Comparing and Contrasting Attitudes of Americans Towards Immigrant Laborers
Gilded Age to Present Day Using Political Cartoons
Labor Movement Lesson

Focus/Summary
The purpose of this lesson is to allow students to analyze political cartoons depicting attitudes of Americans concerning immigrant laborers. In their analysis of the cartoons students will create charts describing similarities and differences. This analysis will allow students to draw conclusions about the spectrum of attitudes Americans have had toward immigration and the labor movement, how they have changed and evolved over time. This lesson will be placed within a larger unit surrounding the theme of industrialization, immigration, labor movement, and the progressive era.

Vital Theme and Narrative
Patterns of social and political interaction

Habits of Mind
• Perceive past events and issues as they were experienced by people at the time, to develop historical empathy as opposed to present-mindedness.
• Understand how things happen and how things change, how human intentions matter, but also how their consequences are shaped by the means of carrying them out, in a tangle of purpose and process.

Objective
Students will be able to identify the elements of what they are seeing in the source. Students will also be able to look at similarities and differences, as well as, draw conclusions about the intent and knowledge that can be gained from the source.

Procedures
Opening the Lesson
Students will be given a short review on political cartoons, what do you see, what could it mean? We will start with cartoon #1 (attached) and discuss as a class what we are seeing in the source, what it could mean, etc. It would be best to demonstrate using a primary source analysis form with them and complete it as a whole class.

Developing the Lesson
Students will be given blank primary source analysis sheets (the link to one of my favorites is included at the end of lesson) to use on the various cartoons. Individually students will examine the cartoons and try to complete as much of the sheet as possible. Students will then be asked to work with a partner to identify the similarities and differences in messages that the feel are prevalent in the cartoons. This element will be completed using a “T-Chart.” Students will be need to interpret at least four of the cartoons.

Concluding the Lesson
Pairs will then find another pair to then compare and contrast their charts and discuss conclusions that could be made regarding the public attitude towards immigrant laborers.

Assessing Student Learning
Students will be asked to write a brief reflection explaining what they feel is the most significant realization (can be a similarity or difference) about the two time periods and then use examples from the cartoon to provide support for statements. Students will be graded based on their ability to soundly identify and analyze a similarity or difference and use specific information in order to support their conclusions.

Political Cartoon Analysis Sheets
Cartoon #2

Cartoon #3

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Political Cartoons of Dr. Suess
Dr. Suess Goes War