

Title: Assessing Political Machines

Key Words: political machine

Grade Level: 7

Time Allotted: One 90 minute block

Lesson Overview	Students will learn the parts and function of political machines in turn of the century America. Students will then use primary sources to assess political machines and answer the questions “What was the role of the political machines at the turn of the century?” and “Were political machines more beneficial or detrimental to American society at the turn of the century?” Students will share their answers to these questions in a final product. Students will choose the format of this product from a menu.
Guiding Question(s)	1. What was the role of the political machines at the turn of the century? 2. Were political machines more beneficial or detrimental to American society at the turn of the century?

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Describe the parts of a political machine.
2. Identify influential political machines around the turn of the century.
3. Identify key personnel in various political machines and notable party bosses and describe their impact on their city and society.
4. Explain the purpose of political machines in American society at the turn of the century.
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.

Standards of Learning

STANDARD USII.4b

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).

OAH Historical Skills:

1. 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.

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

3. 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?”

4. 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?”

Assessment Tool(s) –

1. “Parts and People of Political Machines” handout
2. Primary source analysis handouts
3. Final product (choice from menu)

Materials/Resources

1. Political Machines – PowerPoint presentation file
2. “Parts and People of Political Machines” handout
3. “Parts and People of Political Machines” teacher key
4. “Assessing Political Machines Investigation Packet” includes:
 - a. “Exhibit A” – Jane Addams source
 - b. Analysis form for exhibit A
 - c. “Exhibit B” – Lincoln Steffens on the Corruption in Pittsburgh source
 - d. Analysis form for exhibit B
 - e. “Exhibit C” – Lord James Bryce source
 - f. Analysis form for exhibit C
 - g. “Exhibit D” – George Washington Plunkitt excerpt
 - h. Analysis form for exhibit D
5. “Individual Student Reflection Handout”
6. “Assessing Political Machines – Menu”
7. “Assessing Political Machines Menu Rubric”

Modifications

1. Sources may be modified to accommodate various reading levels (see “Assessing Political Machines – *Modified Packet*”).

2. Choice of menu assignment allows for individual learning styles and preferences.
3. 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.

Instructional Procedures/Process

1. Hook: students answer the following questions in their notebook/journal:
 - a. Who looks out for you?
 - b. Who do you turn to if you need something?
2. Students share their responses to the hook questions.
3. Direct instruction – the parts, people and purpose of the political machine.
 - a. PowerPoint presentation
 - b. Students complete “Parts and People of Political Machines” handout
4. Students are divided into small groups.
5. Introduction to investigation activity: “You are an investigator for the US government. Your job is to assess the role of the political machine in American society around the turn of the century. Use the evidence provided to decide whether political machines were more beneficial or detrimental to American society. You must back up your answer to this question with evidence. You will present your answer to this question in a final product. You will have a choice of formats for this product.”
 - a. Distribute primary source handouts and copies of each source or “exhibit”.
 - b. Students work in small groups to analyze the exhibit, completing a primary source handout for each one.
6. Students respond to the question “Were political machines more beneficial or detrimental to American society at the turn of the century?” on individual reflection handout. Students must justify their answer to this question citing evidence from the exhibits.
7. Students choose a final product format from the menu. Students work on final products and finish for homework.
8. Closure: students share their individual answers to the essential question with the rest of the class.