

The Gilded Age - Social/Personal Responsibility Research Paper

This assignment requires the student to read selected chapters from *The Gilded Age: A History in Documents*. Students will analyze and interpret these primary and secondary sources to formulate a short paper based on the social and personal responsibilities of various figures, why they are writing these papers/journals/articles, and how we in modern America deal with those issues today. The assignment is worth **50 points**.

Social and Personal Responsibility Paper: Students will choose a selection from *The Gilded Age: A History in Documents* to analyze and write a 1-2 page paper (Formatting requirements: single-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 point font, 1" margins, no headings except name and paper title); Papers not meeting the stated formatting requirements will be **docked 5 points**). The definition of "1-2 page" is 1 full page (not half a page or ¾ of a page), with no words on a third page. This is meant to help students learn to write in a precise and concise manner. **Citations must be done in Chicago (Turabian) format.** An example is at the bottom of this document.

Social responsibility is defined as a demonstration of civic responsibility and its engagement in various larger communities. Personal responsibility is defined as an evaluation of choices and actions of others or one's own actions, and relate the consequences (good and/or bad) to decision-making. Students must discuss these issues using critical thinking and effectively communicate their views on these topics in their papers. The paper must discuss the social and personal responsibility of both the writers of the documents and modern interpreters of the documents (politicians, judges, media, American public).

The easiest way to do this is to analyze the primary documents (the sub-chapter of your choice) in the first half of the paper and use primary and secondary sources to address how modern Americans deal with or dealt with the same issues in their time. (For example, "*Whitening*" *Indians* discusses Native American assimilation. Analyze how and why they are discussing that issue, using the documents and lecture material. Then, in the second half of the paper, use secondary sources to analyze and explain how modern Americans deal/have dealt with with Indian assimilation. Modern America in this sense would go back to 1900, so you could use any example from that point to present day). **The secondary sources need to be books, articles, or comprehensive web sites. Web pages like Bio.com, History.com, and others of that sort will not give students the requisite information needed and are unacceptable. It should go without saying that Wikipedia is also not an acceptable source. There will be points off for using unacceptable sources.**

The deadline for submission of the paper portion is listed on the link to turn in this assignment. No late papers will be accepted, **NO EXCEPTIONS.** The students will turn **1 electronic copy to the class dropbox online**, otherwise the student will be assigned a **ZERO for the paper assignment**. Failure to turn in this assignment will adversely affect your final course grade.

Students may choose any of the chapter sub-sections in *The Gilded Age* to write about for their paper (e.g.: "Exodusters" or "From Rags to Riches" or "Sports" – These can be found in the Table of Contents. If the section you want to do is not formatted like the examples given here, you cannot

do that section. Only chapter sub-headings are acceptable). Only one student per class can write on a particular section and preference will be on a **first come, first served basis**. If a student writes on the same section as another student who claimed it first, the second student will receive **no credit** for their paper. **A discussion board has been created to claim the paper numbers, so look there to see which numbers other students have and have not taken. Dr. Smith does not check the discussion board unless there is a problem (e.g.: two students do the same topic) and is not responsible for making sure students pick their topic correctly.** The board is for students to check which papers are available. If you are confused or have question, please email Dr. Smith! **Claim your paper on the discussion board in the “Paper Assignment” tab.**

Writing tips:

1. Statements such as “I think...” “I feel...” “I believe...” “This showed personal/social responsibility by...” and any other statement like these should not find their way into your paper. You can express these sentiments without resorting to high school level writing.
2. You do not need to introduce the book, author, etc. It is a waste of time in such a concise paper. Get to the point!
3. Do not use contractions in formal writing (don’t, won’t, can’t, etc.).
4. Use normal paragraphs, they are your friend! Giant walls of text are not!
5. Do not put an elaborate heading at the top (I know some of you are sneaky with that! haha). All you need is your name and sub-chapter title. Any paper with 3-6 lines of heading will not meet the length requirement.
6. If you would like help becoming a better writer, please ask Dr. Smith for assistance.