



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2015 Volume III: History in Our Everyday Lives

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## **Pittsburgh: Contending with its Steel Past**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 15.03.10, published September 2015

by Tracy Watkins

This unit focuses on the development of the industrial United States (1870-1900) and students will analyze how continuity and change has influenced history. Throughout this unit, the rise of the steel industry in Pittsburgh is studied, as well as the make-up of the workforce and the role the workers played in this history. The unit also focuses on the labor movement by examining unions in the steel mills and the Homestead Steel Strike of 1892. Following is an analysis of the demise of the steel industry and the impact of deindustrialization.

Though Pittsburgh was once considered the steel capital of the world, it is certainly no longer a major steel producer. However, the city still has a strong hold on its steel past. Within this unit, the approach of using public history projects to learn about public memory and urban and labor history is used. The projects presented consist of a book, tours, school programs, and the public use of a historical site.

The unit will conclude with students creating a project to display to the public. The activities throughout the unit will help students develop historical thinking skills through synthesizing and evaluating historical sources and interpretations of events. Furthermore, students will cite specific textual evidence to support their analysis, determine central ideas from sources, evaluate various explanations for actions and events, and integrate information from diverse sources. Lastly, students will write arguments focused on discipline-specific content as well as informative and explanatory texts while drawing evidence from informational texts to support their claim.

(Developed for U. S. History, grade 11; recommended for U. S. History, grade 11)

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