

Name: Karen Fleming

Title: The Gilded Age

Subject: U.S. History - Eighth Grade

State: Illinois

The Gilded Age Unit will consist of the rise of the middle class through the increase of the upper Class, and the disparity of the wages and living conditions of the working class. The rapid changes in technology and industrialization, the rise in immigration, union organizations, and the development of capitalization created an environment of imbalance that grew wider with its influence still being experienced in today's society.

**Objective:** Students will gain a better understanding of the changes in the social structure of the United States in the upper class and the working class to form an expanded middle class through industrialization, immigration, and transportation during the Gilded Age.

ISBE:

SS.IS.5.6-8.MdC. Identify evidence from multiple sources to support claims, noting any limitations of the evidence.

SS.6-8.IS.5.MC. Develop claims and counterclaims using evidence from credible sources while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both. Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action Communicating Conclusions

SS.6-8.IS.6.LC. Construct arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging the arguments' strengths and limitations

SS.6-8.H.1.MdC. Analyze connections and disconnections among events and developments in broader historical contexts and identify the effects of events on groups of people who have been marginalized.

SS.6-8.H.1.MC. Evaluate the significance of historical events to multiple groups and the relationship to modern-day movements and events.

SS.6-8.H.3.MdC. Detect possible biases and limitations in the historical record based on evidence collected from different kinds of historical sources by identifying the author, purpose, funding/source, type of publication/outlet, intended audience, etc.

SS.6-8.H.3.MC. Evaluate the validity of claims made in historical sources representing a variety of perspectives, describe the possible or actual impact(s) of the sources on audiences, and determine uses and applications.

Materials: Fact Sheet for the Group Project on Homestead and the Steel Industry,  
Reference Material  
Individual Internet Access Devices

Time Frame: One week - ten days

Introduction of the “Gilded Age,” Late 1800’s

- Definition of “Gilded”:
- Name believed to be from Mark Twain’s novel The Gilded Age which described a time of unsteady foundations of industrialist’s wealth on the backs of the American workers
- Review the rapid growth both in the country and in industry with many new inventions and methods of working after the Reconstruction.

### **Whole Class Work**

- Explore Andrew Carnegie and Henry Clay Frick as associated with the Steel Mills and Coke Mills in the Homestead, Pennsylvania area using the available resources and recording on the “The Gilded Age Fact Sheet.” Demonstrate how to find information in a variety of resources and how to narrow the search for pertinent information.
- After completion of the fact sheet, discuss the ramifications of the inequity of the living situations and the working conditions. Discuss what could have happened. Show the videos on the Homestead Steel Strike, and Men of Steel. Each student will write a one page response of their impression of the impact these men and the strike had on our history and outlook of the people, especially of the immigrants of the United States at that time. Additionally, each student should include if he or she believes these impressions are still evident today with reasons stated to back that belief.

### **Small Group Work**

Students will follow the same framework and fact sheet as the whole class work while working with more local industries.

1. Matthiessen and Hegler Zinc LaSalle, Illinois
2. Pullman Palace Car Company Pullman, Illinois
3. Cyrus McCormick, Jr. Chicago, Illinois

At the conclusions of the research, each group will create and present a fact sheet, brief history, and a written impression that will be shared digitally with the class.

[The Gilded Age Fact Sheet Original](#)

### **Reference Material**

Born of Fire. Westmoreland Museum of American Art and Visionaries, Inc., 2006

The child miners’ photos of Lewis Hine that appalled America, 1908-1911

<https://rarehistoricalphotos.com/child-miners-lewis-hine>. December 4, 2021

Gale, Dr. Neil, PhD. “Lost Towns of Illinois - Strasburg in LaSalle County,”  
<https://drioijournal.blogspot.com/>

Historic Home and Gardens | The Frick Pittsburgh  
<https://www.thefrickpittsburgh.org/historichome>

Jones, Barbara L. Born of Fire: The Valley of Work, Industrial Scenes of Southwestern Pennsylvania. The Westmoreland Museum of American Art, 2006.

The Men Who Built America (2012) [https://watchdocumentaries.com/the-men-who-built-america/?video\\_index=3](https://watchdocumentaries.com/the-men-who-built-america/?video_index=3)

Out of This Furnace: A Walking Tour of Thomas Bell’s Novel,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlal7566jDk> 1992.

“The Rise of Labor, Freedom: A History of the US (episode 9, segment 6). [www.thirteen.org](http://www.thirteen.org),

Rivers of Steel Homestead Corporation. Homestead Strike  
[https://artsandculture.google.com/story/the-homestead-strike-rivers-of-steel/BQVxuirD\\_5ZSLQ?hl=en](https://artsandculture.google.com/story/the-homestead-strike-rivers-of-steel/BQVxuirD_5ZSLQ?hl=en)

Steel and the Birth of a City. <https://www.esri.com/content/dam/esrisites/en-us/media/pdf/8-naturalresources-ushistory-geoinquiry.pdf>

Stone, Katherine. Origins of Structure of Steel. <https://libcom.org/article/origins-job-structure-steel-industry-katherine-stone>

Zinc plant photo <https://downtownlasalle.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/zincworks-big.jpg>