

UNITED STATES HISTORY
SECTION II

Question 1: Document Based Question
Suggested Reading and Writing Time: 1 hour

It is suggested that you spend 15 minutes reading the documents and 45 minutes your response.
NOTE: You may begin writing your response before the reading period is over.

Directions: The following question is based on the accompanying documents. The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise. High scores will be earned only by essays that both cite key pieces of evidence from the documents and draw on outside knowledge of the period.

In your response you should do the following: (6/10/16)

- Respond to the prompt with a historically defensible **thesis** or claim that establishes a line of reasoning.
- Describe a broader historical **context** relevant to the prompt.
- **Support an argument** in response to the prompt using the **seven documents**
- Use at least **one additional piece of specific historical evidence** (beyond that found in the documents) **relevant to your argument** about the prompt.
- For at least three documents, explain **how or why** the document's **point of view, purpose, context, and/or audience is relevant to your argument.**

Prompt:

To what extent did the Gilded Age (1866-1893) represent a revolution in American society? Frame your answers within the contexts of social, economic, and political factors.

REVOLUTIONARY:

- ↳ emergence of "middle class"
- * BUT (x) → squashed by increasing divisions b/t ↑ + ↓ classes
- ↳ ~~birth of American imperialism (?) → pol.~~
- ↳ ~~birth of political corruption working alongside economic factors~~
 - ~~combination Congress/businessmen working towards own gain~~
- ↳ capitalism = concept of "frontier thesis" etc → America = opportunity, never as necessary
 - AMERICA = DYNAMIC, trickles down into social factors from economic
 - * REV ROOTED IN ECONOMIC*

1. To what extent did the Gilded Age represent a revolution in American society? Be sure to Frame your answer within the context of social, political, and economic factors.



Document 1 → P A

“The association of poverty with progress is the great enigma of our time . . . as long as all the accumulated wealth which modern progress brings goes but to build great fortunes, to increase luxury, and the make sharper the contrast between the House of Have and the House of Want, progress is not real and cannot be maintained.”

Henry Wallace, *Progress and Poverty*, 1879

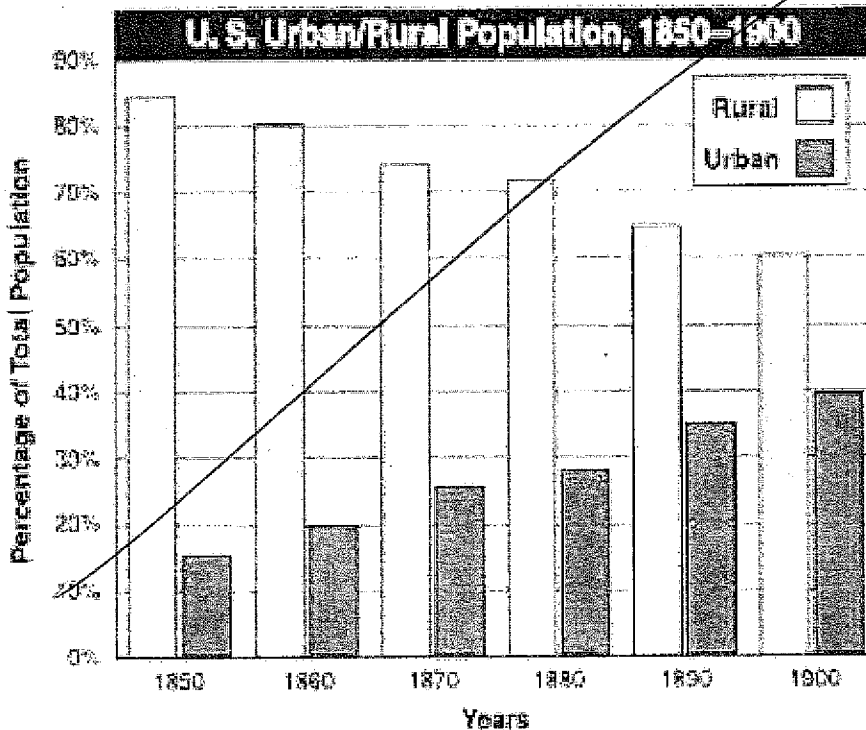
Summary:

increase in ~~wealth~~ national wealth alongside increase in national poverty, economic gains are thus unsustainable

REVOLUTIONARY B/C divide > before due to new cap. system

(S) (E)

Document 2 → P B C



Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census (adapted)

(S) (E)

Summary:

PR leaving farms + moving to cities CONSISTENTLY as the century wears on

NOT REV = same Ind. Rev as in Europe, BUT REV B/C not in same way (idea of individual opportunity is new)

part of majority

"My refinery has been shut down during the past three years, owing to the powerful and all-prevailing machinations of the Standard Oil Trust, in criminal collusion and conspiracy with the railroads to destroy my business unlawful freight rate discrimination. I have been driven from one railway line to another in the vain endeavor to get equal and just freight rates with the Standard Oil trust, so as to be able to run my refinery at anything remotely approaching a profit."

Oil refiner George Rice, testimony before US Industrial Trade Commission, 1899

Summary:

due to the increase of big businesses like Standard Oil, the vast majority of smaller businesses are being overrun

THE RICH AND THE POOR IN 1890

This table gives an indication of the distribution of wealth and income in 1890, with 1989 values in parentheses. what? OH - inflation

Estates by annual income	Number of families	Aggregate wealth	Average wealth per family
Wealthy classes \$50,000 and over (\$692,000 and over)	125,000	\$33,000,000,000 (\$456,720,000,000)	\$264,000 (\$3,653,760)
Well-to-do classes \$5,000 to \$50,000 (\$69,200-\$692,000)	1,375,000	\$23,000,000,000 (\$318,320,000,000)	\$16,000 (\$221,440)
Middle classes \$500 to \$5,000 (\$6,920-\$69,200)	5,500,000	\$8,200,000,000 (\$113,488,000,000)	\$1,500 (\$20,760)
Poorer classes under \$500 (\$6,920)	5,500,000	\$800,000,000 (\$11,072,000,000)	\$150 (\$2,076)

Basic source: Charles B. Spahr, An Essay on the Present Distribution of Wealth in the United States (1896), p. 69. PRIMARY, BIASED(?)

Summary:

1% of pop'n holds majority of wealth, 10 mil poor + lower classes split about 10% of overall wealth

~~(F)~~ (S)?

Document 5

RETURN to W PC?
 → PA

"In every industry the story was endlessly the same: paupers' wages; the constant fear of dismissal; wretched and unsanitary working conditions; ten-twelve and even fourteen-hour days (sixteen for bakers); six- and sometimes seven-day weeks; erratic pay; little or no compensation or injuries or fatalities; a constant increase in the number of women and children employed under such conditions ... As for hours, of 65,627 mill and factory hands in New York, 76 percent worked 60 hours a week or more. Moreover, 12 percent of the men, 22 percent of the women, and 34 percent of the children worked more than 10 hours daily."

Dr. Page Smith, "How the Other Side Lived" *New England Journal of American History*, 2010

Summary: SECONDARY

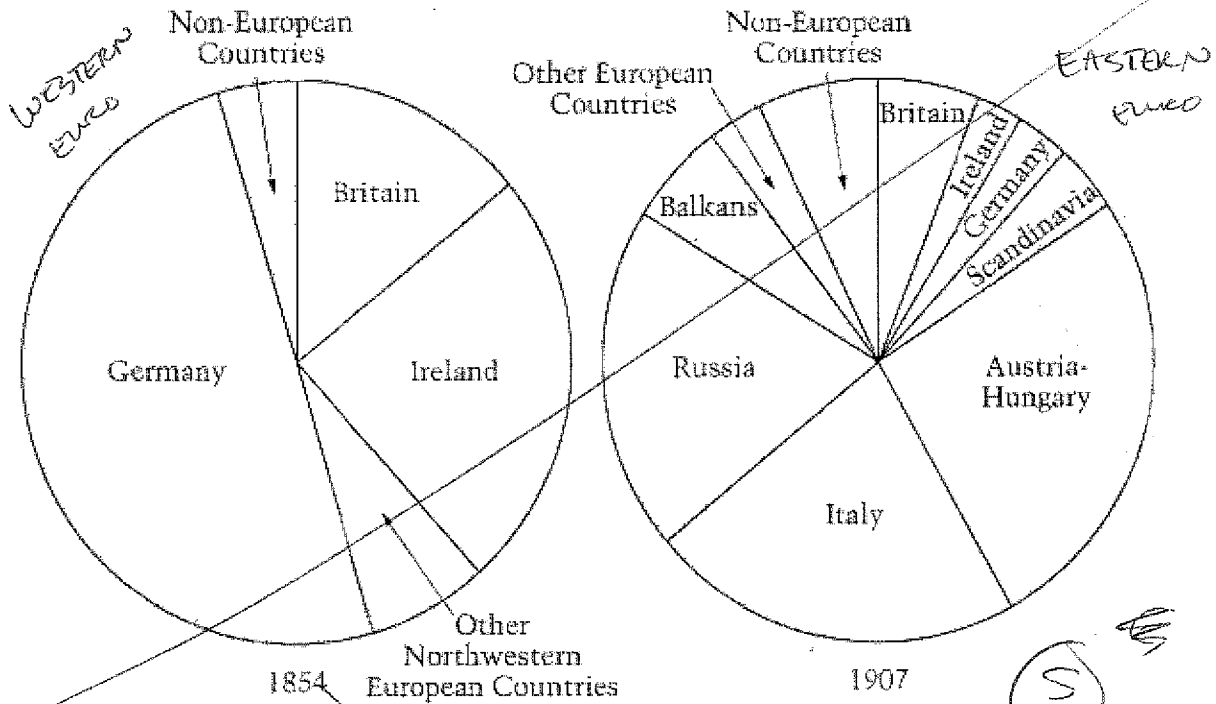
in every industry during Gilded Age America poor workers suffered terrible conditions & worked long, unsafe hours

(S)!

Document 6

→ PC

IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES IN 1854 AND IN 1907



Summary:

in the last half of 19th century the increase of Eastern European immigrants [meant less wealthy, an influx of poor, unskilled laborers to fill factories] → OUTSIDE EU

REV B/C = America had an alliance unlike other countries

"A century after the founding of the republic observers could detect a pattern in American politics. Americans originally organized into parties based on causes, but as the causes lost their power to motivate, still the parties remained. The struggle over the Constitution had produced America's first party system, the Federalists and Jeffersonian Republicans; the struggle for democracy had spawned the second, the Jacksonian Democrats and Whigs; the sectional crisis had generated the third, the Democrats and Republicans . . . While the pre-Civil War Republicans stressed reform issues such as anti-slavery, they also emphasized economics, particularly federal aid to business. After the war, however, these two factions did not weld into a singular political entity; they each abandoned all pretense of unity, treating each other as more dangerous than the Democrats."

Dr. H. W. Brands, *American Colossus: The Triumph of Capitalism (1865-1900)*, 2010 ^{BIAS?}

Summary:

3rd party system based on sectional conflict which was not resolved after the war; factionalism actually split the Rep party [into Stalwarts, Half-Breeds, etc] deeper than divide b/t Rep + Dem

SECONDARY

REU B/C: ~~the~~ fractured political parties = U.S. is open (P)!!! for corruption in greater ways than ever before — now the economic giants such as Standard Oil, Vanderbilt, ~~JP Morgan~~ "govern" the country JP Morgan

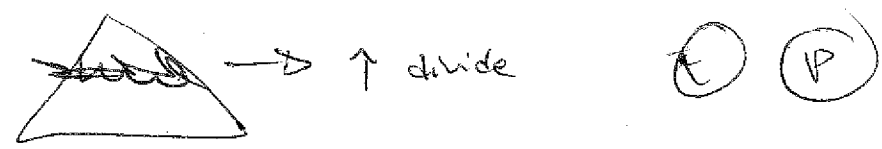
"The people of the United States concluded to assume the conduct of their own business, just as 100 years before they had assumed the conduct of their own government, organizing now for industrial purposes on precisely the same grounds as they had organized for political purposes . . . no business is as much the public's business as the industry and commerce upon which the people's livelihood depends; to entrust it to private persons for private profit is a folly similar in kind to that of surrendering the functions of political government to kings and nobles to be conducted for their personal glorification."

Edward Bellamy *Looking Backward*, 1888

Summary:

REU B/C

The role of economy in America is taking role of gov, now the not in a democratic way but rather as a new aristocracy



QUESTION 1

Prior to the Gilded Age, the United States was P. 1 of 6
a ~~the~~ nation developing an economy of its own, learning
how to combine the industry of the North with the
agriculture of the South. It had, as a form of
political and economic self-defense, adopted a state
of isolation, although engaging in trade with other
countries largely focusing on inward improvements and
growth. As it so often happens following wars, the
period following the Civil War was one filled with
political, social, and economic ~~unrest~~ — a nation once
united in a fight against their tyrannical mother
country England had now turned against itself. ~~The~~
The post-Civil War America was in many ways open
to corruption — enter the "big business" and Congressional
manipulators of the so-called "Gilded Age." ~~At~~
~~Some~~ ^{Some} may argue that the Gilded Age was just an
extension of American development, ~~that~~ continuing the
path it had set for itself prior to the Civil War.
~~The Gilded Age~~ However, the Gilded Age was revolutionary
~~in~~ ⁱⁿ regard ~~to~~ ^{to} the emergence ~~of~~ of a new
relationship between the capitalist economy and political
powers in the United States, and how this change
affected ~~the~~ ^{ordinary} American ~~to~~ citizens. Therefore, although

QUESTION 1

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great economic success, the fact remains that lower classes were harmed in entirely new ways as a result. While a handful of big businesses flourished in the new nature of American economics, poor workers struggled more than ever to make a living (DOCS: 1, 3, 5). However, the Gilded Age was an era of prosperity in America, so this cannot be the case.

While the political scene in Gilded Age America dug itself deeper into a pit of corruption and factionalism, the economic powers began to insert themselves as influencing factors in the government. Interestingly, although some may have predicted that conclusion of the Civil War would have ushered in a new era of political unity, the exact opposite proved to be true. Due to the continued disagreement between Northern and Southern powers over such issues as the distribution of freedmen in American society, an environment of unrest became characteristic of Gilded Age politics. The divide between Democrats and Republicans, however, still proved no match for the factional divisions within the Republican Party (DOC. 7). Still, the question remains: who ran the government if the party system was so fractured as to be nearly non-functional? The answer lies in the workings beneath the surface.

QUESTION 1

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of Gilded Age politics, where corruption, to put it lightly, ran ~~was~~ rampant. In a process entirely revolutionary to America, and perhaps to history itself, the economic powers-that-be ~~is~~ began to take the place of government. While ~~the~~ the United States had previously been a proud democracy, it almost returned to an aristocracy, ~~was~~ due to the ~~first~~ ~~the~~ positions of wealthy business owners such as JP Morgan, Vanderbilt, and Rockefeller in the economy. Their power bled into the political system as well; rather than wait for new politicians to rise to power, business giants would pay off government officials to retire, allowing industry-friendly Republicans to take the stage. In the instances where Congress or the Supreme Court would step in and attempt to neutralize the threat of monopolies and trusts, their attempts were often ~~the~~ ineffective—the sheer volume of such trusts meant that even if one problem could be stopped, another branch of the business would rise up and take its place (Doc. 9). Thus, the government of the Gilded Age was for the first time in American history, virtually defenseless at the hands of the economic sovereigns of big business. (MAKE ONE IP)

~~Inevitably~~, some historians may argue that all these factors are simply reflections ~~is~~ or parallels of previous incidents in American history. However, this is not the case due to

(Doc. 8)

QUESTION 1

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the utterly revolutionary shift in relationship between political, social, and economic factors. In no previous period of American history had the distribution of wealth and lack of governmental influence been caused by the economic boom of Gilded Age industry. ~~The~~ The effect it had on the common people was unprecedented ~~as well~~ ^{as well}, to say the very least.

The new influence of economic factors on the American government also trickled down ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~the~~ ^{to} ~~reshape~~ ^{reshape} the lives of American citizens, especially with regards to the lower class. The population distribution across rural and urban areas shifted massively in the last half of the 19th century, ~~all~~ (Doc. 2). The allure of economic opportunity, ~~a~~ ^a ~~staple~~ ^{staple} of American culture, led to a rapid influx of poor, unskilled workers into cities. Alongside American farmers, a new wave of Eastern Europeans began traveling to ~~the~~ the United States, similarly drawn to the prospect of a ~~self-built~~ self-built life of economic prosperity (Doc. 6). While most workers found themselves in ~~poor~~ ^{jobs characterized by} ~~unsafe~~ unsafe conditions, poor hours, and with few rights as laborers, still the ^{number of} workers continued to rise (Doc. 5). Although poor conditions are typical of all newly industrialized societies, the process by which the United States became one was revolutionary. By nature, America

QUESTION 1

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is dynamic — always changing, always developing, and always expanding. In the way that, after ~~fulfilling~~ ^{achieving} ~~the~~ goal of Manifest Destiny, America went on to conquer other countries in Latin America, ~~this~~ ^{the} mindset of ~~dynamic expansion~~ ^{dynamic expansion} had already become so deeply rooted in American society that the difficulty ~~prevented~~ of the Gilded Age for poor laborers could not stop America's tendency to grow (Doc. 10). In no ~~European~~ other nation's history was a period such as the Gilded Age ~~so~~ motivated by a nation's inherent nature to grow and develop, even ~~if~~ at the expense of integrity or the sacrifice of a lower class to fulfill the socio-economic hierarchy formed as a result.