

Lesson Plans for The Gilded Age to the Great War: America at the Turn of the Century.

[African American Identity in the Gilded Age: Two Unreconciled Strivings](#)

Library of Congress

Subjects: US History and Geography

This Library of Congress lesson asks students to use primary sources to track the African American struggle from Reconstruction to the Great Migration after the end of the First World War. Students will identify ways in which African Americans sustained a vibrant culture and appreciate how a shared experience can shape a people's identity.

[America at the Centennial](#)

Library of Congress

Subjects: World History and Geography

This lesson uses resources from the Library of Congress to facilitate student study of the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876. Students will analyze the texts and images to make hypotheses about what the selected items and images said about America. Studying the Exposition in the context of its time will allow students to work as historians to construct museum exhibits on issues relevant to Centennial-era America. The lesson presents an opportunity for students to use library resources to conduct online searches, interpret and analyze primary sources, and create historical presentations.

[Child Labor in America](#)

Library of Congress

Subjects: History and Social Studies

The combination of rapid industrialization and influx of poor immigrants in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries made it easier for employers to justify allowing young children to join the workforce. This unit asks students to critically examine and respond to photographs as historical evidence. The Library of Congress resources highlight the work of photographer and reformer Lewis Hine. The photographs allow students to identify problems confronted by people in the past and analyze proposed solutions and corresponding action. Throughout, students will study the interconnected relationship of political, economic, and social history and recognize the role citizen action can play in shaping public policy.

[Child Labor and the Building of America](#)

Library of Congress

Subjects: History and Social Studies

Today's students maintain a very different school/work balance than that of students coming of age during America's rapid industrialization from 1880-1920. This Library of Congress lesson challenges

students to immerse themselves in primary sources in order to make personal connections to the past. The lesson culminates in a student-driven project designed to build visual and informational literacy and develop analytical skills. Finally, completion of the project will instill in students the understanding that children played a significant and heroic role in the creation of modern America.

Labor Unions and Working Conditions: United We Stand

Library of Congress

Subject: History

This primary source-rich lesson encourages students to reflect on the conditions faced by workers in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. Students will analyze and discuss the significance of sources presented from American Memory. Seeing and describing working conditions will allow students to understand the rise of the labor movement and justification for unions. Students then use their analysis of primary source to create posters and newspapers defending their arguments for improving working conditions faced by laborers. The lesson culminates with students making a judgment supported by evidence: Was there a need for organized labor unions?

The Industrial Age in America: Sweatshops, Steel Mills, and Factories

EDSITEment, National Endowment for the Humanities

Subject: History

Haymarket, Homestead, Triangle – studying this trio of events tasks students with debating the line between good business practices and unacceptable working conditions. Students begin by discussing working conditions that led to the events and creating a list of positive and negative actions of some managers and workers involved. Students continue the conversation by reflecting on the events' effects on both industrialists and the attitude of the American people toward working conditions in the United States. Students are invited to extend the activity by using evidence to take a stand on modern sweatshops.

The Industrial Age in America: Robber Barons and Captains of Industry

EDSITEment, National Endowment for the Humanities

Subjects: History, Literature and Language Arts

This lesson opens with an introduction to early industrialists. Students will create working definitions for both “robber barons” and “captains of industry.” Students will explore middle ground by listing positive and negative actions of one or more captains of industry/robber barons in order to notice that such definitions cannot always be applied easily. Students will use their findings as evidence and take a stand as to whether a particular individual is or is not a robber baron. Finally, students will adopt a historical persona and respond to criticism in a hypothetical letter to the editor.

Nineteenth Century Women: Struggle and Triumph

Library of Congress

Subjects: History and Social Studies

Students will read and analyze journals, letters, narratives, and other primary sources to shed light on the lives of women who helped shape the history of the early United States. After sharing their findings in a group discussion, students will synthesize information from multiple sources in order to write a persuasive letter in the voice of a nineteenth century woman in the Northeast, Southeast, or West.