



T. R. AND THE COAL STRIKE

A re-creation of President Teddy Roosevelt's historical intervention
between management and labor in the coal strike of 1902

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Interact

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Why is this presidential decision so important in our economic history?

PURPOSE

The re-creation examines President Theodore Roosevelt's groundbreaking intervention in the Coal Strike of 1902. It re-creates that event's strife, emotion, and turmoil, while Roosevelt struggled to decide if he should involve the federal government in the crisis. It also examines the Coal Commission's attempt to arbitrate the dispute. Through participating in this re-creation students should be able to master the following:

Knowledge

1. Tracing the reasons for the rise of labor unions
2. Explaining the events which led to the Coal Strike of 1902
3. Discussing the issues surrounding Roosevelt's decision to intervene in the strike
4. Explaining how Roosevelt finally forced the two sides to arbitration
5. Analyzing and evaluating the evidence used by the Coal Commission

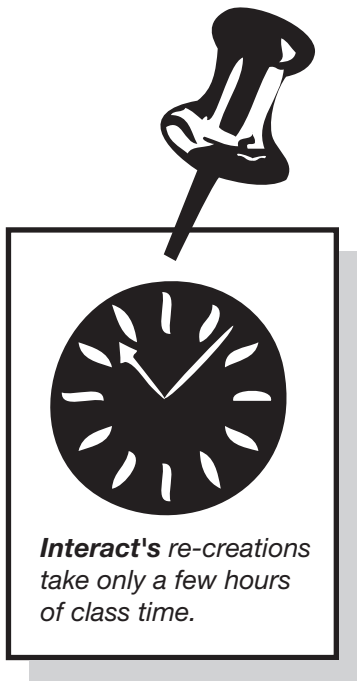
Attitudes

1. Appreciating the reason for differences in points of view
2. Understanding how difficult it may be to help opposing sides reconcile serious differences

Skills

1. Writing paragraphs explaining points of view
2. Defending opinions and question conflicting ideas orally
3. Determining valid points in evidence
4. Analyzing components of a decision
5. Prioritizing issues in a decision

OVERVIEW



During four days students are introduced to the coal strike crisis. They participate in two presidential meetings, an arbitration hearing, and two debriefing activities.

Day 1

Introduce the re-creation with an interest catcher and a survey (optional). The students read the Student Guide. Explain and assign the various roles.

Day 2

After you introduce the first scene, Roosevelt, George Baer, and John Mitchell meet to discuss arbitration possibilities. In Scene 2, the president, Carroll Wright, Philander Knox, and Elihu Root convene to discuss and analyze the alternatives Roosevelt might use.

Day 3

The audience, playing the arbitration committee, hears evidence and establishes points of settlement between the operators and the miners. This scene's participants include Clarence Darrow, Wayne MacVeagh, George Baer, John Mitchell, and John Coll.

Day 4

On the final day, students have two debriefing activities. They discuss several hypothetical case studies, and they retake Day 1's attitude survey (optional).

SETUP DIRECTIONS



Note: You will not need to duplicate the bulleted items the first time you use this re-creation, for Interact has given you different colored handouts for those students playing roles. If you choose to use the recommended optional PRE/POST SURVEY, you will have to duplicate it.

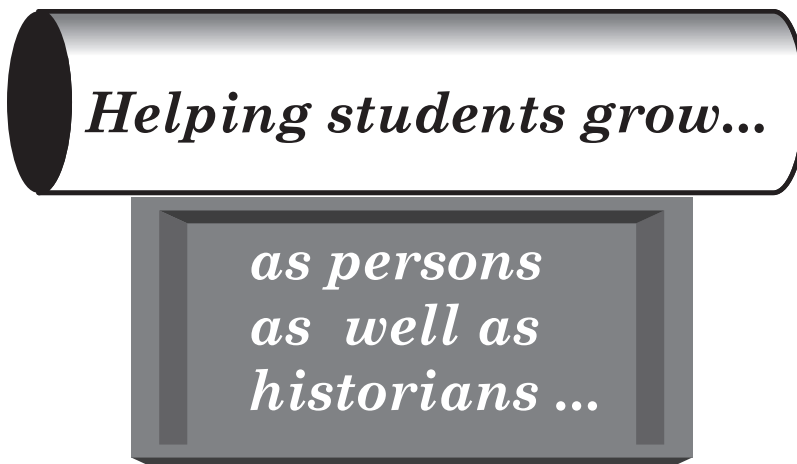
All other items necessary for the re-creation are in the Student Guide.

1. **Handouts** See note at left the first time you use this re-creation. For subsequent classes, duplicate the number in parentheses, using the masters in this Teacher Guide.
 - PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT (one: three pages, back to back)
 - GEORGE BAER (one: two pages, back to back)
 - JOHN MITCHELL (one: two pages, back to back)
 - PHILANDER KNOX (one: one page)
 - ELIHU ROOT (one: one page)
 - CARROLL WRIGHT (one: one page)
 - WAYNE MacVEAGH (one: two pages, back to back)
 - CLARENCE DARROW (one: two pages, back to back)
 - JOHN COLL (one: one page)

Optional:

- * PRE/POST SURVEY (two class sets: one page)

2. **Assigning roles** There are nine roles in this re-creation. Since the moderator's responsibilities are demanding, you should play this role. In assigning the other parts to your students, judiciously select appropriate students of the proper caliber to fill each role. Roles such as President Roosevelt's, Baer's, Mitchell's, Darrow's, and MacVeagh's all require a sound grasp of their requirements and a thorough preparation.



ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Darrow, Clarence, *The Story of My Life*, Universal Library, Grosset and Dunlap, New York, 1932. Darrow's biography provides an arresting overview of his attitudes and his role in the strike.

Grossman, Jonathan, "The Coal Strike of 1902: Turning Point in U.S. Policy," *Monthly Labor Review*, 98:21–28, October 1975. The author's detailed account of the U.S. intervention in the coal strike clearly states the case between the opposing sides and describes Roosevelt's efforts to end the strike.

Lorant, Stefan, *Life and Times of Theodore Roosevelt*, Doubleday, Garden City, 1959. Lorant reveals Roosevelt's actions after his meeting with Baer and Mitchell collapsed.

Mowry, George E., *The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, 1900–1912*, Harper and Row, New York, 1958. Mowry supplies a brief but clear account of the entire coal crisis.

Reynolds, Robert L., "The Coal Kings Come to Judgment," *American Heritage Magazine*, Volume. XI:3, April 1960. This interesting, photo-packed article contains a complete description of the entire coal strike. It has invaluable information about the coal miners' struggle. It also clearly discusses Roosevelt's attempt to end the strike.

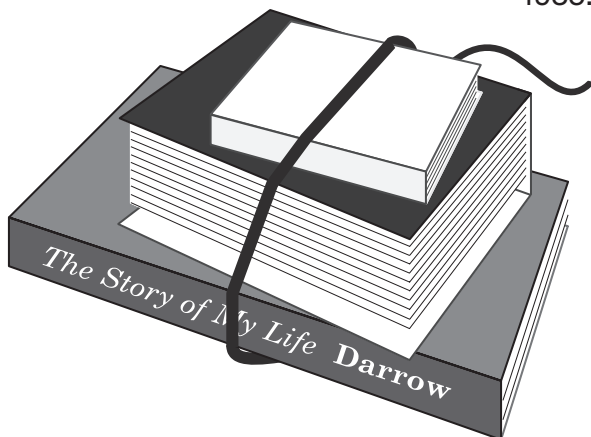
Roosevelt, Theodore, edited by Wayne Andrews, *The Autobiography of Theodore Roosevelt*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1958. Roosevelt's highly readable autobiography explains his views about capital, labor, and the federal government's relationships with each.

Stone, Irving, *Clarence Darrow for the Defense*, Doubleday, Garden City, 1941. This novel-biography's chief value lies in its excellent presentation of Darrow's strategy and talents in representing the United Mine Workers.

Sullivan, Mark, *Our Times: The United States 1900–1925; America Finding Itself*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1935. This easily read and enjoyable book provides a blow-by-blow account of Roosevelt's involvement in the 1902 Coal Strike and the events which brought about the Coal Commission hearing.

Consider seeing your friendly school librarian so that she/he will set up a T. ROOSEVELT AND THE COAL STRIKE RESERVE SHELF just for your class.

Certain students—the one playing Clarence Darrow for example—just might go to Darrow's *The Story of My Life* in order to "flesh out" his/her character.



DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 1



Be certain you have carefully planned how to integrate this re-creation with the early 20th-century history chapters you have had your students read in their textbooks.

Before Day 1 Be sure you have thoroughly examined this Teacher Guide, the various handouts, and the Student Guide.

Day 1

1. Introduce the topic with an interest catcher that will sensitize students to the issues they are going to meet. A lecture, movie, or an appropriate current events discussion would likely achieve this objective.
2. Administer the PRE/POST SURVEY. Have students write the date and their names on this survey so that they can compare the differences in their responses, if any, after taking it a second time.
3. Distribute the Student Guides and have students read the Purpose and Background Essay.
4. Assign the nine roles.
5. Satisfy yourself that everyone understands his/her tasks.
 - a. Separate the role players from the rest of the class and distribute the proper handouts.
 - b. Have the audience prepare both sides of their note-taking sheets.
 - c. Circulate from group to group in order to help students prepare.

Day 2

1. Get the room and participants ready.
 - a. Arrange the desks in a convenient order.
 - b. Make props available (e.g., a presidential seal, writing paper, possibly a wheelchair—Roosevelt had been injured in a carriage accident several weeks before).
 - c. Insure that the role-players are ready.
 - d. Arrange with Roosevelt certain signals telling him/her to “speed up,” “slow down,” or “get more information.”
2. Introduce Scene 1 to the audience. For example: “Caught in the midst of a crippling coal strike, President Roosevelt has decided to bring both the operators and the UMW together to discuss an arbitration settlement. The date is October 3, 1902. The scene is the White House. Present are President Roosevelt, George Baer and John Mitchell.”
3. Scene 1 begins:
 - a. The president opens the meeting.
 - b. Mitchell and Baer express their views.
 - c. The meeting ends in failure.
 - d. Baer and Mitchell leave.

DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 2



Encourage your students to speak passionately. Work to get them truly involved in their characterizations.

If you have a quality class and you are considering using this re-creation next year, record the presidential decision so that you can show portions next year to stimulate students' performance. (Such a video is also useful for open house when you want parents to see the participatory nature of your instruction.)



4. After Baer and Mitchell exit you should briefly comment on what has happened and communicate T.R.'s frustrations.
5. Now set the stage for Scene 2: Roosevelt, Wright, Knox, and Root meet to discuss the president's options.
6. Scene 2 begins:
 - a. Roosevelt comments on his failure to get an agreement.
 - b. He listens to input from his advisers.
 - c. Using the three alternatives provided in the Student Guide, the group evaluates each alternative's strong and weak points.
 - d. Roosevelt then makes and announces his decision to the class.
7. If time permits, ask for students' reactions to Roosevelt's decision.
8. Briefly explain what preparation you expect for Day 3. (The participants should examine their handouts; audience members should read Day 3's description in the Student Guide.)

Day 3

1. Open Day 3 with a summation of yesterday's events.
2. Point out that the audience, playing the Coal Commission, will hear evidence presented by Clarence Darrow, representing the UMW, and by Wayne MacVeagh, representing the mine operators.
3. Tell the audience to listen carefully since they will decide on three issues:
 - **Wages** Should the miners not receive a raise? receive a raise of 10 percent? receive a raise of 20 percent?
 - **Hours** Should miners' daily working hours be reduced to 8 hours? 9 hours? or should they remain at 10 hours?
 - **Union recognition** Should the UMW be recognized as the coal miner's bargaining agent?
4. Introduce the participants to the class: Clarence Darrow, Wayne MacVeagh, George Baer, John Mitchell, and John Coll.
5. Acting as moderator, have the scene begin with both sides' opening statements: Darrow's first, MacVeagh's second.
6. Allow MacVeagh to question his witnesses first.
7. Then have Darrow question his witnesses. Each lawyer may call the other's witnesses.

DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 3

8. After both lawyers finish, Baer delivers his side's closing statement. Then Darrow delivers his side's closing statement.
9. When the hearing is completed, conduct a discussion of the evidence presented.
10. After the discussion, have the class vote on each issue. You decide whether a plurality or majority is necessary to settle an issue.
11. If time permits after the class has made its decisions, tell the class the terms of the actual settlement: a 10-percent raise; a 9-hour day; but no union recognition.

Day 4

1. Number off your class 1 to 4 so that you form four groups.
2. Have each group fulfill the debriefing activity as described in the Student Guide. After the groups have had time to discuss the options, have their chairpersons report to the whole class.
3. Distribute new PRE/POST SURVEYS. Have students retake the survey.
4. When the students have completed these surveys, return their first surveys.
5. Ask students to identify factors in this re-creation that contributed to any attitudinal changes.



Having students speak about the activity they have experienced will intensify their learning. Such speaking experiences also help students' personal growth.

PRE-POST SURVEY

Date _____ Name _____

Directions: Read the following statements. For each statement circle **SA** if you strongly agree; **A** if you agree; **NS** if you are not sure; **D** if you disagree; and **SD** if you strongly disagree.

- | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Labor unions' demands are often harmful to the general public. | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 2. A company's owners have the right to set the working conditions of its business. | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 3. Since America's business is business, the federal government should regulate businesses as little as possible. | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 4. If a worker doesn't like the working conditions his employer offers him/her, the worker should quit. | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 5. The more profits America's companies make the better off all Americans are. | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 6. When workers strike, the federal government should force them back to work for the nation's welfare. | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 7. Belonging to a union means that a worker is too weak to stand up for his individual rights. | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 8. A satisfied group of laborers will produce more goods and profits for their employers. | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 9. A corporation's first priority is getting dividends for its stockholders even when the well-being of the nation may be at stake. | SA | A | NS | D | SD |
| 10. A stockholder has the "divine right" to make profits. | SA | A | NS | D | SD |

PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT HANDOUT - 1



You will portray President Theodore Roosevelt in this re-creation by conducting two scenes. After hearing the discussion and weighing the alternatives, you will select and announce your decision, which will end the crippling coal strike of 1902.

While role-playing Roosevelt, you must carry out several tasks:

1. Familiarize yourself with your political career, your progressive viewpoints, and your attitudes toward the presidency.
2. Know the background and issues surrounding the coal strike and your efforts to end it.
3. Prepare yourself thoroughly so that you will be “in character” as you conduct two meetings at the White House.
4. Analyze the strong and weak points of each alternative available to you.
5. Choose and announce your decision to the class.

Background information

Read the Background Essay in your Student Guide to acquaint yourself with your early career, your rise to the presidency, and your efforts to end the coal strike. Here are some basic points to recall:

1. Your political career is characterized by action and accomplishments. You do not shy from controversy.
2. As president you are an activist, get-things-done individual. You take the initiative rather than react to others. This coal strike is no exception.
3. You believe that the government must step in to protect its citizens from the excesses of industrial expansion.
4. You are wary of too much corporate power and accept the workers' right to form responsible unions to protect their interests.
5. You are concerned about the spreading effects of the coal strike. Ignoring the lack of legal precedent, you are convening both sides at the White House in order to use your influence to settle their differences for the nation's welfare.

Re-creation participants

Scene 1 The re-creation's second day has two scenes that you will lead. In the first scene, you will meet with George Baer, spokesman for the mine operators, and John Mitchell, his counterpart for the UMW (United Mine Worker). Your goal here is to attempt to get each side to agree to arbitration. (Arbitration is a process when both sides in a dispute agree to abide by a decision made by a third group of qualified, independent individuals.)