

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Grades 5 to 12

Freedoms Gained and Lost in the Gilded Age

America's Quest for Freedom Series

Subject Area: United States History, Social Studies

Synopsis: Describes the rapid growth of the United States following the Civil War as the last of the free Native Americans were forced onto reservations, new inventions changed life and industry, individual entrepreneurs rose to power, and immigrants arrived from Europe in search of freedom and opportunities.

Learning Objectives:

- Objective 1)** Students will be able to identify the factors that contributed to the period of rapid change following the Civil War, including improved transportation, new inventions, and the emergence of powerful individual entrepreneurs.
- Objective 2)** Students will be able to discuss the relocation of Native Americans to reservations and detail the journey taken by the Nez Perce in an attempt to keep their freedom.
- Objective 3)** Students will be able to explain how new inventions, such as Thomas Edison's electric light, changed life and advanced industry.
- Objective 4)** Students will be able to discuss the rise of the "Robber Barons", powerful, wealthy businessmen of the 19th century, and the increasing gap between the rich and poor during this period.
- Objective 5)** Students will be able to describe the wave of immigration in the late 19th century and early 20th century and recall how these new immigrants challenged working conditions by forming labor organizations and instituting strikes.

Pre-Viewing Discussion and Activities:

- 1) Discuss the freedoms held by Native Americans, African Americans, women, factory workers and settlers at the end of the Civil War.
- 2) Vocabulary: boom, rebuild, transportation, frontier, reservations, peaceably, surrender, invent, collaborate, quintessential, corporation, industrial capitalism, ruthless, entrepreneur, industry, resentment, conspicuous, philanthropist extravagance, prominent, immigrants, oppression, poverty, strike

Post-Viewing Discussion and Activities:

- 1) On a map, locate the region in Oregon originally held by the Nez Perce Indians, trace their journey towards Canada under the leadership of Chief Joseph, and point out the reservation they were given after their surrender.
- 2) Why did Chief Joseph try to lead his people to Canada? How would life have been different for the Nez Perce in Canada than on a reservation in the United States?
- 3) In what ways did the expansion of the railroads put an end to the frontier? What opportunities to did the railroads offer to settlers?

- 4) Explore how Thomas Edison's invention of electric light changed life. How would life be different today if we had no electric lights? List the other innovations we have today that could not be possible without the electric light, such as the motion picture camera.
- 5) Compare and contrast J.P. Morgan and Andrew Carnegie. How did these men come into their fortunes? What were their family backgrounds? What types of businesses did they own?
- 6) According to Andrew Carnegie, what is the role of the wealthy in society? Do you agree?
- 7) During the time of the Robber Barons many wondered if the gap between the rich and the poor would damage the American democracy. How could American democracy be compromised by this gap?
- 8) Why did immigrants come to America in the late 19th century and early 20th centuries? Where did most immigrants find employment? How did these immigrants change working conditions in the factories?

Additional Activities:

- 1) Use an encyclopedia to find a list of inventions by Thomas Edison. Divide students into groups of three or four and ask each group to select an invention to research. Each group should research the invention, the original purpose of the invention, how it is used today, and how it has impacted life or industry. Allow time in class for each group to present their findings.
- 2) Ask students to research their family histories and report on when their ancestors moved to the United States, their countries of origin, their reasons for immigrating, and their experiences as immigrants.
- 3) As a class project, learn about a group of recent immigrants in your area. Through interviews, if possible, learn about their country of origin, their reasons for immigrating to the United States, and the challenges they face in their new community. Also discuss how these immigrants are influencing life in the United States.

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