

Industrialization

Part Three



Part One

Part Two

Part Three

Thematic Icons



Economics



Geography



Historical concepts



Government

Icons



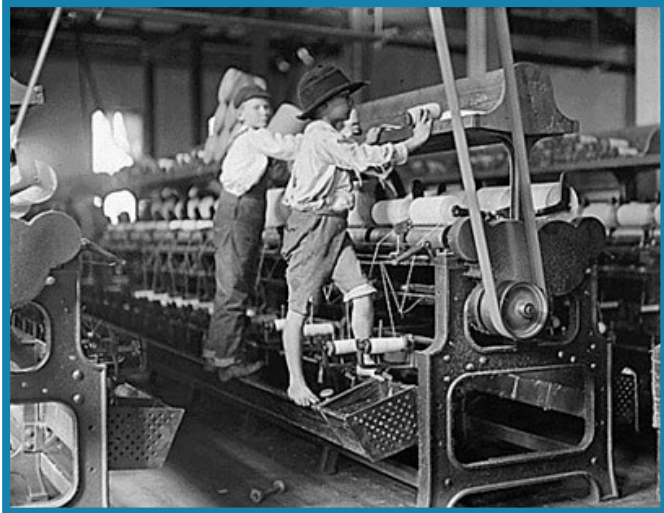
Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page

For more instructions, see the *User Guide*.





By 1900, about two-thirds of the population earned wages.

Working conditions were often terrible. Machinery was dangerous and injuries were common.

Twelve-hour days and six-day weeks were common, with no vacations or compensation for injuries. Employees had effectively no rights.

Wages were generally low due to the availability of labor. Women and children often had to work in order for a family to make enough money to survive and they were paid even less.

Why did people put up with these conditions?



In response to poor working conditions and low wages, **unions** were formed to fight for workers' rights. They wanted:

- better pay
- shorter hours
- safer working conditions.



One of the tactics used by unions was **strikes**, where the workers refused to work. Union officials then tried to make a deal with the owner. If the owner made concessions, the laborers came back to work, but often this did not happen.

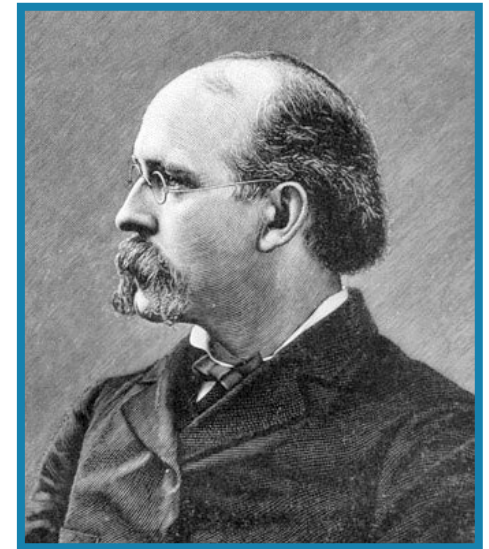
How do you think business owners
tried to defeat unions?





Small groups of skilled workers had formed unions for many decades, but the first national labor organization was the **National Labor Union (NLU)** in 1866.

The NLU was fairly unsuccessful, but it paved the way for other groups, such as the **Knights of Labor**. The Knights were open to all workers, including the unskilled, women and black people, who were often excluded from other labor groups.



The Knights supported **equal pay** for men and women and an eight-hour workday. Membership grew until 1886, but it declined sharply afterwards following a series of failed strikes.





In the late 19th century, two large labor unions were created.

American Federation of Labor (AFL)

- founded by Samuel Gompers
- only skilled workers could join
- focused on attainable workplace goals
- achieved better pay and shorter hours

American Railway Union (ARU)

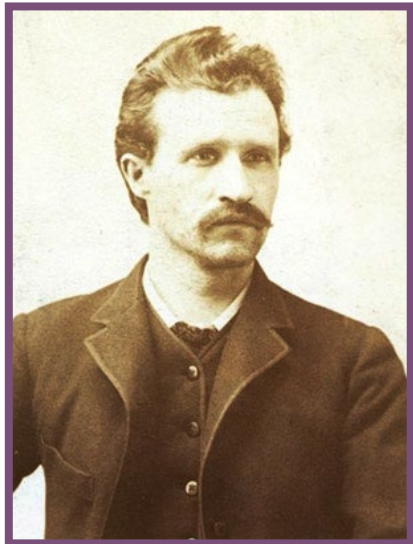
- founded and led by Eugene V. Debs
- all workers could join
- became invested in socialist politics
- helped motivate the left and the labor movement



Famous strikes



Following the Haymarket affair, public opinion began to turn against unions and the labor movement. Eight men were convicted in connection with the bomb and four were hanged. One of these was August Spies, who gave the following address to the court:



“I believe with Paine, Jefferson, and many other great thinkers, that the state of castes and classes, this barbaric form of social organization, with its legalized plunder and murder, is doomed to die, and make room for a free society.”

What does Spies think of American society?

During industrialization, new technologies made it possible for machines and factories to churn out goods at a faster pace.

A new elite sprang out of this transitional period. Businessmen were able to exert control over the market and earned huge amounts of money. At the same time, many workers had little power over their low wages and terrible working and living conditions. Big business controlled the labor movement.



Overall, do you think that industrialization was a good thing? Why or why not? Was it necessary?

