

Lesson Plan Outline

Unit: The Promise and Problems of the Growth of America's Cities: 1890-1920

Lesson Title: Immigrant Tenement Living in NYC: 1890-1920

Grade Level: Eleventh Grade Advanced Placement U.S. History Students

Essential Question related to the Vital Theme: How does the story told by the photographs of immigrants living in tenement housing compare with the story told by the history books?

Lesson Time: One fifty-five minute class period

Curriculum Standards: Course Description Outline for AP US History

Materials: Twelve 17" x 22" Jackdaw black and white photographs of Immigrant Tenement Living: New York City 1890-1920

Activity description and overview of instructional strategies:

Divide the class into small groups composed of four students each and distribute the photographs among the groups. Have each group to choose a recorder to take notes. Instruct each small group to answer the following questions about each photograph before passing it along to the next group:

1. What characteristics do the people in the photograph have in common?
2. What characteristics set the subjects apart?
3. Describe the living conditions in the photograph.
4. What emotions, if any, are revealed in the photograph?
5. Is this a homogenous or heterogeneous community?
6. What can you tell about the economic situation by that photograph?
7. Was this photograph staged or candid?
8. What statement, if any, was the photographer trying to make by this photograph?
9. How does the story told by this photograph compare with the story told by the textbook?

Encourage the students to briefly discuss their differences of opinions regarding the photographs. After each group has analyzed all twelve photographs, collect the photos and have the students return to their original seats. For closure, have the students write a brief essay explaining how they think the story told by the actual photographs of the immigrants living in tenement housing compare with the story being told by the textbooks.

Assessment: Grades for this activity will be assigned based on participation and completion of the essay. The facts, interpretation, and analyses of information will be assessed at a later date.

Lesson Plan Outline

Unit: The Promise and Problems of the Growth of America's Cities: 1890-1920

Lesson Title: Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, 1911

Grade Level: Eleventh Grade Advanced Placement US History Students

Essential Question related to the Vital Theme: How can examining primary source documents from the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire be used to understand the deplorable working conditions that existed in some parts of the cities in the early 1900s?

Lesson Time: One fifty-five minute class period

Curriculum Standards: Course Description Outline for AP US History

Materials: Transcripts of background information regarding the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, copies of photographs from the scene of the fire, and copies of political cartoons printed in response to the fire

Activity description and overview of instructional strategies: Allow students time to read the transcripts of the background information about the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire so that they may become familiar with the facts surrounding the incident. Then, lead a discussion about those facts by asking the following questions:

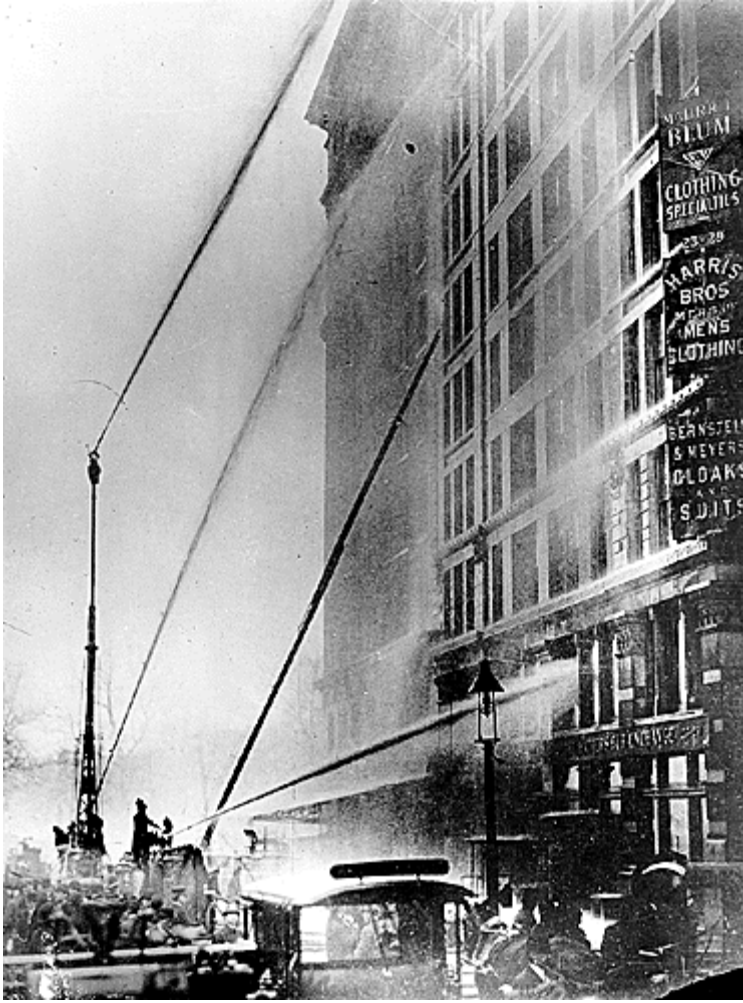
- Who were the majority of the workers in this factory?
- Where was this factory located?
- Why were these workers unable to escape?
- What were the various causes of death at this scene?
- Why was the fire department hindered from rescuing the workers?
- What caused public outrage after this fire?
- How did the government respond to this outrage?
- What happened to the owners of the factory?
- What was the legacy of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire?

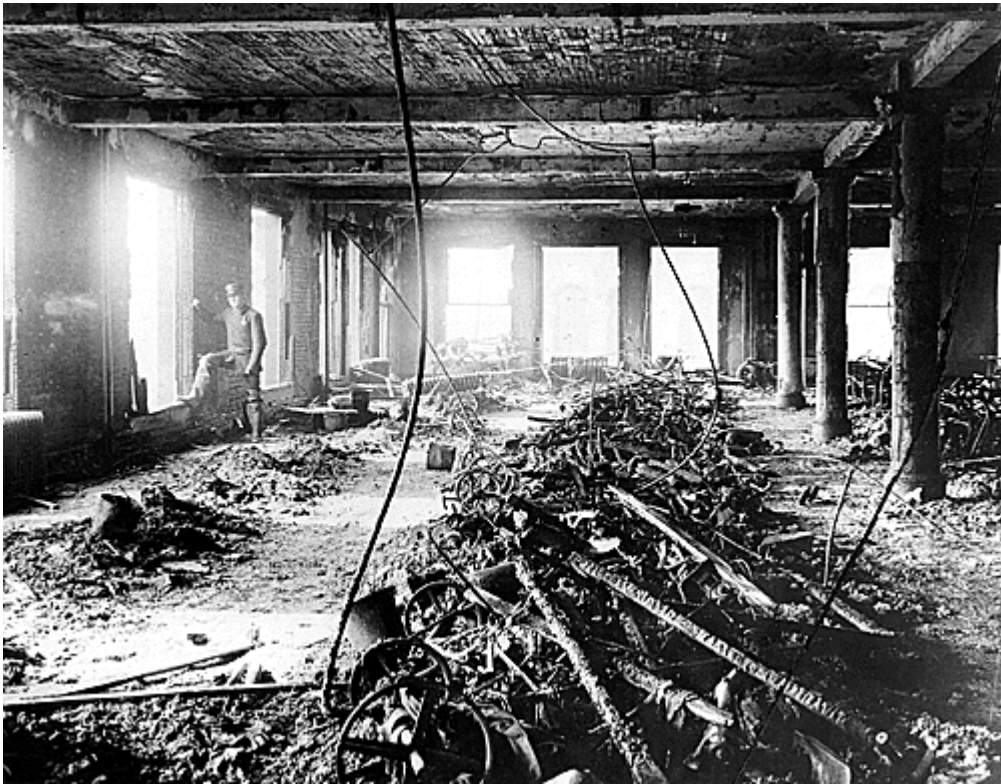
After warning students that some of the photographs from the scene of the fire are somewhat disturbing, distribute the photos for them to examine carefully for the multiple elements within them. Have them discuss the structure of the buildings, the activity taking place, the people involved, the emotions portrayed, and the purpose of the photograph. Allow the students time to discuss how and why they think these photographs influenced the public the way they did. After collecting the photographs, hand out copies of the political cartoons that were published following this horrific incident. Allow the students time to study the drawings to search for clues to their meanings. For closure, assign an essay over one particular cartoon of the students' choice and require them to include the following of information:

- What people or objects are depicted in the cartoon?
- What words or phrases are used in the cartoon?
- What action is taking place in the cartoon?
- Explain the message of the cartoon.
- What special interest groups would agree/disagree with the message of this cartoon? Why?

Assessment: Grades for this activity will be assigned based on the use and interpretation of the facts, inference of knowledge, and the quality of the essay.













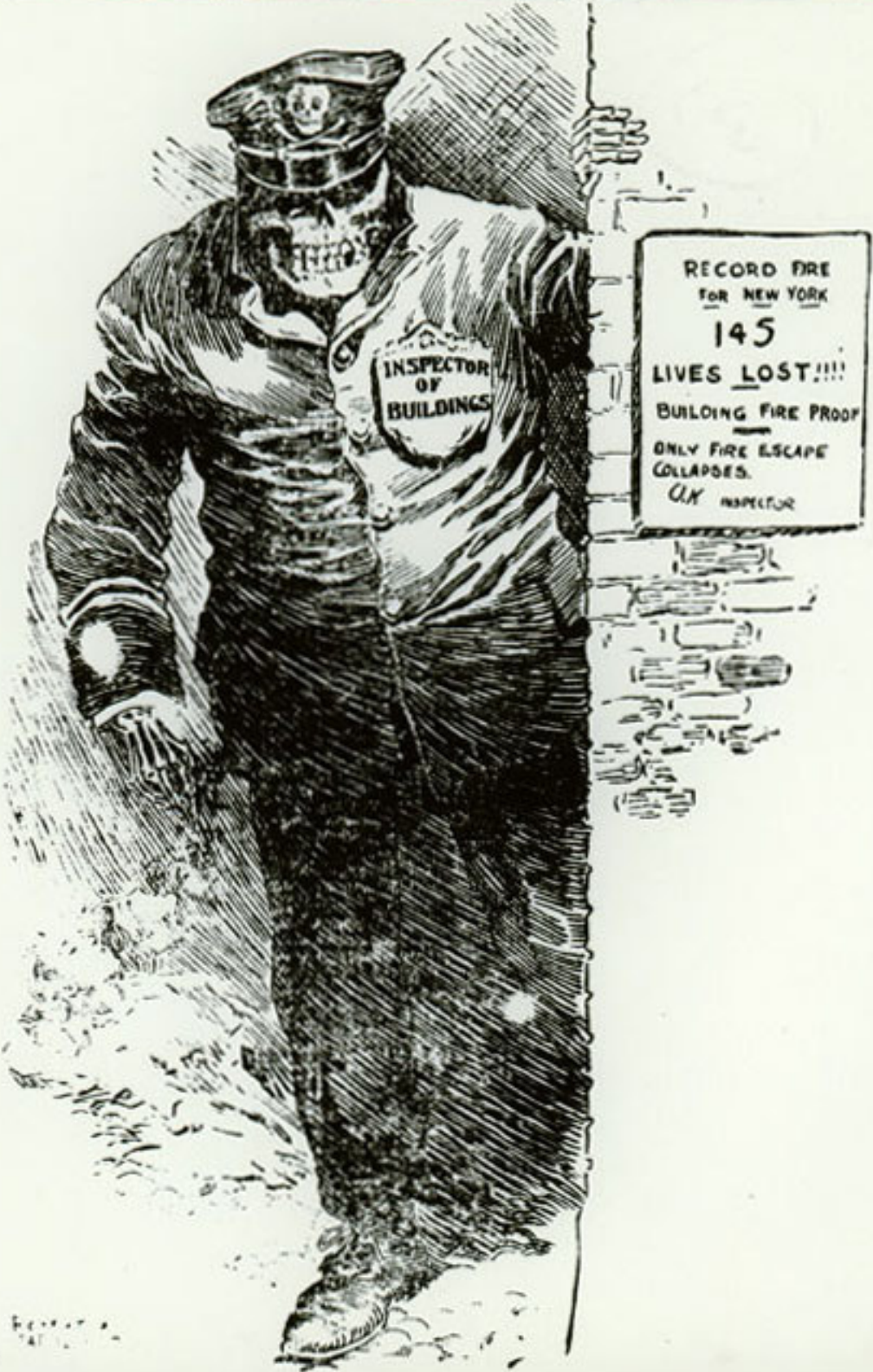






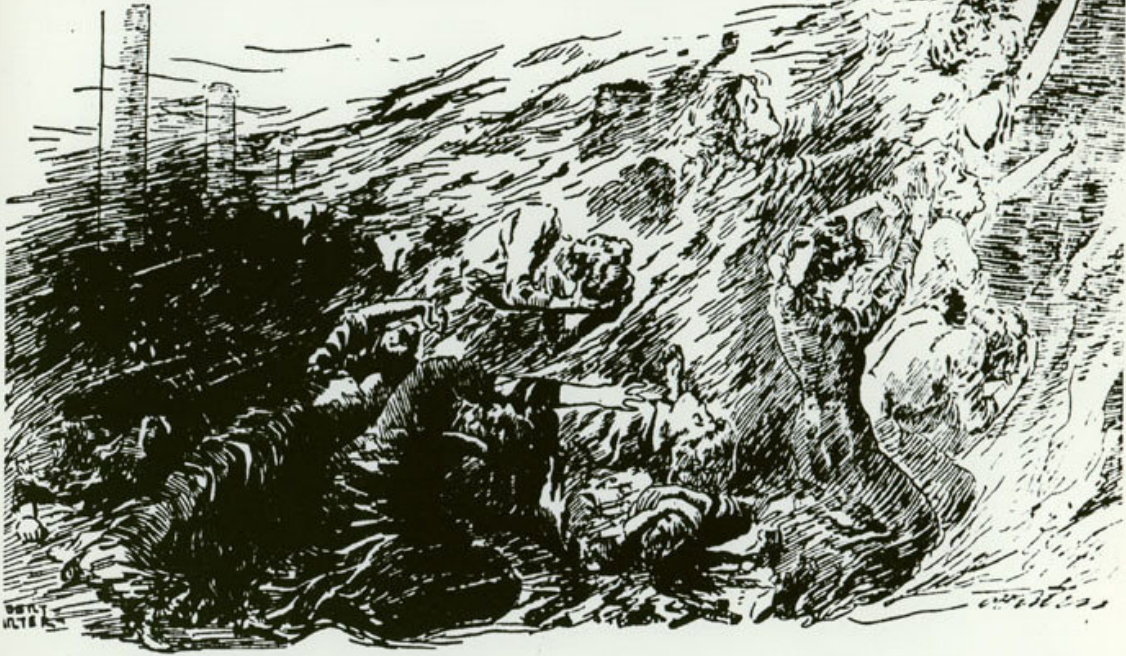
14. Viewing the unfortunates at the Morgue

INSPECTOR OF BUILDINGS!



Reverend
1911

THE LOCKED DOOR!



Cities: The Promise and Problems of the Growth of America's Cities:
1890-1920
Questions for Discussion

The following are discussion/review questions for teachers to ask students

1. Do you think this nation could have achieved the benefits of industrialization without all the social costs, or did our own government and economic system actually make that impossible?
2. What do you think historians mean when they say the different immigrant groups "adjusted" to American society rather than "assimilated" into it?
3. Considering the hostility among the unskilled workers living in the tenement housing sections of the city, why do you think so few turned to socialism or dared to stage some sort of workers revolution?
4. Despite some of the negative characteristics of the urban setting, how did those very same factors actually generate interest in promoting education? Why did the South lag behind the North in terms of public education?
5. Why do you think the Upper class and the Middle class chose different forms of leisure time activities rather than socializing together?

The following are some questions that are commonly asked by students:

1. If the living conditions were so bad in the cities...why didn't the people just move out to the rural areas?
2. Did the wealthy people have any idea what it was like for the workers and immigrants living in those tenement buildings?
3. Why did the government not do more to help the workers and the immigrants?
4. What did the people living in the tenement buildings do about bathrooms?
5. Would our "wealthy, middle, and poor classes" of today basically fall into the same economic/social classes as in 1890-1920?