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Andrew Carnegie: The Father of Middle-Class America
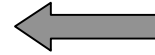
For decades Americans couldn't help but love the red-headed, fun-loving Little Orphan Annie. The image of the little girl moving so quickly from poverty to wealth provided hope for the poor in the 1930s, and her story continues to be a dream of what the future just might hold. The rags-to-riches phenomenon is the heart of the American Dream. And few other people have embodied this phenomenon as much as Andrew Carnegie did in the late 1800s and early 1900s. His example and industry caused him to become the father of middle-class America.

Andrew Carnegie can be looked to as an ideal example of a poor immigrant making his way up to become leader of the capitalist world. Carnegie was born into a poor working-class family in Scotland. According to the PBS documentary "The Richest Man in the World: Andrew Carnegie," the Industrial Revolution was difficult on Carnegie's father, causing him to lose his weaving business. The Carnegie family was much opposed to the idea of a privileged class, who gained their wealth simply by inheritance ("Richest"). This type of upbringing played a large factor in Andrew Carnegie's destiny. In order to appease his mother's desire for material benefits, and perhaps in an effort to heal his father's wounds, Carnegie rejected poverty and cleaved to prosperity.

Carnegie's character was ideal for gaining wealth. His mother taught him to "look after the pennies, and the pounds will take care of themselves;" he later turned this proverb into "watch the costs, and the profits take care of themselves" ("Richest"). Such thrift was integral to his future success. He also believed that "all is well since all goes better" ("Richest"). His theory

of an "industrial utopia" proves his optimistic outlook of both capitalism and the laboring class. Optimism is what pulled him through his difficulties at Homestead and empowered him to withstand competition.

Carnegie didn't let the Industrial Revolution, which so damaged his father, destroy him. As a young boy in Pittsburgh, he began working in a factory. He hated this position, and even had terrible nightmares, but he still endured. In so doing, he was able to secure a different position in a telegraph office. From here, he developed a skill that is priceless to capitalist America—he made connections. Memorizing faces and facts, he was able to win the sympathy of elite customers. This, in turn, led to his acquaintance with Thomas Scott ("Richest").

Scott secured Carnegie a job with Pennsylvania Railroad. This position was pivotal in his career. His ability to take risks enabled him to move ahead in the business. When a Pennsylvania Railroad train crashed, Carnegie took a risk and boldly ordered the workers to burn the cars. Such a bold and risky statement later became standard procedure ("Richest").

Perhaps the most controversial of Andrew Carnegie's qualities is his belief in Social Darwinism. The English philosopher Herbert Spencer convinced Carnegie that it wasn't bad to be successful. It was "survival of the fittest" in the financial jungle, and Andrew Carnegie need not feel guilty for obtaining more wealth. Throughout Carnegie's life, he displayed his firm belief in the certainty of competition. In fact, he feared competition and did all he could to hinder it ("Richest").

Andrew Carnegie's belief in Social Darwinism also affected his treatment of his laborers. Perhaps the only negative quality that is placed upon him is that of oppressor of the working class. Carnegie inspired competition among his workers and fired the managers and work crews that fell behind. His workers believed that upward mobility wasn't possible—they were stuck as laborers and would never rise higher ("Richest").

Provide parenthetical documentation for any information that you can attribute to another source.

Still cite a source even if you only summarize the information in it.

Despite his workers' pessimism, Carnegie still believed in their ability to improve their situations. Carnegie once said, "To be born to honest poverty and compelled to labor and strive for a livelihood in youth is the best of all schools for developing latent qualities, strengthening character, and making useful men" (qtd. in McCloskey 233). He firmly believed in the laborers' right to organize themselves in unions and canonized the commandment "Thou shalt not take thy neighbor's job" ("Richest"). Perhaps Carnegie recognized that unions and other societies of organized laborers develop a cohesiveness that moves them up in society; the emergence of reform organizations crystallizes middle-class consciousness (Blumin 345).

In-text parenthetical documentation occurs after the quote but before the period. The name(s) of the author(s) precede the page number with no comma.

The idea that former craftsmen, who now were the unskilled laborers in Carnegie's mills, still demanded codes of conduct, led to their involvement in unions to improve working conditions in the mills. According to historian Stuart Blumin, "To the extent that they accepted doctrines of individual upward mobility, . . . many immigrant workers absorbed the acquisitive and individualistic ethos of the native middle class. Multiple cultural systems offered workers different strategies for survival and self improvement" (301). Carnegie allowed for this upward mobility as long as it didn't impede production.

If you delete words from the original quote, insert three periods with a space between and after each one. This is called an ellipsis.

Carnegie was not a "typical" capitalist of the time. He was more absorbed in the moral problems of his times than his peers (McCloskey 250). Though Carnegie believed that workers should be allowed to organize themselves, he feared the threat of violence. This idea was brought to the forefront with the Homestead crisis in 1892. Carnegie's associate, Henry Clay Frick, handled the crisis and was consequently criticized by Carnegie for allowing the violence and the loss of so many jobs. Carnegie tried to move past this and eventually built a library in Homestead ("Richest").

Each paragraph should begins with a topic sentence. Every sentence in the paragraph should relate to and support the statements made in the topic sentence in some way.

With Carnegie's quest to develop cheaper and more efficient production, new machinery replaced many of the jobs that required human labor. In consequence, white-collar workers were

needed for paperwork, and unskilled laborers became a thing of the past. This caused a middle class to form because of "the emergence of new tasks and the reorganization of old tasks" (Blumin 316). Carnegie hired clerks, chemists, and others at higher-than-average wages ("Richest").

In addition to offering higher wages, Carnegie's control over the emerging steel market also helped form a middle class by providing cheap access to a valuable commodity. Carnegie predicted the steel revolution and harnessed it from the beginning. His lifelong quest to make production more efficient and cheaper was perpetuated by his entrance into the steel industry ("Richest"). The low-cost mass production of steel spurred the growth of the middle class. Carnegie reduced prices to beat the competition and eventually produced more steel than all of Great Britain ("Richest"). Carnegie sold steel to manufacturers of buggy springs and railroad-car axles, farmers' plows, stovepipe, and roofing gutters (Kent 239). Steel was also used in the mass production of automobile bodies (Walton 138).

Transitions from one paragraph to another should connect concepts from the previous paragraph to the next one. Also, useful markers like "In addition" help signal that you are transitioning to a new subject.

The fact that Carnegie provided low-cost quality steel is perhaps the premiere reason that he is the father of the middle classes. In providing the means for automobiles among other durable goods, average citizens, not just the wealthy, had access to luxury items. Credit and the consumer society of the 1920s can be considered the grandchildren of Andrew Carnegie.

It became clear throughout Andrew Carnegie's life that capitalism could make an aristocracy out of the lower classes. Carnegie was truly the richest man in the world, yet he firmly believed that "the man who dies rich, dies disgraced" (Carnegie). America has often been ready to blame the men of big business for their more flagrant depredations, yet we must remember that American has been quick to forgive them as well (McCloskey 267). Through Carnegie's philanthropy, he has been forgiven of any wrongdoing in his dealings with the working class.

Carnegie realized that the difference between a working classman and the white-collar working is knowledge. He believed that a library "outranks any other one thing that a community can do to benefit its people" (Kent 378). He built nearly 3,000 libraries throughout the world and gave millions more dollars to universities and colleges. What better way for a rags-to-riches success to develop the same success in others?

Carnegie also put aside $4 million to support employees and the families of employees of the Carnegie Steel Company who had been injured or killed at work. He did this "as an acknowledgement of the deep debt I owe to the workmen who have contributed so greatly to my success" (Kent 409). A true man of the people and father to the poor, Carnegie gave away $180 million after which he established the Carnegie Corporation to

> promote the advancement . . . of knowledge among the people of the United States by aiding technical schools, institutions of higher learning, libraries, scientific research, hero funds, useful publications, and by such other agencies and means as shall form time to time be found appropriate therefore. (Kent 410)

All in all, Carnegie donated 90 percent of his money—$324,657,399 (411). These gifts to society are at the heart of the hard-working middle-class American.

Andrew Carnegie's example of thrift and industry, optimism, realistic Social Darwinism, and risk taking, are the ingredients needed to be a successful capitalist. His example and life pursuits have been, and continue to be, an ideal for the poor American and the immigrant trying to make the American Dream a reality. Andrew Carnegie ordained the happy marriage between capitalism and humanitarianism. In so doing, he made himself the father of the American middle class.

Block quotes begin on a new line and are indented 1.0" from the left margin. Do not use quotation marks. The citation information (author name and page number, if any) follows the block quote's end punctuation.

Your conclusion could restate the following: your topic, your topic's importance, your thesis, and your supporting points.

Parenthetical citation used for information from the previously cited source only requires the relevant page number. You do not need to repeat the name of the author.

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