

Creative Activities for Teaching  
American History  
**The Industrial Era**

SS120

**Introduction**

These puzzles, games and valuing exercises are designed to engage students in the study of the issues and events of the Industrial Era. They emphasize the problems of labor, economic issues, and American inventiveness. Problem solving, decision making, and evaluating are the skills that are taught.

**Contents****Activities****1-9 Puzzles (Pages 4-13)**

Five puzzles ask the students to identify early objects produced by the Industrial Revolution.

**10 Famous Inventors (Pages 14-16)**

Students evaluate famous inventors, compare their techniques and make generalizations about what made them successful.

**11 Inventor's Workshop (Pages 17-20)**

Students can develop their own inventing skills in these three activities.

**12 Inventor's Fair (Pages 21-22)**

This classroom activity involves all the students as they invent and compete in contests that require creativity.

**13 Famous Folks (Page 23)**

Students compare and evaluate capitalists, inventors and labor leaders.

**14 Famous Ideas (Page 24)**

Students compare and evaluate important ideologies.

**15 The Molly Maguires (Pages 25-26)**

Students decide who is responsible for the violence in a labor dispute.

**16 The Haymarket Trial (Pages 27-28)**

Students decide on the guilt or innocence of labor leaders.

**17 The Pullman Strike (Page 29)**

Students decide on a solution to the famous Pullman Strike.

**18 Assembly Line Game (Pages 30-31)**

Students experience working on an assembly line building a model car.

**19 Collective Bargaining Game (Pages 30-31)**

Students play roles of management and labor in negotiating a contract.

**20 Distribution of Wealth (Page 35)**

Students decide who should be paid for what kind of work in this valuing exercise.

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# Industrial Revolution

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## **1-9 PUZZLES**

In puzzles 1 to 5 the students must determine what the object is. The objects are 19th and early 20th century implements. Puzzles 6 and 7 require the students to identify who invented the object. Puzzles 8 and 9 require the students to determine the use of the objects. Puzzle answers are on a separate page after Activity 9.

## **10 FAMOUS INVENTORS**

Short biographies of Jenkins, Westinghouse, Goodyear and Edison are to be reproduced and distributed to the class. The students are to make generalizations about why they became inventors and what techniques they used to come up with their inventions.

## **11 INVENTOR'S WORKSHOP**

In this activity the students practice certain techniques that are used in the problem solving process. The techniques involve analysis, idea generation and evaluation and are generally useful. A description of the problem solving process is provided.

## **12 INVENTOR'S FAIR**

A problem solving activity that requires the students to explore the inventing process. Also includes a puzzle of somewhat outrageous inventions. ANSWERS: A., a toilet seat, B., a foot warmer that uses a person's breath, C., a fire escape apparatus, D., a tool for creating dimples!

## **13 FAMOUS FOLKS**

A valuing exercise in which students make judgements about the contributions of four people of the Industrial Era.

## **14 FAMOUS IDEAS**

Students must evaluate the ideologies of the Industrial Revolution.

## **15 THE MOLLY MAGUIRES**

Students decide who is responsible for the deaths of miners and mine policemen in the Pennsylvania coal fields.

## **16 THE HAYMARKET TRIAL**

Students must decide on the guilt of the eight men arrested for the Haymarket bombing. Of the eight, Parsons, Spies, Engel and Fischer were executed. Lingg was found hung in his cell, a victim of suicide or murder. Fielden, Schwab and Neebe were imprisoned.

## **17 THE PULLMAN STRIKE**

An activity in which the students must negotiate a solution to the Pullman strike of 1894.

## **18 ASSEMBLY LINE GAME**

This is a hands-on activity which simulates an assembly line.

## **19 COLLECTIVE BARGAINING GAME**

In this game the students must negotiate a contract.

## **20 DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH**

In this activity students must decide how a sum of money will be distributed among a variety of people. It is a valuing exercise which can be used to stimulate class discussion.

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Working people have always been concerned about getting their fair share for their work. During the late 19th Century the few owners of the railroads and factories were getting wealthy while most workers were poor.

Many workers were socialists. They wanted the government to take over the factories and they wanted a fair distribution of the wealth.

In the following activity decide how you would divide up \$200,000 among the people listed below.

	<b>Your Opinion</b>	<b>Socialist's Opinion</b>	<b>Reality</b>
1. A divorced mother of three. Works as a waitress and has a second job cleaning houses.	_____	_____	_____
2. A playboy. Likes girls and traveling to resorts. Has never worked. Single.	_____	_____	_____
3. A bank manager. Is responsible for handling large sums of money. Single.	_____	_____	_____
4. Farmworkers who work half the year. Husband, wife and 8 children.	_____	_____	_____
5. Owner of a large amount of stock which was inherited. Lives off dividends. Married, no children.	_____	_____	_____
6. A single person who cannot find a job.	_____	_____	_____
7. An unwed mother with two children. Unemployed, and without any job skills.	_____	_____	_____
8. A single person who works as a clerk.	_____	_____	_____
9. A retired person who worked hard for 40 years but has no savings because his wages were so low.	_____	_____	_____
10. A middle-aged couple who has two teenaged children. He is an engineer.	_____	_____	_____

Now, if you were a socialist following the socialist principle of “to each according to his needs and from each according to his means”, how would you divide up the wealth?

Pool your knowledge with the other members of the class and decide, perhaps by voting, how the wealth is divided in reality.