

Pullman Strike Lesson Plan

Central Historical Question:

How did Chicago newspapers cover the Pullman strike?

Materials:

- Pullman PPT
- Transparencies of all four document sets
- Copies of all four document sets (only ¼ class gets each set)
- Copies of Graphic Organizer

Plan of Instruction:

1. Introduction: *We have been talking about labor unions and the big strikes that happened during the Gilded Age:*

Haymarket—1886, Homestead—1892

Today we're going to talk about the Pullman Strike of 1894.

2. Present Pullman Powerpoint.
3. Transition: *The Pullman strike divided the nation. In Chicago, there were newspapers that supported the workers and newspapers that supported the Pullman Car Company. Today we're going to use close reading to figure out which newspapers supported whom.*

REVIEW CLOSE READING QUESTIONS.

3. Divide class into four groups. Each group gets ONE DOCUMENT SET (A, B, C, **OR** D). Distribute Graphic Organizer to all students.

Explain that each group must complete the Graphic Organizer for their set and answer the question: *Which paper supported the workers and which supported Pullman?*

Students should be prepared to explain how they arrived at their conclusion.

4. When finished, a representative from each group should come up to the overhead and model how they did close reading on their document. (We recommend limiting each group's presentation to 5 minutes).

Students should circle words or phrases that tipped them off to whether the newspaper favored the workers or Pullman.

Citations:

All newspaper articles in this lesson were found in:

Victoria Bissell Brown and Timothy J. Shannon. *Going to the Source: The Bedford Reader in American History, Volume 2: Since 1865*. Bedford/ St. Martin's, 2007.

Set A: May 12, 1894

Chicago Times	Chicago Tribune
<p>PULLMAN MEN OUT</p> <p>Nearly 4,000 Throw Down Their Tools and Quit Refuse to Work Till Wrongs are Righted Firing Three Men Starts It</p> <p>Almost the entire force of men employed in the Pullman shops went out on strike yesterday. Out of the 4,800 men and women employed in the various departments there were probably not over 800 at work at 6 o'clock last evening. The immediate cause of the strike was the laying off of three men in the iron machine shop. The real but remote cause is the question of wages over which the men have long been unhappy.</p> <p>The strike of yesterday was ordered by a committee representing every department at the Pullman works. This committee was in session all night Thursday night, and finally came to the conclusion to order a strike 4:30 o'clock yesterday morning.</p> <p>The position of the company is that no increase in wages is possible under the present conditions. The position of the men is that they are receiving less than a living wage, to which they are entitled.</p>	<p>PULLMEN OUT</p> <p>LAY OFFS THE CAUSE</p> <p>Committeemen Laid Off and Their Comrades Act</p> <p>Two thousand employees in the Pullman car works struck yesterday, leaving 800 others at their posts. This was not enough to keep the works going, so a notice was posted on the big gates at 6 o'clock saying: "These shops closed until further notice."</p> <p>The walk-out was a complete surprise to the officials. Mr. Pullman had offered to allow the men the privilege of examining the books of the company to verify his statement that the works were running at a loss. When the men quit work at 6 o'clock Thursday evening none of them had any idea of striking. But the Grievance Committee of Forty-six held a session until 4:30 o'clock in the morning. . . . One department at a time, the men went out so that by 10 o'clock 1500 men were out. Only 800 came back after lunch.</p> <p>Vocabulary: Grievance—complaint</p>

Set B: June 26-28, 1894

The following articles were written during the first week of the national railway boycott.

Chicago Times	Chicago Tribune
<p>NOT A WHEEL TURNS IN THE WEST</p> <p>Complete Shutdown of All Roads in the Territory Beyond the Missouri River</p> <p>It May Be the Biggest Tie-Up in All History</p> <p>All the western half of the United States has begun to feel the paralysis of the American Railway Union's boycott of Pullman. At every important division point in the west, southwest, and northwest there are trains blockaded because the American Railway Union men will not run them with Pullman cars attached. Some roads are absolutely and utterly blockaded, others only feel the embargo slightly, but it grows in strength with every hour.</p> <p>The six o'clock train on the Great Western started out with two Pullman sleeper cars and one Pullman diner. The conductor rang the bell, the train stopped, the whole crew got down and cut off those three cars. The train pulled out without the Pullmans. It was the most decisive thing the boycotters have done yet.</p>	<p>DEBS IS A DICTATOR</p> <p>His Warfare on the Railroads is Waged Effectively</p> <p>The American Railway Union became aggressive yesterday in its efforts to force a settlement between Mr. Pullman and his striking employees. Its freight service was at a standstill all day and the same is practically true of other roads. In no case, however, did the strikers prevent the departure of any regular passenger trains from Chicago.</p> <p>Deb's master stroke, however, occurred at midnight, when every employee on the Santa Fe belonging to the American Railway Union was ordered out. Whether the men will obey the order will be learned today.</p> <p>So far no marked violence has been attempted. Chief Brennan says he has 2,000 men who can be gathered at any point inside of an hour.</p> <p>Vocabulary: Dictator— leader with total power</p>

Set C: July 7, 1894

The following articles were written after federal troops had been in Chicago for three days.

Chicago Times	Chicago Tribune
<p>MEN NOT AWED BY SOLDIERS</p> <p>MOST OF THE ROADS AT A STANDSTILL</p> <p>Railway Union is Confident of Winning Against Armed Capital</p> <p>Despite the presence of United States troops and the mobilization of five regiments of state militia, despite threats of martial law and total extermination of the strikers by bullet, the great strike begun by the American Railway Union holds three-fourths of the roads running out of Chicago.</p> <p>If the soldiers are sent to the southwest section of the city, bloodshed and perhaps death will follow today, for this is the most lawless part in the city. But the perpetrators are not American Railway Union men. The people engaged in this outrageous work of destruction are not strikers. The persons who set the fires yesterday are young hoodlums.</p> <p>Vocabulary: Martial law—military law Perpetrator—person committing an act, often a crime</p>	<p>YARDS FIRE SWEEPED</p> <p>Hundreds of Freight Cars, Loaded and Empty, Burn Rioters Prevent Firemen from Saving the Property</p> <p>The yards from Brighton Park to 61st Street were lit on fire last night by the rioters. Between 600 and 700 freight cars have been destroyed, many of them loaded. Miles and miles of costly track are in a snarled tangle of heat-twisted rails. Not less than \$750,00—possibly \$1,000,000 of property—has been sacrificed to the mob of drunken Anarchists and rebels. That is the record of the night's work by the Debs strikers.</p>

Set D: July 15, 1894

The following articles were written as the strike was coming to an end. On July 10, Debs and other American Railway officers were arrested for violating a court order. They were held for several hours until posting \$10,000 bail.

Chicago Times	Chicago Tribune
<p>DEBS SURE HE CAN WIN Says the Battle is But Begun</p> <p>More than 1,000 railroad men held an enthusiastic meeting yesterday afternoon, the speakers were President Debs and Vice-President Howard.</p> <p>President Debs then told the men the situation was more favorable than it had been at any time since the men went on strike. He said that telegrams from twenty-five points west of the Mississippi showed that the roads were completely tied up. Debs said, "I cannot stop now . . . I propose to work harder than ever and teach a lesson to those bigoted idiots. The managers refuse to work for peace."</p> <p>"There are men who have returned to their work, but they are traitors. We are better without them. We must unite as strong as iron, but let us be peaceful in this contest. Bloodshed is unwarranted and will not win."</p> <p>Vocabulary: Unwarranted—unnecessary</p>	<p>WITH A DULL THUD The Strike Collapses with Wonderful Rapidity</p> <p>DEB'S WILD ASSERTIONS</p> <p>He is Still Defiant While His "Union" Crumbles About Him</p> <p>Eugene V. Debs's statements were like the last flicker of a candle that is almost burned out. The men who first answered his calls for help deserted him. Those who followed his banner of revolt and lost their positions also denounced him. The very fabric of the American Railway Union was falling upon his head and support was rapidly slipping from under his feet.</p> <p>He said "The Northwestern will not be turning a wheel tonight." At midnight every wheel on the Northwestern had turned. The Northwestern people are inclined to look at Mr. Deb's declaration as a huge joke.</p> <p>Vocabulary: Rapidity—speed Assertion—statement Denounce—speak against</p>