

## Document-Based Question

**Directions:** The following question is based on the accompanying documents. The documents have been edited for this exercise. Spend approximately 15 minutes planning and 45 minutes writing your answer.

Write an essay that does the following:

- ♦ States an appropriate thesis that directly addresses all parts of the question.
- ♦ Supports the thesis or argument with evidence from all or all but one of the documents AND your knowledge of U.S. history beyond the documents.
- ♦ Analyzes all or all but one of the documents.
- ♦ Places each document into at least one of the following categories: intended audience, purpose, historical context, and/or point of view.
- ♦ Uses historical evidence beyond the documents to support your argument.
- ♦ Places the argument in the context of broader regional, national, or global processes.
- ♦ Incorporates all of the elements above into a convincing essay.

**Question:** Analyze the ways in which laboring-class Americans in the Gilded Age (1865–1900) attempted to better their lives in the face of the power of big business and the federal government. Evaluate the degree of success their efforts attained.

### Document 1

Source: Gift for the Grangers, 1873



Library of Congress, LC-DIG-pga-04170

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Document 2

Source: I. G. Blanchard, "The Eight Hour Day," *Boston Daily Voice*, 1886

We mean to make things over,  
We're tired of toil for naught,  
With bare enough to live upon,  
And never an hour for thought;  
We want to feel the sunshine,  
And we want to smell the flowers,  
We're sure that God has willed it,  
And we mean to have Eight Hours.  
We're summoning our forces  
From shipyard, shop, and mill;  
Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest,  
Eight hours for what we will!

Document 3

Source: The Haymarket Riot, *Harper's Weekly*, May 15, 1886



Library of Congress, LCUSZ62-796

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## Document 4

Source: National People's Party Platform, 1892

1. We demand free and unlimited coinage of silver and gold at the present legal ratio of 16 to 1.
2. We demand that the amount of circulating medium be speedily increased to not less than \$50 per capita.
3. We demand a graduated income tax.
4. We believe that the money of the country should be kept as much as possible in the hands of the people, and hence we demand that all State and national revenues shall be limited to the necessary expenses . . .

TRANSPORTATION.—Transportation being a means of exchange and a public necessity, the government should own and operate the railroads in the interest of the people. The telegraph, telephone, like the post-office system, being a necessity for the transmission of news, should be owned and operated by the government in the interest of the people.

LAND.—The land, including all the natural sources of wealth, is the heritage of the people, and should not be monopolized for speculative purposes, and alien ownership of land should be prohibited. All land now held by railroads and other corporations in excess of their actual needs, and all lands now owned by aliens should be reclaimed by the government and held for actual settlers only.

## Document 5

Source: Jacob Coxey, 1894

Up these steps the lobbyists of trusts and corporations have passed unchallenged on their way to committee rooms, access to which we, the representatives of the toiling wealth-producers, have been denied. We stand here to-day in behalf of millions of toilers whose petitions have been buried in committee rooms, whose prayers have been unresponded to, and whose opportunities for honest, remunerative, productive labor have been taken from them by unjust legislation, which protects idlers, speculators, and gamblers: we come to remind the Congress here assembled of the declaration of a United States Senator, "that for a quarter of a century the rich have been growing richer, the poor poorer, and that by the close of the present century the middle class will have disappeared as the struggle for existence becomes fierce and relentless.

We have come to the only source which is competent to aid the people in their day of dire distress. We are here to tell our Representatives, who hold their seats by grace of our ballots, that the struggle for existence has become too fierce and relentless. We come and throw up our defenseless hands, and say, help, or we and our loved ones must perish. We are engaged in a bitter and cruel war with the enemies of all mankind—a war with hunger, wretchedness, and despair, and we ask Congress to heed our petitions and issue for the nation's good a sufficient volume of the same kind of money which carried the country through one awful war and saved the life of the nation.

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## Document 6

Source: Royal Melendy, "The Saloon in Chicago," 1900

In many of these discussions, to which I have listened and in which I have joined, there has been revealed a deeper insight into the real cause of present evils than is often manifested from lecture platforms, but their remedies are wide of the mark, each bringing forward a theory which is the panacea for all social ills. The names of Karl Marx and leaders of political and social thought are often heard here. This is the workingman's school. He is both scholar and teacher. . . . Many as patriotic men as our country produces learn here their lessons in patriotism and brotherhood. Here the masses receive their lessons in civil government, learning less of our ideals, but more of the practical workings than the public schools teach. It is the most cosmopolitan institution in the most cosmopolitan of cities. One saloon advertises its cosmopolitanism by this title, "Everybody's Exchange." Men of all nationalities meet and mingle, and by the interchange of views and opinions their own are modified. Nothing short of travel could exert so broadening an influence upon these men. It does much to assimilate the heterogeneous crowds that are constantly pouring into our city from foreign shores. But here, too, they learn their lessons in corruption and vice. It is their school for good and evil.

## Document 7

Source: Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House*, 1912

Halsted Street is thirty-two miles long, and one of the great thoroughfares of Chicago. . . . Between Halsted Street and the river live about ten thousand Italians—Neapolitans, Sicilians, and Calabrians, with an occasional Lombard or Venetian. To the south on Twelfth Street are many Germans, and side streets are given over almost entirely to Polish and Russian Jews. Still farther south, these Jewish colonies merge into a huge Bohemian colony, so vast that Chicago ranks as the third Bohemian city in the world. To the northwest are many Canadian-French, clannish in spite of their long residence in America, and to the north are Irish and first-generation Americans. . . .

The policy of the public authorities of never taking an initiative, and always waiting to be urged to do their duty, is obviously fatal in a neighborhood where there is little initiative among the citizens. The idea underlying our self-government breaks down in such a ward. The streets are inexpressibly dirty, the number of schools inadequate, sanitary legislation unenforced, the street lighting bad, the paving miserable and altogether lacking in the alleys and smaller streets, and the stables foul beyond description. Hundreds of houses are unconnected with the street sewer.