

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Urbanization & Industrialization

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

1. In the decades after the Civil War, cities in the United States grew at an incredible rate. In 1860, only nine cities had a population of more than 100,000. By 1880 that number had more than doubled to 20. Twenty years later in 1900, there were 38 cities with over 100,000 residents. By 1920, with 68 such cities, the country's urban population exceeded that of rural areas for the first time in American history. New York City led the way with a population of nearly 3,500,000 in 1900, but other cities like Chicago weren't far behind. Over a 40 year period, Chicago's population grew from 100,000 to 1,700,000. This massive growth was driven by three factors: immigration, migration and industrialization.

Notes

2. Though immigration was not a new phenomenon in the United States, the middle and late 19th century saw a new wave of immigrants arriving from all over the world. In the 1840s, groups of relatively financially well-off immigrants arrived from northern and western Europe. These immigrants, who were often Protestant and hailed from countries like Ireland and Germany, settled in cities along the east coast and in the midwest of the United States. Later on, in the 1890s, Jewish and Catholic immigrants from southern and eastern Europe as well as immigrants from Mexico and Asia began to arrive in America. These immigrants were often poorer than those from northern and western Europe. Some were fleeing religious persecution, and others were escaping political unrest. But the common thread among most of these immigrants was that they were seeking opportunity in US cities. This influx of immigrants was fueled by inexpensive and fast travel on steamships. A once-expensive and long trip across the Atlantic or Pacific Ocean had become affordable and only took 8 to 12 days.

Notes

3. Cities were a popular place for immigrants to settle for a number of reasons. Many immigrants arrived in the US in cities and, lacking the money necessary to travel farther into the country, stayed there. Many jobs were located in cities: steam and electricity led to a boom in industry during this time period. Finally, cities offered a support system to immigrants. Ethnic enclaves were cities within cities that allowed immigrants to speak their native language, build a social life with people from their home country and maintain their culture. Have you ever been to or heard of a section of a city referred to as Chinatown or Little Italy? These types of neighborhoods started as ethnic enclaves—cultural centers where people from China or Italy lived, ate their native dishes and distributed newspapers in their native language.

Notes

4. Not everyone who populated US cities came from other countries. Many were migrants who came from other parts of the United States. As technological advances in agriculture began putting small farms out of business, many farm workers struggled to find work. Because of this, about one-third of people moving to cities were Americans leaving farms for industrial jobs. At the same time, African Americans were migrating from the South to cities in the North and Midwest. Faced with discrimination and danger as a result of Jim Crow laws and lynching, as well as punishing and unfavorable work as sharecroppers, black migrants looked to northern cities for opportunities that didn't exist in southern states.

Notes

5. The 19th century marked a transition from rural farmers to urban factories as the cornerstone of United States industry. In 1880, for the first time, there were more wage workers than independent workers in the US—meaning there were more people working for a boss than there were working for themselves. This was a result of the mechanization of agriculture, a phenomenon that sent many self-employed farmers into cities for work in factories and mills. This time period is known as the Second Industrial Revolution. Advances in steam and electricity meant factories no longer had to be located next to waterways. These advances brought many factories into urban areas, turning cities into industrial hubs. Many cities specialized in one industry: Pittsburgh had steel, Chicago had meat packaging and New York City made clothing.

Notes

6. The Second Industrial Revolution was lucrative for the business owners of the Gilded Age. As titans of business like Cornelius Vanderbilt and JP Morgan amassed a fortune, residents of cities worked long hours in terrible working conditions for low wages. With the institution of mass production and assembly line business practices, factories grew rapidly. These factories were staffed not only by men and women, but also relied on child labor. Though opportunities for African Americans existed, factory work was still segregated. Labor unions were formed to fight back on behalf of workers, but many businesses were monopolies. With little competition, business owners had the power to set wages and working hours with no input from workers or unions. This left most workers poor and overloaded, living in crowded and unsanitary tenements around America's largest cities. The divide between rich and poor grew in both wealth and distance. As elevated railroads and subway systems were built, the rich moved farther away to wealthy neighborhoods or suburbs and only came to the city center during working hours.

Notes

7. Throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s, nativism and racism was widespread. Rulings like Plessy v. Ferguson in 1896 solidified racial segregation and Jim Crow laws. At the same time, the false theory of Social Darwinism intensified racist and anti-immigrant sentiment. As racial and economic inequality worsened, reform movements sought to address these issues. The unchecked greed and continuing racism and xenophobia of the Gilded Age had reached a tipping point. This led to the Progressive Era. While issues persisted and success was uneven, this era offered an early blueprint for political, business and social reform.

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