Scottish-American entrepreneur and philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie, became one of the world’s richest people by expanding his steel business in the late 1800s. At a time when the wealth gap in America was severe, Carnegie encouraged wealthy people to give back in order to help their communities, a practice he himself became famous for doing. His opinions about wealth are recorded in “The Gospel of Wealth” which Carnegie wrote in 1889.

Students will understand Carnegie’s attitudes on wealth and the responsibility of wealthy people to the less fortunate. Students will analyze excerpts from “The Gospel of Wealth” and write a response connecting its major points to today’s societal issues.

The student will:

- Research and share background knowledge about Andrew Carnegie
- Analyze excerpts from “The Gospel of Wealth”
- Integrate Carnegie’s ideas into the context of the Progressive Era
- Participate in a class discussion applying Carnegie’s ideas to society today

What responsibility, if any, do the wealthy have to the rest of society? What can “The Gospel of Wealth” tell us about Andrew Carnegie and his views on wealth?

Grades: 11th
Subjects: U.S. History, English/Language Arts
Time required: One 90 minute block
Author: Colbi Layne Hogan, Teaching with Primary Sources—MTSU

Curriculum Standards
U.S. History
- US.6 Describe the changes in American life that resulted from the inventions and innovations of business leaders and entrepreneurs of the period: Henry Bessemer, George Pullman, Alexander Graham Bell, Andrew Carnegie, Thomas Edison, J.P. Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, Swift and Armour, and Cornelius Vanderbilt (C, E)

11th Grade English/Language Arts
- 11-12.W.TTP.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning supported by relevant and sufficient evidence.
- 11-12.RL.KID.1 Analyze what a text says explicitly and draw inferences; support an interpretation of a text by citing and synthesizing relevant textual evidence from multiple sources.
- 11-12.SL.CC.1 Initiate and participate effectively with varied partners in a range of collaborative discussions on appropriate 11th - 12th grade topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- 11-12.RL.CS.6 Analyze how point of view and/or author purpose requires distinguishing what is directly stated in texts and what is implied.
Resources

- Andrew Carnegie [circa 1913]
- Timeline: Rags to Richest
- How Andrew Carnegie Turned His Fortune Into a Library Legacy. [August 1, 2013]
- Upton Sinclair
- Some of the workers in a Md. packing company. Plenty of work for even the tiniest hands. Many have to carry heavy boxes full of beans etc. Location: [Baltimore, Maryland]., July 1909
- The crusaders / C. Hassman.
- New York City dumping wharf, 1903
- Child Labor in the Canning Industry of Maryland, July 1909
- Well, I hardly know which to take first!
- Anti-trust cartoons; Nursery Rhymes for Infant Industries, No. 15: 'O' is the Oil Trust, a modern Bill Sikes; he defies the police, and does just as he likes

Materials

- “The Gospel of Wealth” excerpt, Pg. 1-2
- Post-its

DAY 1

| Step 1 | Oftentimes students are more willing to thoroughly read primary texts when they have some familiarity with them, so as a precursor to this activity, have students look up Andrew Carnegie for homework the night before. Ask them to determine who he is, where he is from, and what role he played in history. |
| Step 2 | Then in class the following day, refresh students’ memories with this 30 second trailer from American Experience before asking a student to introduce Carnegie to their peers by sharing what they found during their research. If time allows, listen to How Andrew Carnegie Turned His Fortune Into a Library Legacy. |
| Step 3 | Display the Timeline: Rags to Richest and point out some of the pivotal moments of Carnegie’s life such as: his emigration to the U.S. in 1848, his investments and career path, his 1872 visit to Bessemer’s steel company in England, and donations that he made. |
| Step 4 | Next, introduce “The Gospel of Wealth” excerpt, Pg. 1-2 and explain that the article was published in the North American Review in 1889. Establish Carnegie’s intended audience, the upper class, and purpose for writing. |
| Step 5 | Create context for “The Gospel of Wealth” by discussing the Progressive Era. Primary sources related to muckrakers, progressive legislation, the growth of cities, labor and industry issues, child labor, imperialism, and the Great Migration are located under “Resources.”

Ask students how these issues and societal changes may have affected Carnegie and vice versa.

Discuss Carnegie’s beliefs about the responsibility of the wealthy in a time when many people struggled economically and dealt with horrendous working conditions. |
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<td>Step 6</td>
<td>Introduce Jane Addams, who founded Hull House in Chicago the same year that Carnegie’s “The Gospel of Wealth” was published. Ask students to draw parallels between the work of Carnegie and Addams. Explain that “The Gospel of Wealth” was part of Carnegie’s solution to societal and economic problems, but it can also be categorized as part of a larger movement to aid the poor.</td>
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<td>Step 7</td>
<td>Ask students to scan the “The Gospel of Wealth” excerpt and write down words they cannot define on a Post-it. Reiterate that they are not to read for content, but just to look for difficult language. Having them scan the document backwards can eliminate using context clues to define words, therefore ensuring that difficult language is highlighted on the Post-its. When finished, have students stick their Post-its onto the board. Using an alphabet poster or creating sections on the board (A-G, H-M, etc.) can make posting the words more organized.</td>
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<td>Step 8</td>
<td>Next, assign a word from the Post-its to each student to look up. Only accepting dictionary definitions will create continuity. Have students share their definitions with the class and annotate their “Gospel of Wealth” excerpt beside each unknown word. This easy access to definitions will prevent stumbling blocks when students are reading independently.</td>
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<td>Step 9</td>
<td>Read the directions and first section of “The Gospel of Wealth” together as a class. Discuss answers to question #1: According to Carnegie, what should wealthy men do with their money? Why?</td>
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### Step 10
Allow time for students to read the other sections of the excerpt and answer questions #2-5 independently. Walk around to assist students in need of help. After students are finished, discuss their responses.

### Step 11
Lastly, ask students to write a paragraph for question #6: Consider what Carnegie did with his wealth in the late 19th century and the state of our nation today. Do you think he would still advocate for "The Gospel of Wealth"? Has it worked? If time allows, ask students to share their thoughts. This could also be assigned for homework.

### Evaluation
- “The Gospel of Wealth” Excerpt Questions 75 pts
- Class Discussion 25 pts

### Extension
- Have your students choose a modern-day organization or charity to research. Ask them to determine its origins, leaders, purpose, goals, and from where they receive funding. Consider hosting a bake sale or collecting donations to give back. Students could then create a presentation to share their experience with the class.

### Additional Resources
- **Today in History: Library Benefactor Andrew Carnegie**
- **Library of Congress Blog: Andrew Carnegie- Man of Steel**
- **Topics in Chronicling America: Carnegie Libraries in the United States**
- **America’s Story from America’s Library: Andrew Carnegie**

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Hull-House community workshop Register now: Free classes in painting, sculpture, pottery, weaving, poster art / / Beard. [1938]
Andrew Carnegie, from “The Gospel of Wealth” (1889)

Industrialist Andrew Carnegie grew his steel company to become one of the world’s richest people. In the later part of his life, he gave away most of his wealth as a way of practicing what he preached: “The Gospel of Wealth.”

Directions: Answer the following questions as you read the excerpts to determine the definition of “the gospel of wealth” and why Carnegie believed it was best for society.

This, then, is held to be the duty of the man of wealth: first, to set an example of modest, unostentatious living, shunning display of extravagance; to provide moderately for the legitimate wants of those dependent upon him; and after doing so to consider all surplus revenues . . . as a matter of duty to administer in the manner which, in his judgment, is best calculated to produce the most beneficial results for the community—the man of wealth thus becoming the mere agent and trustee for his poorer brethren, bringing to their service his superior wisdom, experience, and ability to administer, doing for them better than they would or could do for themselves. . . .

Those who would administer wisely must, indeed, be wise, for one of the serious obstacles to the improvement of our race is indiscriminate charity. It were better for mankind that the millions of the rich were thrown into the sea than so spent as to encourage the slothful, the drunken, the unworthy.

A well-known writer of philosophic books admitted the other day that he had given a quarter of a dollar to a man who approached him as he was coming to visit the house of his friend. He knew nothing of the habits of this beggar; knew not the use that would be made of his money, although he had every reason to suspect that it would be spent improperly. . . . He only gratified his own feelings, saved himself from annoyance—and this was probably one of the most selfish and very worst actions of his life...

1. According to Carnegie, what should wealthy men do with their money? Why?

2. What does Carnegie mean by “indiscriminate charity?” What does he believe might happen to society if money is not spent wisely?

3. How would Carnegie have wanted the writer to respond to the beggar?
Andrew Carnegie, from “The Gospel of Wealth” (1889)

In bestowing charity, the main consideration should be to help those who will help themselves; to provide part of the means by which those who desire to improve may do so; to give those who desire to rise the aids by which they may rise; to assist, but rarely or never to do at all . . .

[The] best means of benefiting the community is to place within its reach the ladders on which the aspiring can rise—parks, and the means of recreation, by which men are helped in body and mind; works of art, certain to give pleasure and improve the public taste; and public institutions of various kinds, which improve the general condition of the people—in this manner returning their surplus wealth . . . in the forms best calculated to do them lasting good. . . .

The man who dies leaving behind him millions of available wealth, which was his to administer during life, will pass away “unwept, unhonored, and unsung,” no matter to what uses he leaves the dross which he cannot take with him. Of such as these the public verdict will be: “The man who dies thus rich dies disgraced.”

Such, in my opinion, is the true Gospel of Wealth, obedience to which is destined some day to solve the problem of the Rich and the Poor, and to bring “Peace on earth, among men good will.”

4. Can you think of a modern day organization or charity in which Carnegie would approve?

5. How does Carnegie define the “true Gospel of Wealth”?

6. Consider what Carnegie did with his wealth in the late 19th century and the state of our nation today. Do you think he would still advocate for “The Gospel of Wealth”? Has it worked?