

Teaching Guide

SEGMENT 3, WEBISODE 9

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



Segment Overview

During the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth, America struggled to balance the needs of its workers—many of whom were immigrants and child laborers—with the greed of Gilded Age capitalists. The gap between rich and poor grew so large that it threatened to swallow up capitalism itself.

Andrew Carnegie—like his fellow “captains of industry” John D. Rockefeller and J. Pierpont Morgan—demonstrated both the opportunities and the excesses of the American capitalist system during this time. Carnegie, a Scottish immigrant, started his life in business as a twelve-year-old bobbin boy in a textile factory and rose to command the American steel industry.

Like Rockefeller and Morgan, Carnegie worked hard and shrewdly took every opportunity that came his way. He was full of contradictions: while he was a generous benefactor, his workers were poorly paid. Even though his plants reaped huge profits, he cut wages and ruthlessly quashed fledging labor uprisings—most notably at his Homestead steel mill. Carnegie could be unstintingly generous: he founded hundreds of libraries, endowed foundations, and believed that the duty of the rich man was to be merely a steward of his money and use it for the betterment of society. By the time he died in 1919, Carnegie had given away over 350 million dollars, and upon his death, the last thirty million was given away to foundations, charities, and pensioners.

Teacher Directions

1. Students, in small teams, discuss the following questions.
 - Why did Mark Twain call this era the “Gilded Age”?
 - Why is Carnegie’s life a rags to riches story?
 - How did Carnegie earn his riches?
 - What happened at the Homestead steel mill?
 - How did Carnegie’s ideas about making and saving money change?
2. Make sure students understand the following points in discussing the questions.

Mark Twain called this time a “Gilded Age” because the appearance of gold and riches covered but did not change the poverty underneath. It was an age of extremes, of robber barons and impoverished immigrants, monopolies and muckrakers, child labor and conspicuous consumption.



Let's Discuss

Let's Discuss, Cont.



History Sleuth

Andrew Carnegie came to America as a poor immigrant and became one of the wealthiest men of the time. Carnegie invested in the steel business. He kept profits high and wages low. When workers went on strike at the Homestead steel mill, Carnegie's manager sent in armed detectives to break up the strike. Twenty strikers and four detectives were killed. Carnegie spent most of his life earning money, but at age sixty-six, he began giving away all his money. He established libraries, schools, colleges, and other charitable organizations.

Teacher Directions

Activity One

1. Discuss with students the following questions.

Should the president and founder of a large corporation earn more than his laborers? How much more?
2. Allow students to share their responses. Explain that in 1890, the average worker earned about \$10 a week, just above the poverty line of \$500 a year.
3. Display the Transparency: *Gilded Age Wages*. Explain to students that it took the wages of nearly 4,000 steelworkers to match the earnings of steel tycoon Andrew Carnegie.
4. Discuss the following questions with students.
 - Do you think this gap in wages between the owner and his workers will lead to trouble?
 - Do you think this gap exists today?
 - How does this difference in salaries compare to today's workers and corporate executives?
5. Tell students that Bill Gates, the founder and CEO of Microsoft, is one of the richest men in America today. His company created a software system that is used on most of the world's computers. His estimated worth is \$69 billion dollars! A secretary in his company might earn approximately \$20,000 a year (based on 1990 figures).

Activity Two

1. Distribute the Student Sheet: *Gilded Age Gent: Andrew Carnegie*. Working in small learning teams, students record information about Carnegie's background, character traits, how he made his fortune, and how he used his money.
2. Explain that an *epitaph* is a brief statement found on a tombstone. It often sums up the person's life or describes him. Students create an epitaph for Carnegie. You may want to share some possible suggestions with students.

History Sleuth, Cont.

- The man who dies thus rich, dies disgraced
- Generous, but not to his workers
- He lived like a prince, but his workers lived like paupers
- From rags to riches
- The Generous Scotsman

3. Give students an opportunity to share their epitaphs with the class.

Note to the Teacher: This activity may be expanded to include a comparison of the three Gilded Age tycoons profiled in Webisode 9 (Carnegie, segment 3; Rockefeller, segment 4; and J. P. Morgan, segment 5). For students to compare the three men, distribute the Student Sheet: *Gilded Age Gents*.

Teacher Directions

1. Write the following quotes from Andrew Carnegie on a transparency or on the chalkboard. Define difficult vocabulary for students (modest, unostentatious, shunning, surplus, revenues, trust funds).

In his *Gospel of Wealth*, Carnegie wrote, “This, then is held to be the duty of the man of wealth: first, to set an example of modest unostentatious living, shunning display....and...to consider all surplus revenues which come to him simply as trust funds...to administer in the manner which...is best calculated to produce the most beneficial results for the community.”

2. Carnegie also said that “the man who dies thus rich, dies disgraced.”

3. Lead a class discussion of these quotes. Use the following questions as guidelines.

- Do you agree or disagree with these quotes?
- Did Andrew Carnegie follow this principle in his own life? Support your opinion.
- Do you think the average person today can work his or her way up to a more comfortable lifestyle?





Moving Toward
Freedom



Connections

Teacher Directions

1. Distribute the Student Sheet: *Labor, or The Reading Blacksmith*. Working in small learning teams, students examine the photograph of the statue and read about its creation.
2. To encourage closer scrutiny of the statue, students brainstorm fifteen details about *The Reading Blacksmith*. Allow students to share their lists with the class.
3. Students discuss the overall message of the statue. Use the following questions as guidelines.
 - What is the sculptor's overall message?
 - How does he communicate this?
 - Describe his ideal working man.
4. Students discuss: How did Andrew Carnegie move America toward freedom?

Teacher Directions

Use the following activities with your students.

Video/Social Studies — Students view the PBS video *The Richest Man in the World: Andrew Carnegie*.

Math — Students create graphs that show the expansion of railroads during the Gilded Age.

Art — Students view the statue "Labor" also known as "The Reading Blacksmith," which Carnegie gave to the city of Allegheny, Pennsylvania (available on the web site www.clpgh.org/exhibit/french1.html). Students draw their own pencil or pen and ink sketch of the statue, or design their own statue in honor of the working man and woman.

Gilded Age Wages

Daily Wages of Joe Steelworker \$10/week 5

Daily Wages of Andrew Carnegie \$40,000/week

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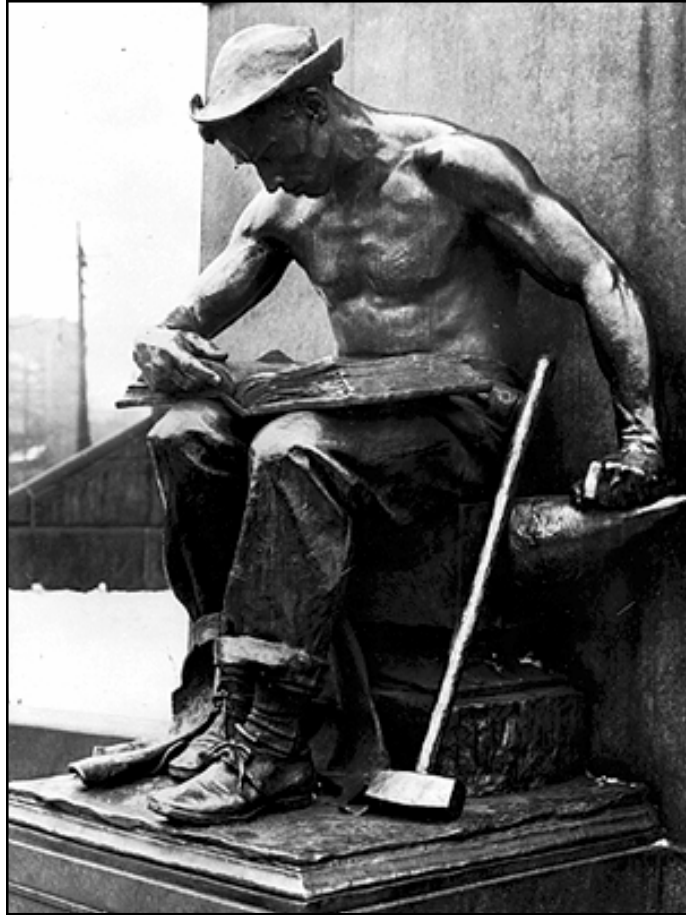
Gilded Age Gent: Andrew Carnegie

My Back- ground	
My Character Traits	
My Money: How I Made It	
My Money: How I Used It	
My Epitaph	

Gilded Age Gents

	Andrew Carnegie	John D. Rockefeller	J.P. Morgan
My Back-ground			
My Character Traits			
My Money: How I Made It			
My Money: How I Used It			
My Epitaph			

Labor or The Reading Blacksmith



Photograph courtesy of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

Andrew Carnegie gave this statue to the people of Allegheny, Pennsylvania. The sculptor, Daniel Chester French, also created the statue of Abraham Lincoln in the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

The statue honors businessman Colonel James Anderson, who opened free libraries in western Pennsylvania. The inscription on the statue states that Anderson “opened his library to working boys and on Saturday afternoons acted as librarian, thus dedicating not only his books, but himself, to the noble work.” On the plaque, Andrew Carnegie notes that he himself was “one of the working boys to whom were thus opened the precious treasures of knowledge and imagination through which youth may ascend.”

In his later years, Carnegie gave away millions of dollars to establish libraries. ⊕