

|                                                    |                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PROJECT TITLE: <b>Assessing Political Machines</b> |                                                                                                                           |
| AUTHOR: <b>Teresa Goodin</b>                       | SUBJECT & GRADE LEVEL<br><b>US History II, 7<sup>th</sup> grade (can be adapted for 11<sup>th</sup> grade US History)</b> |

## CLASSROOM PRACTICE

1. **HI Overview & Teaching Thesis:** This instructional kit introduces students to the parts and people of some of the most successful political machines in US history. Students will learn the role political machines played in turn of the century society and in the survival and mobility of certain groups such as immigrants and lower class urban Americans. Students will then use a set of primary sources to uncover how machines helped and hurt Americans and American society at the turn of the century. Finally, students will use what they have learned about political machines from the primary source set or “exhibits” to assess the benefits of these organizations to Americans and American society. Students will answer the question “Were political machines more beneficial or detrimental to American society at the turn of the century” in an individual reflection and product.
  
2. **Suggested Grade Level and Length of Activities:** US History II – Since 1865, one 90 minute lesson (final product may be assigned for homework; sharing of final products may occur after the one day lesson)
  
3. **Significance & Relevance:** This instructional kit introduces students to the complicated topic of political machines and machine politics around the turn of the century. By examining the role of these machines and how they impacted various groups, students will understand why machines grew to dominate urban politics around 1900 and how these organizations played an important role in helping immigrants and poor urban Americans survive and advance during this time of unprecedented growth and expansion. Students use high-level analytic skills to analyze and interpret primary sources that they will then use as evidence to back up their answer to the essential question (“Were political machines more beneficial or detrimental to American society at the turn of the century?”). By asking students to assess the value and contributions of political machines, the student not only learns about the organization and people involved in machine politics but also practices the skill of using historical evidence to support a view point.

### **Virginia State Standards of Learning**

The student will demonstrate knowledge of how life changed after the Civil War by

- b) explaining the reasons for the increase in immigration, growth of cities, and challenges arising from this expansion.
  - Efforts to solve immigration problems
    - Political machines that gained power by attending to the needs of new immigrants (e.g., jobs, housing).

## Historical Inquiry Standards – Organization of American Historians

**Historical Comprehension:** Students will understand how political machines played an important role in American society at the turn of the century. Students will describe and evaluate the impact of political machines on individuals, groups such as immigrant populations, local governments, and American society at the turn of the century.

**Historical Analysis and Interpretation:** Students will analyze primary source documents or “exhibits” that provide varying perspectives on political machines.

**Historical Research Capabilities:** Students will use primary sources and information gained from direct instruction to create a product that answers the question “Were political machines more beneficial or detrimental to American society at the turn of the century?”

**Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making:** Students will assess the role of the political machine in American society and answer the question “Were political machines more beneficial or detrimental to American society at the turn of the century?”

**4. Technology applications:** This instructional kit can be used with or without access to technology in the classroom. For teachers with access to technology, the primary sources or “exhibits” can be posted online so that students can complete analysis questions online. Technology can also be incorporated into the final product by allowing students to choose from options such as creating a podcast or digital video for their final product.

### 5. Modifications, Differentiation, and Extensions:

- a. Sources may be modified to accommodate various reading levels (see “Assessing Political Machines – *Modified Packet*”).
- b. Choice of menu assignment allows for individual learning styles and preferences. Menu products may be modified with regard to technology. Students may create iMovies, digital documentaries, pod-casts or voice recordings if technology permits. However, no technology is needed to complete the menu assignment.
- c. For students interested in learning more about political machines, assign the classic historical fiction book *Solid for Mulhooly: a sketch of municipal politics unders the leaders of the ring and the boss* by Rufus E. Shapley. This book, although historical fiction in genre, closely mirrors the workings of New York’s Tammany Hall. Students could be given various writing prompts that ask them to compare the characters in *Solid for Mulhooly* with real life members of Tammany Hall and the Tweed Ring.

## 6. Lesson Overview

### LESSON PLAN MATRIX

| Guiding Questions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Objectives                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Assessment                                                                                                                   | Activities to support objectives and assessment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Title: <b>Assessing Political Machines</b></p> <p>What was the role of the political machine in turn of the century American society?</p> <p>Were political machines more beneficial or detrimental to turn of the century American society?</p> | <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe the parts of a political machine.</li> <li>2. Identify influential political machines around the turn of the century.</li> <li>3. Identify key personnel in various political machines and notable party bosses and describe their impact on their city and society.</li> <li>4. Explain the purpose of political machines in American society at the turn of the century.</li> <li>5. Assess and evaluate the impact of political machines on individuals, groups such as immigrant populations, local governments, and American society at the turn of the century.</li> </ol> | <p>Objectives #1-3: Completion of “Parts of People of Political Machines” handout.</p> <p>Objectives #4-5: Final product</p> | <p>Objectives #1-3: Presentation/direct instruction that walks students through the various parts of a political machine, key machines and key people in those political machines.</p> <p>Objectives #4-5: Investigation activity where students analyze primary sources that provide various perspectives on political machines.</p> <p>Final product where students assess political machines and explain their role in American society.</p> |

**7. Related Materials and Resources: List of specific and aligned resources and materials that are needed to execute the investigation.**

Background/contextual essay and annotated bibliography  
Parts and People of Political Machines – Debriefing Presentation (ppt)  
Parts and People of Political Machines – Student Handout  
Parts and People of Political Machines – Key  
Investigation Packet  
Final product menu  
Menu rubric

**8. Annotated Instructional Bibliography (books, articles, primary sources, websites, .PPT files)**

Colburn, D.R., & Pozzetta, G. E. (1976). Bosses and Machines: Changing

Interpretations in American History. *The History Teacher*, 9(3), 445-463.

This source discusses machines throughout history with a focus on their purpose and function in society.

The resource is especially helpful for teachers of all grade levels including the college level, as it addresses key ideas, concepts and themes that should be pulled out of the topic to present to students to help their understanding of machines and the time period.

Connable, A., & Silberfarb, E. (1967). *Tigers of Tammany: Nine Men Who Ran New York*.

New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

This source provides comprehensive details about the leaders of one of the most powerful and lasting political machines in history. The book provides important information regarding Boss Tweed, his colleagues and downfall.

Eaton, D. B. (1892). The Degeneration of Tammany. *The North American Review*, 154(424), 297-304.

This is a primary source that discusses the leaders, organization and downfall of Tammany Hall and the Tweed Ring. This source is written from a Gilded Age perspective, which is interesting to compare to more modern interpretations of the role and function of machine politics in America.

The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Project. (n.d.) Teaching Eleanor Roosevelt Glossary –

Tammany Hall. Retrieved from <http://www.gmu.edu/~erpapers>.

This website's glossary section provides a clear, succinct definition and explanation of Tammany Hall and Boss Tweed. It would be very useful to students and those new to the topic.

Kennedy, D. M. & Bailey, T. A. (2002). *The American Spirit: Volume II Since 1865*.

Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

This classic primary source anthology includes an excerpt from George Washington Plunkitt, in which he distinguishes between “honest” and “dishonest” graft. The excerpt is more useful at the secondary and college level, however illustrates the point that machines provided necessary services and materials to Americans.

Mandelbaum, S. (1965). *Boss Tweed's New York*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Mandelbaum's comprehensive work on the Tweed era of Tammany Hall provides a detailed account of the people and events that impacted Tweed and his ring. His chapters on the investigation and downfall of Tweed are comprehensive and provide necessary details on the case.

Mandelbaum, S. (1984). Boss Tweed's New York. In B. Stave (Ed.), *Urban Bosses, Machines, and Progressive Reformers* (pp. 55-62). Malabar, FL: Robert E. Krieger.

This abridged version of Mandelbaum's work on Tweed provided valuable and easy to access details about the Tweed Ring, its members and its impact.

McCaffrey, P. (1992). Style, Structure, and Institutionalization of Machine Politics:

Philadelphia, 1867-1933. *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 22(3), 435-452.

This article describes the organization, function and key people involved in Philadelphia machine politics from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to mid 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

McCaffrey, P. (1993). *When Bosses Ruled Philadelphia: The Emergence of the Republican Machine 1867-1933*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.

In this work, McCaffrey explores the complicated relationship among Philadelphia's top Republicans, as well as their tenuous hold on Philadelphia politics during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Tarr, J. A. (1984). The Urban Politician as Entrepreneur. In B. Stave (Ed.), *Urban Bosses, Machines, and Progressive Reformers* (pp. 62-72). Malabar, FL: Robert E. Krieger.

This work examines the purpose and function of the political machine around the turn of the century using Chicago as a key example.

Tindall, G. B. & Shi, D.E. (2004). *America: A Narrative History*. New York: Norton.

This classic high school/college text provides a good introduction to the topic of political machines and machine politics.

Well, Francois. (2004). *A History of New York*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Well includes a general discussion of Tammany Hall in his work without delving into some of the complicated details.

Werner, M.R. (1932). *Tammany Hall*. New York: Greenwood.

This comprehensive work discusses the history of Tammany Hall, from its origins to its downfall. It covers Tweed and the Tweed Ring in much detail.