20th Century U.S. History

UNIT 1: Land of Opportunity?

ESSENTIAL QUESTION	BIG IDEAS
Does capitalism promote opportunity for all?	Through the lens of modern U.S. History, student historians will… • evaluate the impact of the second industrialization on the economy. • evaluate the role of government regulation, the consequences of corruption and consolidation of power. • analyze the goals and strategies of labor leaders and organizations and evaluate their success or failures. • compare the Gilded Age to contemporary issues and solutions. • analyze the social and political responses to mass immigration. • debate the American ideal of opportunity.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

Content
(Kansas HGSS Standards & Benchmarks indicated)

- How did large-scale production, massive technological change, expanding international communication networks, and laissez-faire government policies lead to an era of industrial growth? (4.1) (4.2) (4.3)
- What impact did political corruption and unregulated railroads, business trusts and monopolies have on the economy and the American worker? (1.1) (1.2)
- What role did immigrants play in industrialization, did they achieve the “American Dream” and how did government and existing society react to the influx of immigrants? (i.e. Chinese, Irish, Italian, Japanese, etc.) (4.1) (4.2) (4.3)
- What impact did racism and nativism have on the effectiveness of the labor movement? (5.1)
- Was the Sherman Antitrust Act effective? In what ways? (1.1) (1.2)
- What were some of the major labor strikes of the era, what were the results? (1.1) (1.2)
- How did corporations and the federal government respond to organized labor strikes? What motivated these actions? What were the effects? (5.1) (5.2)
- What cultural and intellectual arguments justified the success of those at the top of the socioeconomic structure? (3.1) (3.2)
- What were the demands and goals of workers and labor leaders in an attempt to improve the protection, power and influence of workers? (i.e. Euguene Debs, Samuel Gompers) (3.1) (3.2)
- How did sharecropping and the convict leasing labor systems in the South impact the social and economic mobility of African Americans? (1.1) (1.2)

Process
(NCSS C3 Framework Standards indicated)

- How do I explain how supporting questions contribute to an inquiry and how, through engaging source work, new compelling and supporting questions emerge? (D1.4.9-12)
- How do I determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources? (D1.5.9-12)
- How do I evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by the unique circumstances of

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time and place as well as broader historical contexts? (D2.His.1.9-12)

Reflective

- Did this time period deserve the name the "Gilded Age"?
- How do businesses build and maintain economic power and at what costs?
- How are people impacted by industrialization and globalization?
- Should the government protect the opportunity of private businesses or the opportunity of the worker and consumer?
- How do workers build and maintain power? Are unions still necessary today?
- Should the government regulate the economy?
- Can violence be justified to achieve economic goals?
- Do the wealthy have some obligation to help society?
- What are the consequences of large-scale, poverty-level wages for workers across America?
- Who owns your labor? What is the value of your labor and time?
- Was America really the land of opportunity?

FOCUS STANDARDS

Kansas History, Government, and Social Studies Standards

- The student will recognize and evaluate significant choices and consequences that have impacted our lives and futures. (1.1)
- The student will analyze the context and draw conclusions about choices and consequences. (1.2)
- The student will use his/her understanding of choices and consequences to make a claim or advance a thesis using evidence and argument. (1.4)
- The student will recognize and evaluate how societies are shaped by the identities, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups. (3.1)
- The student will analyze context and draw conclusions about how societies are shaped by the identities, beliefs and practices of individuals and groups. (3.2)
- The student will recognize and evaluate continuity and change over time. (4.1)
- The student will analyze the context and draw conclusions about continuity and change. (4.2)
- The student will investigate and connect continuity and change to a contemporary issue. (4.3)
- The student will recognize and evaluate dynamic relationships that impact lives in communities, states, and nations. (5.1)
- The student will analyze the context of significant relationships and draw conclusions. (5.2)

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