

THE HISTORY CHANNEL CLASSROOM STUDY GUIDES

Empires of Industry

Empires of Industry is a series that explores the cornerstones of America's economic might that established the United States as a world leader. Each of the one-hour programs in this remarkable series focuses on an industry that played a unique role in America's rise to world economic dominance. The stories of changing fortunes in the Steel, Coal, Brewing, Ship Building and Textile and other American industries reveal much about our country's past and present.

Empires of Industry would be useful for classes on American History, History of Science and Technology, Economics and American Culture. It is appropriate for middle school and high school.

Leaves of Gold

The leaves of the tobacco plant are worth their weight in gold, and some of America's earliest fortunes were made in the precious plant. But these fortunes depended not only on the tobacco leaf, but also on the work force this labor-intensive crop demanded, and herein lies the roots of American slavery. The history of the tobacco industry is laden with controversy, from its use of African slaves to the health hazards of its products.

- buxom
- cachet
- clandestine
- clientele
- coffers
- cumbersome
- currying
- effeminate
- exotic
- famine
- idyllic
- lofty
- lurid
- meager
- methodical
- patriarch
- philanthropic
- proWess
- stranglehold
- tepid

Discussion Questions

1. Tobacco has played a major role in the colonization and history of America. Discuss the role of tobacco and how it contributed to the growth of the colonies, then the nation.
2. Why are tobacco leaves called "leaves of gold?"
3. For over four hundred years, the United States allowed slavery to be practiced. Discuss the role of tobacco in American slavery.
4. Although both men and women smoke cigarettes, they were considered "unmanly" when first introduced in the 19th century. Why were they considered effeminate and associated with women?

5. How did James Buchanan Duke, partner in the American Tobacco Company, counter the effeminate image of cigarettes and create a more masculine image?
6. When first introduced, workers, mostly females, rolled cigarettes by hand. How did the invention of the cigarette-rolling machine revolutionize the tobacco industry?
7. Discuss some of the health problems that have been associated with tobacco.
8. How did R.J. Reynolds, one of the Dukes competitors, survive the Dukes' attempts to take over his firm?
9. Camels are one of the most popular brands of cigarettes. What was the role of marketing and advertising in the brand's success?
10. Discuss the politics of tobacco.

Extended Activities

1. Create a poster illustrating the steps for growing, harvesting and processing tobacco.
2. Using the techniques that made brands such as Winston and Camel cigarettes famous, create an anti-smoking advertising campaign.