or transparency.

The people of the United States are entitled to a sound and stable currency. Their government has no right to injure them by financial experiments opposed to the policy and practice of other civilized states.

~~ President Grover Cleveland

2. Students, in small teams, discuss the following questions.
 - What is the financial experiment to which President Cleveland refers?
 - Why does he say that the experiment opposes “the policy and practice of other civilized states?”
 - Who are the people President Cleveland wants to protect?
 - Who might be harmed by Cleveland’s policy?
3. Make sure students understand the following points in discussing their answers with the class.

Let's Discuss, Cont.



History Sleuth

President Cleveland refers to using a bimetal (both gold and silver) standard to back American currency. Most countries in the world used the gold standard, so using silver seemed experimental. President Cleveland wants to protect the big money interests who want money to be tight (not plentiful). Farmers, common workers, and silver miners are hurt when Cleveland abolishes the silver standard, which made money more plentiful for them.

Teacher Directions

1. Distribute the Student Sheet: *Monopolized*, one copy to each team.
2. Working in their small teams, students use the Student Sheet: *Cartoon Analyzer* to discuss and understand the political cartoon.
3. Students share their findings in a class discussion.
4. Ask the students to speculate.
 - How are government and trade related?
 - What might the government do to create monopolies or benefit big businesses (like the big hog in the cartoon)?
 - Who benefits from trade restrictions and tariffs?
 - Who suffers from trade restrictions and tariffs?
5. Help the students to understand that the government can control trade through laws that restrict it and through tariffs, which are taxes that make goods imported from foreign countries more expensive and therefore less desirable.

Restrictions and tariffs help big businesses grow because they eliminate foreign competition. They harm small businesses and those who are not wealthy because people cannot afford the increased prices, and they harm foreign countries that want to trade with the United States.

Teacher Directions

1. Students imagine that they are workers or farmers and Congress has just repealed the Sherman Silver Purchase Act.
2. Write a letter to your congressman telling him how this will affect you and your ability to pay your bills and buy the things that you need for your family.



What do you
Think?



Moving Toward
Freedom



Connections

Teacher Directions

1. Discuss with students the effect of tight money (based on the gold standard) on common people who are not wealthy.
2. Help the students understand the gold and silver standards by discussing the following questions.
 - Which metal, gold or silver, is scarcer in the world and therefore more valuable?
 - If currency is based on silver, would the government be able to print more money or less money than if currency is based on gold? (more because silver is cheaper and more plentiful).
 - If you were a worker or a farmer, would you want the government to base its money on gold or on silver? Why?
 - What would you think of the repeal of the law, the Sherman Silver Purchase Act, that allowed the government to base currency on silver?
 - Who would benefit from the repeal of this law? Why?
 - Do you think the return to the gold standard was a move toward freedom for the nation? Why or why not?

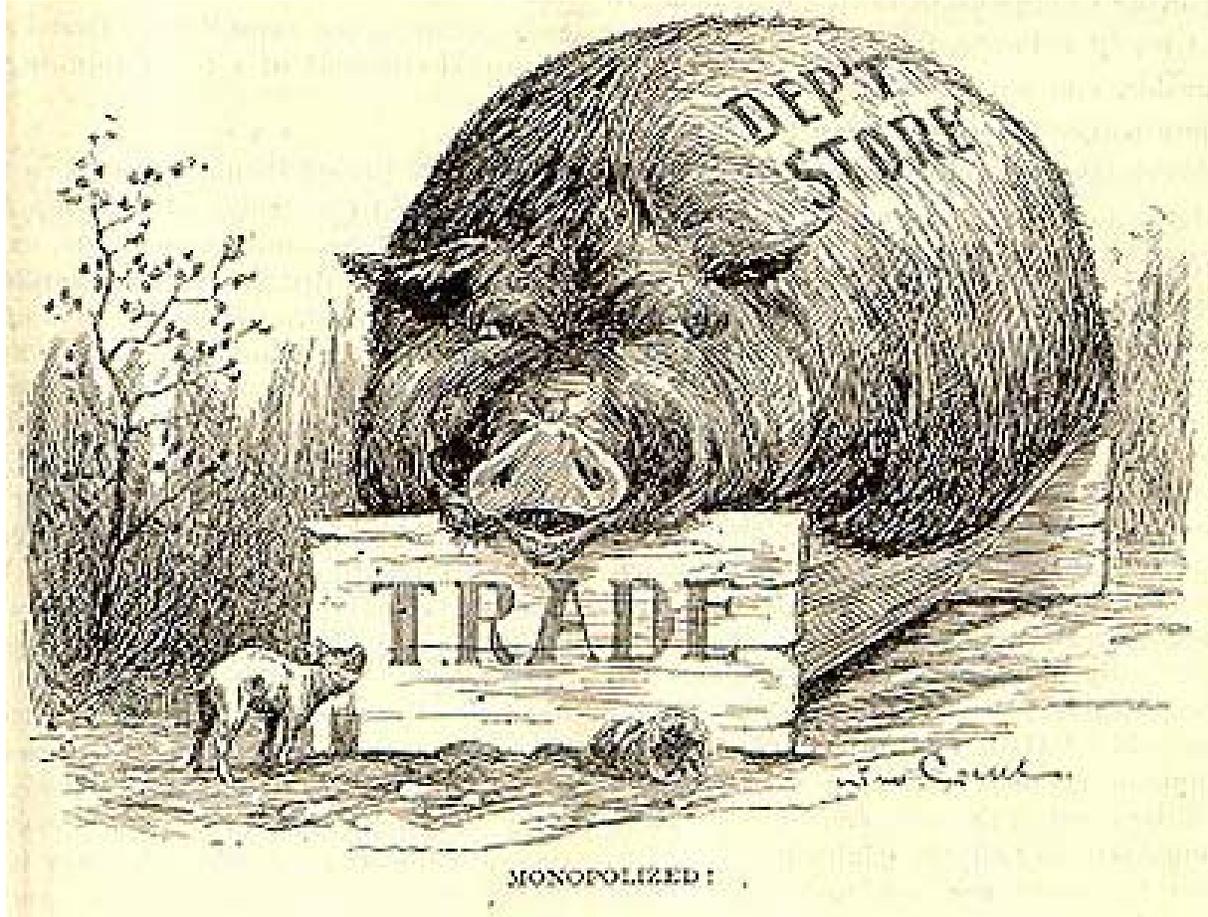
Teacher Directions

Use the following activities with your students.

Geography — Students locate and place the past and present sites of the United States mints on a map.

Research/Math — Students research the price of gold and the price of silver. Make a graph of the fluctuations of these prices over a month.

Monopolized!



The Ram's Horn

Cartoon Analyzer

Visuals

Which of the objects or characters in the cartoon are symbols?

What do you think each symbol means?

Words (not all cartoons include words)

Which words or phrases in the cartoon appear to be the most significant?

Why do you think so?

Describe the action taking place in the cartoon.

Explain the message of the cartoon.

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