Industrialists Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

“Robber Barons” or “Captains of Industry”?

**Robber baron:** A negative term applied to the extremely wealthy and powerful businessmen in Modern America. They became extraordinarily wealthy by immorally and unethically exploiting others. Technically their business practices never break the law, but they also used their power to influence government in their favor. A robber baron is very competitive and cares only about himself.

**Captain of industry:** A smart, ruthless businessman who gets rich by improving the economy, his country, and the lives of other people. They built and dominated their section of the economy and then used their vast wealth to support significant educational, cultural, medical or humanitarian projects. Captains of industry are extremely rich, but they use their power to help others.

**Task, Part I:** Your group will be assigned an industrialist you must research in order to decide whether he was a “robber baron” or a “captain of industry.” Fill out the research guide on the other side of this page to help you make your decision. I recommend splitting the research up between your group members – but be sure to share your info and make your final decision (robber or captain?) as a group.

My group’s industrialist is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Task, Part II:** Your group will create a visual biography of your industrialist, including the following features:

* Biographical information – where they were born & when they died (shoes)
* The industry they worked in (hat)
* Brief description of how they became rich (an action that helps explain)
* Something they are well known for (I ❤ …)
* How they spent their money (something they’re holding)
* What they think of workers (thought bubble or something in the background, etc. …)
* How they got involved in politics (thought bubble or something in the background…)

**Task, Part III:** The terms “robber baron” and “captain of industry” are not limited to history. Many businesspeople today could qualify as one or the other. Your group will choose a current industrialist (or business mogul) to research, and you will decide whether they are more of a robber baron or a captain of industry. Your group can choose from the list below, or pick your own if you want (just clear it with me first).

* Charles & David Koch (manufacturing, trading)
* Donald Trump (real estate, TV)
* The Walton family (Wal-Mart)
* Bill Gates (Microsoft)
* Steve Jobs (Apple)
* Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook)
* Jeff Bezos (Amazon)
* Larry Page & Sergey Brin (Google)
* George Soros (banking, hedge funds)
* Rupert Murdoch (News Corp, 21st Century Fox)
* Warren Buffett (Berkshire Hathaway)
* S Truett Cathy (Chick-fil-A)
* Oprah Winfrey (TV)
* Ted Turner (TV)
* Michael Eisner (Disney)
* Barry Diller (Fox News, Expedia)
* John Malone (TV – lives in CO!)

Research Guide

Industrialist: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Details |
| Biography – who was he & how did he get his wealth? |  |
| How he (or his industry) treated workers |  |
| How he spent his money |  |
| How he donated money |  |
| How did he get involved in politics |  |
| Robber Baron or Captain of Industry? |  |