

U.S. History Lesson: Robber Baron or Captain of Industry

Taken from: Unit 2: “Bridge to the 20th Century”; Chapter 6 “A New Industrial Age”

Goal/Aim/Purpose: To determine whether Rockefeller and Carnegie were Robber Barons or Captains of Industry and to speculate on which CEOs or leaders of industry today fit this model.

-John D. Rockefeller and Ida Tarbell

-Andrew Carnegie and “Gospel of Wealth” and steel mill workers

Motivation/Set/Hook: Begin the lesson by informing the students, “Today, we are going to play cards.” This activity will build on your prior knowledge of the terms Robber Baron and Captain of Industry.

Prior Preparation: The game is called “Rockefeller” and is played to a monopoly of a commodity. Take note cards and make 8 copies of each of the following commodities, include the \$ value beneath the name. Commodities: coal \$10, iron \$20, copper \$30, silver \$40, oil \$50, gold \$60. Also make 1 wild card. This combination of 49 cards makes one deck. With the understanding that only 4 or 5 students will be in a group, make enough decks for the class. For example: If you have 30 students, you will need 7 decks. Helpful hint: make sure that the name doesn’t bleed through the card and that all your cards are the same color and size.

Directions: Students will be placed in groups of 4 or 5. One student in each group will be the dealer and will deal out all the cards from their deck. Students are not to look at their hands until all cards are dealt out. Students then may begin to organize the cards. Students must have a monopoly to win, that is they must have 8 of a kind or 7 with the wild card. To get that monopoly the students need to request cards from other students.

Start play to the left of the dealer. Student A may request as many as 4 cards from any other person in the group and must give that student the same number of alike cards. He may not ask for a particular type of card and student B must give him 4 cards that are alike. After the exchange is made, the turn is over and the next student repeats the process.

When a student has the monopoly, he yells out “Rockefeller”. The student who has the monopoly of gold obviously is making more money than the one with coal and so forth. Play at least 2 rounds so the students may get the full experience. Hopefully, your students will complain that someone is cheating. This is the perfect time to proceed to the lesson and have the students learn whether Rockefeller and Carnegie cheated their way to the top.

Have the students

- write down in their notebooks their reactions to the game. Have them reflect on who was cheating and if they themselves cheated and why.
- answer during the Question and Answer session

Instructional Objectives: The students will be able to (Bloom's Ladder) the difference between a Robber Baron and a Captain of Industry; the careers of Rockefeller and Carnegie; whether Rockefeller and Carnegie were Robber Barons and/or Captains of Industry; who in our society today can be qualified in this way.

Level I (Identify, List, Explain)

Level II (Analyze, Question)

Level III (Role Play, Evaluate, Judge)

Materials: U.S. History Textbook (The Americans), Primary Documents taken from Internet <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5007.html>; <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5008.html>; <http://academics.uww.edu/lscore/cc120/industry/rspind7o.htm>; http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/rockefellers/sfeature/sf_6.html
Index cards for "Rockefeller" game.

Key Questions: Teacher discretion to repeat these questions for the Motivation/Set/Hook and the "main" lesson.

1. Did you feel that people in your group were cheating to get a monopoly? Explain **(Motivation/Set/Hook question)**
2. Were you cheating to get a monopoly? Explain **(Motivation/Set Hook question)**
3. Why is it okay that you cheated, but not the other group members? **Motivation/Set Hook question)**
4. In what industries did John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie make their fortune? **(Previous knowledge question).**
5. What are the qualifications of a person who is a Robber Baron, a Captain of Industry? **(Previous knowledge question).**
6. What facts are presented about Rockefeller, Carnegie? Explain.
7. Using the facts you gathered, what conclusions can you draw about which category fits Rockefeller and Carnegie the best? Explain.
8. Were Rockefeller and Carnegie both Robber Barons and Captains of Industry? Explain.

9. Is it possible for a man to be both a benefactor to the people and at the same time out for personal wealth and gain? Explain.
10. How can society protect itself from Robber Barons? Explain.
11. Why did some Americans refer to Rockefeller and Carnegie as Robber Barons?
(Recap question)
12. Why did some Americans refer to Rockefeller and Carnegie as Captains of Industry?
(Recap question)
13. If you could only qualify Rockefeller and Carnegie as a Robber Baron or a Captain of Industry, which would you choose and why? Explain. **(Recap question)**

Final Application/Homework: Research information on at least 3 of the following men: Bill Gates, Donald Trump, Dick Cheney, Tom DeLay, and Fred Smith. Find evidence that supports whether he is a Robber Baron or a Captain of Industry. Your conclusions should be in essay form with citation included.

Conflicting Sources U.S. History Lesson- There are two sides to these issues, the way the industrialist viewed himself and the way the public perceived him.

Humanistic U.S. History Lesson – Both Carnegie and Rockefeller are perceived by the present as “great men” for the work they achieved for the public domain.

Lesson Plan notes

After students have played the game and reflected on what happened, have the students stay in those groups. Two groups will have information that will reveal Carnegie and Rockefeller to be Captains of Industry and the other Robber Barons.

Each group must list the facts they find and then draw conclusions as to whether their information leans toward Captains of Industry or Robber Barons.

Captain of Industry: business leaders who serve the nation in a positive way. Increasing the availability of goods by building factories; raising productivity; expanding markets; creating jobs; founded and funded museums, libraries, universities.

Robber Barons: business leaders who build their fortunes by stealing from the public. Drain the natural resources, corrupt public officials to interpret laws in their favor, drive competitors out of business, pay poor wages, force workers to work under dangerous and unhealthy conditions.

Rockefeller believed in horizontal consolidation. He brought all the oil businesses together under his control in a cartel or trust.

Carnegie believed in vertical consolidation. He controlled all phases of the steel business, from the raw material to the railroad and lowered his cost, thus driving his competitors out of business.