

Guided Reading Activity 9-4

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS \_\_\_\_\_

**Guided Reading Activity 9-4**

**DIRECTIONS:** Fill in the blanks in the space provided, write the word or words that best complete the sentence. Refer to your textbook to fill in the blanks.

- Despite the difficult working conditions of industrial America, industrialists brought about a dramatic rise in the \_\_\_\_\_.
- In 1900 the average industrial worker made approximately \_\_\_\_\_ an hour and worked an average of \_\_\_\_\_ a week.
- \_\_\_\_\_ generally received higher wages and had more control over how they organized their time on the shop floor.
- In the 1890s, coal workers began to form \_\_\_\_\_ unions devoted to protecting their workers' rights.
- Overturn of large corporations opposed \_\_\_\_\_ leaders that united all coal workers and common laborers in a particular industry.

**Profiles IN HISTORY**

Mary Harris Jones published her life story, *The Autobiography of Mother Jones*, in 1925 when she was 95 years old.

**Ask:** What was Mother Jones's main message? (The only way workers could help themselves was to work together with other workers.)

**Reading Check**

**Answer:** They associated unions with immigrants, revolution, and anarchy.

**Organizing Information** Have students create a graphic organizer similar to the one shown below to categorize the obstacles facing immigrants coming to the United States in the late 1800s. Students should include as many rows as they need. **L1**

Working Conditions	Family Life	City Life	Social Life

oaths or sign contracts promising not to join a union, and they hired detectives to go undercover and identify union organizers. Workers who tried to organize a union or strike were fired and placed on a **blacklist**—a list of “troublemakers.” Once blacklisted, a laborer could get a job only by changing residence, trade, or even his or her name.

If workers formed a union, companies often used a **lockout** to break it. They locked workers out of the property and refused to pay them. If the union called a strike, employers would hire replacement workers, or **strikebreakers**.

**Political and Social Opposition** Workers who wanted to organize a union faced several major problems. There were no laws giving workers the right to organize or requiring owners to negotiate with them. Courts frequently ruled that strikes were “conspiracies in restraint of trade,” for which labor leaders might be fined or jailed.

Unions also suffered from the perception that they threatened American institutions. In the late 1800s, the ideas of Karl Marx, called **Marxism**, had become very influential in Europe. Marx argued that the basic force shaping capitalist society was the class struggle between workers and owners. He believed

**Profiles IN HISTORY**

**Mother Jones 1830–1930**

Mary Harris “Mother” Jones emigrated to the United States from Ireland in 1835 at the age of five. Jones became the nation’s most prominent woman union leader after a tragic personal loss. In 1867 her husband George, a union organizer, and their four children died from yellow fever.



Widowed and childless, Jones moved to Chicago and opened a dressmaker’s shop. From her shop window, Jones could see the effects of the economic downturn of the 1870s: “poor shivering wretches, jobless and hungry.” At night she attended rallies for the Knights of Labor.

By 1890 Jones had become an organizer for the United Mine Workers. In 1897 she traveled to West Virginia. The intrepid labor organizer trudged from camp to camp along railroad tracks or rode atop farm wagons. She slept in a tent.

A journalist who followed Jones on her trip reported that Jones began her speeches slowly, encouraging her listeners to “look on yourselves, and upon each other. Let us consider this together for I am one of you, and I know what it is to suffer.” Then Mother Jones would make an impassioned plea for the miners to join the union. “You pity yourselves, but you do not pity your brothers, or you would stand together to help one another.”

**MEETING SPECIAL NEEDS**

**Verbal/Linguistic** Have students play the role of a reporter assigned to cover the railroad strike of 1877. Tell them to write investigative articles that tell when, what, where, why, and how things occurred. Ask students to do independent research to find facts such as dates. Have volunteers read their articles to the class. **L2**

Refer to *Inclusion for the High School Social Studies Classroom Strategies and Activities* in the TCR.

that workers would eventually revolt, seize control of the factories, and overthrow the government.

Marxists claimed that after the revolution, the government would seize all private property and create a socialist society where wealth was evenly divided. Eventually, Marx thought, the state would wither away, leaving a Communist society where classes do not exist. Marxism strongly shaped the thinking of European unions.

While many labor supporters agreed with Marx, a few supported anarchism. Anarchists believe that society does not need any government. At the time, some believed that with only a few acts of violence they could ignite a revolution to topple the government. In the late 1800s, anarchists assassinated government officials and set off bombs all across Europe, hoping to trigger a revolution.

As Marxist and anarchist ideas spread in Europe, tens of thousands of European immigrants began arriving in the United States. Nativism—anti-immigrant feelings—was already strong in the United States. As people began to associate immigrant workers with revolution and anarchism, they became increasingly suspicious of unions. These fears, as well as the government’s duty to maintain law and order, often led officials to use the courts, the police, and even the army to crush strikes and break up unions.

**Reading Check Identifying**

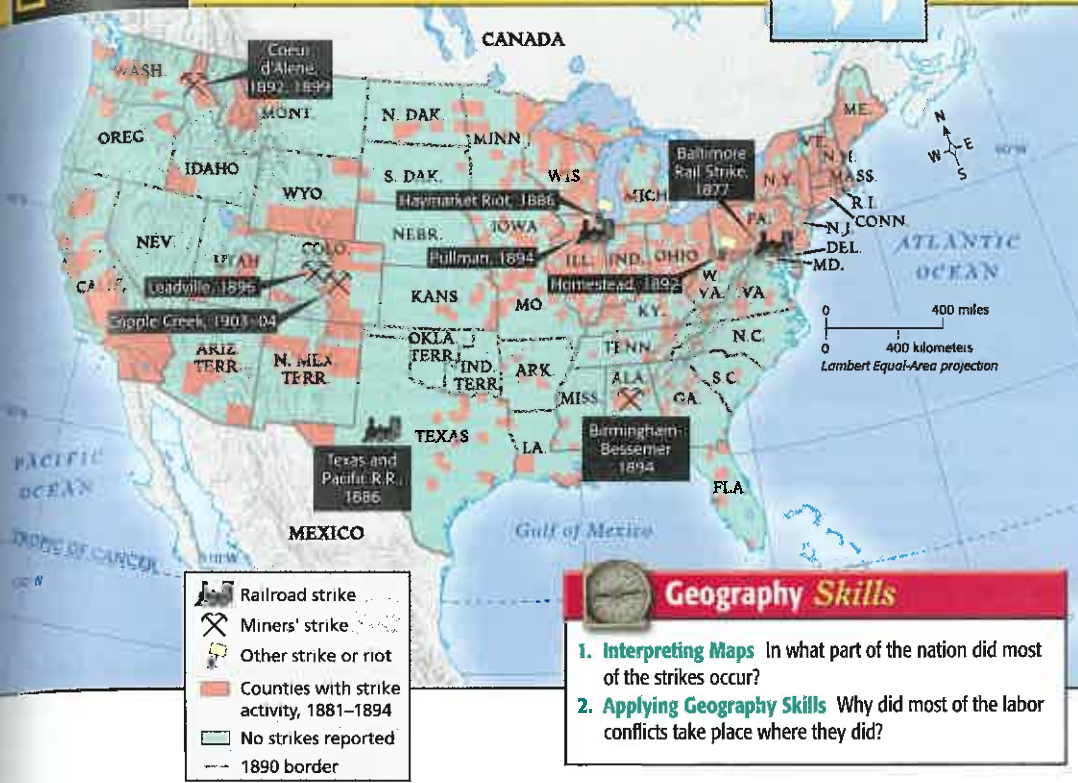
Why were some Americans suspicious of Unions?

**The Struggle to Organize**

Although workers attempted on many occasions to create large industrial unions, they rarely succeeded. In many cases the confrontations with owners and the government led to violence and bloodshed. In 1868 William Sylvis, president of the Iron Molders Union and leader of the National Labor Union, wrote to Karl Marx to encourage Marx’s work and express his own hopes:

“Our cause is a common one. . . . Go ahead in the good work that you have undertaken, until the most glorious success crowns your efforts. . . . monied

**Strikes and Labor Unrest, 1870–1890**



**Geography Skills**

- Interpreting Maps** In what part of the nation did most of the strikes occur?
- Applying Geography Skills** Why did most of the labor conflicts take place where they did?

power is fast eating up the substance of the people. We have made war upon it, and we mean to win it. If we can we will win through the ballot box; if not, we will resort to sterner means. A little bloodletting is sometimes necessary in desperate causes.”

—quoted in *Industrialism and the American Worker*

**The Great Railroad Strike of 1877** In 1873 a severe recession known as the Panic of 1873 struck the American economy and forced many companies to cut wages. In July 1877, as the recession continued, several railroads announced another round of wage cuts. This triggered the first nationwide labor protest. The day after the cuts took effect, railroad workers in Martinsburg, West Virginia, walked off the job and blocked the tracks.

As word spread, railroad workers across the country walked off the job. The strike eventually involved 50,000 railroad workers in 11 states and affected two-thirds of the nation’s railways. Angry strikers smashed equipment, tore up tracks, and blocked rail service in New York, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, St. Louis,

and Chicago. The governors of several states called out their militias to stop the violence. In many places, gun battles erupted between the militia and striking workers.

Determined to stop the violence, President Hayes ordered the army to open the railroad between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. He then sent troops to Chicago, where the strike had paralyzed the entire city. The troops restored order, but by the time the strike ended, more than 100 people lay dead, and millions of dollars of property had been destroyed.

**The Knights of Labor** The failure of the Great Railroad Strike convinced many labor organizers that workers across the nation needed to be better organized. By the late 1870s, enough workers had joined a new organization, the **Knights of Labor**, to make it the first nationwide industrial union.

The Knights called for an eight-hour workday and a government bureau of labor statistics. They also supported equal pay for women, the abolition of child labor, and the creation of worker-owned factories. The Knights’ leaders initially opposed the use of strikes, preferring to use boycotts to pressure

**Geography Skills**

**Answers:**

- Northeast, Midwest, West
- They were sites of major industrial development.

**Geography Skills Practice**

**Ask:** In which states did mining strikes occur? (Alabama, Colorado, Idaho)

**Designing a Board Game** Have students design a game based on life in the late 1800s. Invite interested students to play some of the games and explain the connections to the 1800s. **L3**

Use the rubric for creating a cooperative group management plan on pages 71–72 in the *Performance Assessment Activities and Rubrics*.

**FYI**

Almost 100 years after the railroad strike of 1877, another group of transportation workers, air traffic controllers, went on strike demanding higher wages and fewer working hours. In August 1981, over 11,000 striking air traffic controllers were fired.



**Hard Work** Strict rules were enforced in the workplace in the late 1800s. Many bosses forbade singing, drinking, joking, smoking, or conversation on the job. They also denied immigrant workers time to celebrate their national holidays and holy days, and they did not accommodate workers who did not want to work on the Sabbath.

**INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS ACTIVITY**

**Economics** Have students use magazines to create a collage of today’s American workforce. Instruct students to insert text callouts to highlight how today’s workforce is similar to and different from the workforce the late 1800s. **L1**