

APUSH UNIT 6 REVIEW GUIDE (1865–1898)

For Students Preparing for the AP® United States History Exam



10-17%

of the APUSH exam

The sixth unit of the AP® United States History (APUSH) course focuses on the period from 1865 to 1898. Key themes include westward expansion, industrialization, immigration, and urbanization.

This unit is eligible to be assessed on every portion of the exam (including the DBQ).

THE CONQUEST OF THE AMERICAN WEST



In 1869, Americans celebrated the completion of the first transcontinental railroad at a ceremony in Utah.

The Union's victory in the Civil War enabled the federal government to focus on settling and developing the West as a key priority. In 1862, Congress passed the **Homestead Act**, which offered free land to Americans who started family farms in the Great Plains, and the **Pacific Railway Act**, which offered generous land subsidies to corporations willing to build transcontinental railroads. While these policies led to the rapid settlement and economic development of the West, it came at the expense of the freedom of Native Americans, who were forced onto **reservations** and pressured to assimilate into mainstream American culture. In 1887, Congress passed the **Dawes Act**, which broke up tribal reservations to open additional lands for white settlement. Farmers on homesteads in the West also faced economic hardships as mechanized farming drove down crop prices while **protective tariffs** drove up the cost of farm equipment.

TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS

The massive economic growth the United States experienced during the late 1800s was fueled by several technological innovations. In the 1850s, the **Bessemer process** made it possible to mass produce steel. Large quantities of steel facilitated the construction of transcontinental railroads, tall **skyscrapers**, and bridges across large rivers. **Thomas Edison**, the best-known inventor of the age, invented the **light bulb**, leading to increased productivity in American factories, which could now operate around the clock.

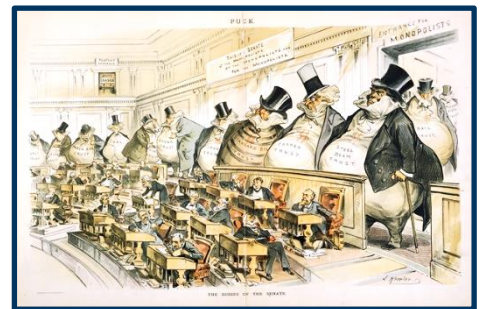
The late 1800s also witnessed the first inventions that could capture and transmit sound. Edison's **phonograph** recorded sounds that could be played back for distant audiences at later dates. The **telephone**, invented by **Alexander Graham Bell**, allowed people in two different places to speak to each other in real time.



Alexander Graham Bell's telephone (1876) enabled spoken communication across long distances. (Smithsonian)

THE RISE OF INDUSTRIAL CAPITALISM

In the decades after the Civil War, known as the **Gilded Age**, the United States witnessed unprecedented economic growth as the economy shifted toward large-scale industrial production. **John D. Rockefeller** founded the Standard Oil Company, which grew so large that it refined over 90 percent of the oil in the United States by 1900. **Andrew Carnegie** used the Bessemer process to produce steel on an unprecedented scale in Pittsburgh. Industrialists like Carnegie and Rockefeller were helped by friendly government policies, such as **protective tariffs** (high tariffs that raised the price of foreign goods). To increase profits, business leaders formed **trusts**, which placed several companies from one industry under one board of directors (like a monopoly). In response to the public outcry against trusts, Congress passed the **Sherman Antitrust Act** in 1890. Although the Sherman Act was not a very strong piece of legislation, it set a precedent for government regulation of business in the early 1900s.



This 1889 political cartoon, *Bosses of the Senate*, reflected concerns about the power of business trusts in the late nineteenth century.

THE "NEW SOUTH"

After the Civil War, slavery no longer existed in the South and there was more openness to industry and manufacturing. In Alabama, **Birmingham** emerged as an industrial city that rivaled Pittsburgh in steel production. Although some Southerners hailed the coming of a "New South," the Southern economy was still primarily agricultural. A large portion of Southern farmers – including the majority of those formerly enslaved – worked as **sharecroppers** who owed their landlords a share of each year's produce. **Booker T. Washington**, who had been born into slavery, founded the **Tuskegee Institute** in Alabama, which provided black Southerners with both a college education and training for skilled jobs.

LABOR IN THE GILDED AGE

Industrialization created many new manufacturing jobs that required hours of hard labor. Railroad workers, meatpackers, coal miners, and steel workers put in 10-hour days six days a week. These workers often worked in unsafe conditions and were fired if they were hurt on the job. Workers formed **labor unions** to campaign for better pay, shorter hours, and safer working conditions. Union leaders used **strikes** (work stoppages) to pressure employers to meet their demands. Strikes sometimes led to violent conflicts. Steel workers and **Pinkertons** (hired strikebreakers) clashed during the **Homestead Strike** at a Carnegie mill in Pittsburgh, resulting in about a dozen deaths. The federal government was not very friendly to unions during the Gilded Age. During the **Pullman Strike**, when railroad workers went on strike to protest wage cuts without proportional cuts in company housing rent, President Cleveland mobilized National Guard troops against the strikers.



An 1894 political cartoon shows a Pullman worker being crushed between low wages and high rent.

IMMIGRATION IN THE GILDED AGE

The expansion of American industry attracted immigrants from outside of mostly-Protestant Northern European regions that had been the source of most immigration to the United States before 1880. The Gold Rush attracted many Chinese immigrants to California who were instrumental in building the transcontinental railroads. Many native-born Americans believed that the Chinese could never be assimilated into mainstream American culture. Labor union leaders particularly resented Chinese workers, who were sometimes used as strikebreakers. Congress passed the **Chinese Exclusion Act**, which banned immigration from China. This was the first time Congress passed a law limiting immigration.

UNIT TIMELINE

- **1862** Congress passes the Homestead Act.
- **1869** The transcontinental railroad is completed.
- **1879** Thomas Edison invents the light bulb.
- **1881** Booker T. Washington begins leading the Tuskegee Institute.
- **1882** The Chinese Exclusion Act bans immigration from China.
- **1887** The Dawes Act opens Indian lands for white settlement.
- **1889** Jane Addams founds Hull House to help immigrants.
- **1890** Congress passes the Sherman Antitrust Act.
- **1893** The Panic of 1893 wrecks the economy.
- **1894** Federal troops break the Pullman Strike.
- **1896** McKinley soundly defeats Bryan in the presidential election.

In the 1880s, “**new immigrants**” from Southern and Eastern Europe (e.g., Italy, Greece, Poland, Russia) began arriving in the United States. Most of these immigrants arrived lacking job skills and having little knowledge of the English language or American political institutions. **Jane Addams**, a social activist, founded **Hull House**, a settlement house in Chicago where recent immigrants could take language classes, learn job skills, and develop an appreciation for American culture and the arts.



Jane Addams

THE RISE OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

The growth of large corporations resulted in the growth of the American middle class. American industrialists engaged in **philanthropy** efforts, using their wealth to help elevate society through funding education, public health, and the arts. New universities in the South and the Midwest, such as Vanderbilt University and the University of Chicago, provided greater access to higher education. Americans who attended these schools often got high-paying jobs that afforded them leisure time and money to spend on consumer goods. Andrew Carnegie expressed his belief in a “**Gospel of Wealth**,” by which the rich could elevate society by giving away their excess wealth. However, **Jacob Riis**, a Danish-born photographer, documented the continuing problems of immigrant poverty in his book, **How the Other Half Lives**.

THE POLITICS OF THE GILDED AGE

The Gilded Age represented the peak of corruption in American politics. The **Crédit Mobilier scandal** exposed corruption in Congress during the construction of the transcontinental railroads. In municipal (city) politics, corrupt **political machines** gained support from recent immigrants by promising jobs and government benefits.

Southern and Western farmers were frustrated as they continued to struggle economically while government policy favored the manufacturing sector. The same high protective tariffs that helped build industry increased the prices that farmers paid for their farm equipment. In 1892, these farmers organized the **Populist Party**, which campaigned for a lower tariff and the unlimited coinage of silver. The Populists gained momentum after the **Panic of 1893** threw the nation into a deep economic crisis. In the 1896 election, the Democratic Party nominated William Jennings Bryan, who supported Populist positions, for the presidency. He was defeated by William McKinley, the Republican nominee, in both 1896 and 1900.