

United States History
Section II—Part A
Suggested writing time is—40 minutes

Directions: The following prompt is based on the accompanying documents. The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise. In your response you should do the following.

- State a relevant thesis that directly addresses all parts of the question.
- Support the thesis or a relevant argument with evidence from all, or all but one, of the documents.
- Incorporate analysis of all, or all but one, of the documents into your argument.
- Focus your analysis of each document on at least one of the following: intended audience, purpose, historical context, and/or point of view.
- Support your argument with analysis of historical examples outside the documents.
- Connect historical phenomena relevant to your argument to broader events or processes.
- Synthesize the elements above into a persuasive essay.

To what extent was it justified to characterize the industrial leaders of the late 19th century as either “robber barons” or “industrial statesmen”? Were the results of their efforts, examples of exploitation and graft, or were they philanthropic and cultural giants who helped to build the American culture?

Document A

Q: How is the freight and passenger pool working?

W.V.: Very satisfactorily. I don't like that expression “pool,” however, that's a common construction applied by the people to a combination which the leading roads have entered into to keep rates at a point where they will pay dividends to the stockholders. The railroads are not run for the benefit of the “dear public” – that cry is all nonsense – they are built by men who invest their money and expect to get a fair percentage on the same.

Q: You don't run your limited express for the public benefit?

W.V. The public be damned. What does the public care for the railroads except to get as much out of them for as small consideration as possible? I don't take any stock in this silly nonsense about working for anybody's good but our own.

Source: Interview with William H. Vanderbilt, *Chicago Daily News*, October 9, 1882

Document B

The problem of our age is the proper administration of wealth so that the ties of brotherhood may still bind together the rich and poor in harmony. The conditions of human life have been revolutionized within the past few hundred years. The contrast between the palace of the millionaire and the cottage of the laborer with us today measures the change which has come with civilization.

This change, however, is not to be deplored, but welcomed as highly beneficial. It is essential for the progress of the race that the houses of some should be homes for all

that is highest and best in literature and the arts, rather than none should be so. Much better this great inequity than universal squalor....

The price which society pays for the law of competition, like the price it pays for cheap comforts and luxuries, is also great; but the advantages of this law are also greater still. For it is to this law that we owe our wonderful material development which brings improved conditions. While the law may be sometimes hard for the individual, it is best for the race, because it insures the survival of the fittest in every department. We welcome, therefore, as conditions to which we must accommodate ourselves, great inequality of environment, the concentration of business, industrial and commercial, in the hands of a few; and the law of competition between these as being not only beneficial, but essential for the future progress of the race.

Source: Andrew Carnegie, "Wealth," *North American Review*, 1889

Document C

It is clear that trusts are contrary to public policy and hence in conflict with the common law. They are monopolies organized to destroy competition and restrain trade....

The main weapons of the trust are threats, intimidation, bribery, fraud, wreck, and pillage. Take one well-authenticated instance in the history of the Oat Meal Trust as an example. In 1887 this trust decided that part of their mills must stand idle. They were accordingly closed. This resulted in the discharge of a large number of laborers who had to suffer the consequence. The mills which continued in operation would produce seven million barrels of meal during the year. Shortly after shutting down, the trust advanced the price of meal one dollar per barrel, and the public was forced to stand the assessment.

Source: James B. Weaver, *A Call to Action*, 1892.

Document D

I say that you ought to get rich, and it is your duty to get rich. How many of my pious brethren say to me, "Do you, a Christian minister, spend your time going up and down the country advising young people to get rich, to get money?" "Yes, of course I do." They say, "Isn't that awful! Why don't you preach the gospel instead of instead of preaching about man's making money?" "Because to make money honestly is to preach the gospel." The men who get rich may be the most honest men you find in the community....

Let me say here clearly, and say it briefly ... that ninety-eight out of one hundred of the rich men in America are honest. That is why they are rich. That is why they are trusted with money. That is why they carry on great enterprises and find plenty of people to work with them. It is because they are honest men....

Source: Russell H. Conwell, *Acres of Diamonds*, 1900

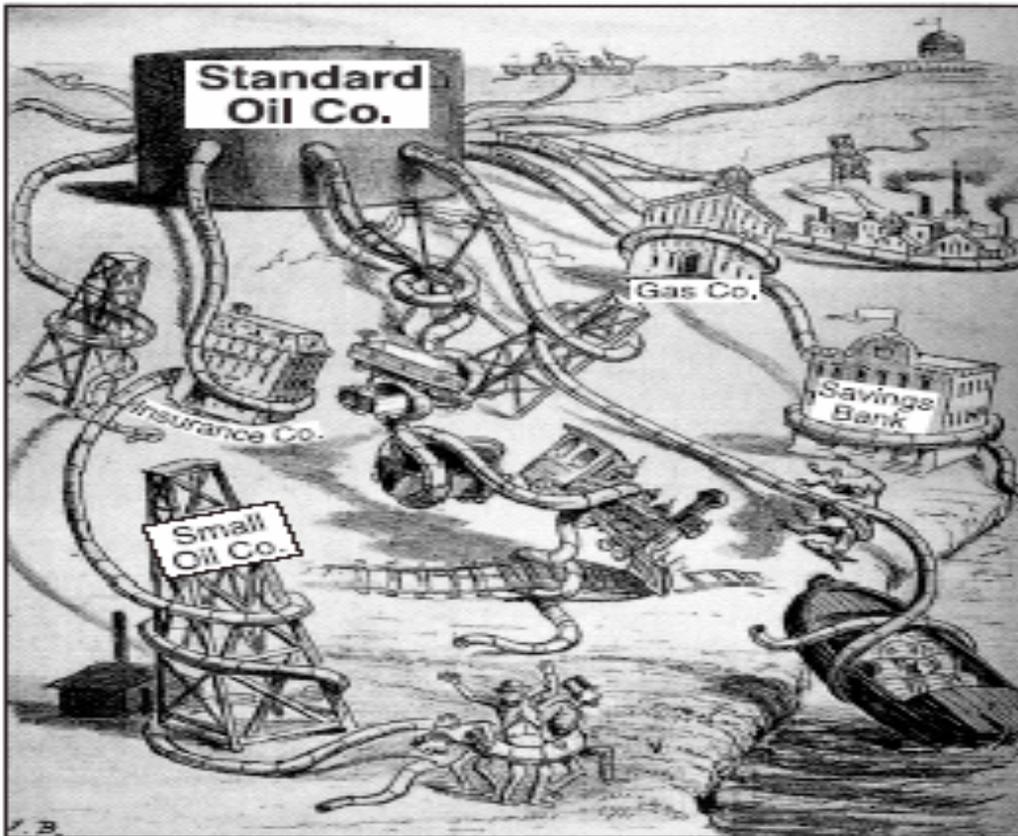
Document E

The captains of industry and the capitalists ... if they are successful, win, in these days, great fortunes in a short time. There are no earnings which are more legitimate or for which greater services are rendered to the whole industrial body. The popular notions about this matter really assume that all the wealth accumulated by these classes of persons would be here just the same if they had not existed. They are supposed to have

appropriated it out of the common stock. This is so far from being true that, on the contrary, their own wealth would not be but for themselves; and besides that, millions more of wealth, manifold greater than their own, scattered in the hands of thousands, would not exist but for them.

Source: William Graham Sumner, Forum, March 1892

Document F



Source: Herman Viola, *Why We Remember: United States History*, Scott Foresman—Addison Wesley Publishing Co. (adapted)

Document G

List of major gifts given by John D. Rockefeller by the time of his death in 1937.

American Baptist Foreign Mission Society - NY	\$6,845,688.52
American Baptist Home Mission Society - NY	6,994,831.62
American Baptists Missionary Society – Dayton, Ohio	1,902,132.58
General Education Board	129,209,167.10
Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial – NY	73,985,313.77
Minister and Missionaries Benefit Board	7,090,579.06
Rockefeller Foundation – NY	182,851,480.90
Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research	59,931,891.62
University of Chicago	34,708,375.28
Yale University	1,001,000.00
Y.M.C.A., International Committee	2,295,580.73

TOTAL: \$506,816,041.18

Source: *The New York Times*, May 24, 1937

Document H

It is too late to argue about advantages of industrial combinations. They are a necessity...Their chief advantages are:

- 1) Command of necessary capital
- 2) Extension of limits of business
- 3) Increase of number of persons interested in the business.
- 4) Economy in the business
- 5) Improvements and economies which are derived from knowledge of many interested persons of wide experience
- 6) Power to give the public improved products at less prices and still make profit for stockholders
- 7) Permanent work and good wages for laborers

Source. U. S. Industrial Commission,
Preliminary Report on Trusts and Industrial Combination. House Documents No.476, 56th
Congress Session (December,1899), Part I, 796.