

Northwest History Consortium

Seattle General Strike

Omar Crowder
11th Grade

National Standard

Era 7: The Emergence of Modern America (1890-1930) / Standards 1 and 3

Standard 1: How Progressives and others addressed problems of industrial capitalism, urbanization, and political corruption

Standard 3: How the United States changed from the end of World War I to the eve of the Great Depression

Washington State Standards (EALRs)

History 4.1.2: Students understand how the following themes and developments help to define eras in US history: reform, prosperity, and the Great Depression (1918 - 1939).

Social Studies Skills 5.1.2: Students evaluate the depth of a position on an issue or event.

BACKGROUND

"The Seattle General Strike of February 1919 was the first city-wide labor action in America to be proclaimed a 'general strike.' It led off a tumultuous era of post-World War I labor conflict that saw massive strikes shut down the nation's steel, coal, and meatpacking industries and threaten civil unrest in a dozen cities.

The strike began in shipyards that had expanded rapidly with war production contracts. 35,000 workers expected a post-war pay hike to make up for two years of strict wage controls imposed by the federal government.

When regulators refused, the Metal Trades Council union alliance declared a strike and closed the yards. After an appeal to Seattle's powerful Central Labor Council for help, most of the city's 110 local unions voted to join a sympathy walkout. The Seattle General Strike lasted less than a week but the memory of that event has continued to be of interest and importance for more than 80 years."

Gregory, James N., Professor. "Strike: Seattle General Strike Project." 1999. [Pacific Northwest Labor and Civil Rights History Project \(University of Washington\)](http://depts.washington.edu/labhist/strike/index.shtml). ©1999 - 2010. Seattle, WA. 13 November 2010 <<http://depts.washington.edu/labhist/strike/index.shtml>>.

SCENARIO

"On the morning of February 6, 1919, Seattle, a city of 315,000 people, stopped working. 25,000 union members had joined the 35,000 already on strike. Much of the remaining work force was idled as stores closed and streetcars stopped running. The General Strike Committee, composed of delegates from the key striking unions, tried to coordinate vital services and negotiate with city officials, but events moved quickly beyond their control.

Most of the local and national press denounced the strike, while conservatives called for stern measures to suppress what looked to them to be a revolutionary plot. Mayor Ole Hanson, elected the year before with labor support, armed the police and threatened martial law and federal troops. Some of the unions wavered on the strike's third day. Most others had gone back to work

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by the time the Central Labor Council officially declared an end on February 11. By then police and vigilantes were hard at work rounding up Reds. The IWW hall and Socialist Party headquarters were raided and leaders arrested. Federal agents also closed the **Union Record**, the labor-owned daily newspaper, and arrested several of its staff. Meanwhile across the country headlines screamed the news that Seattle had been saved, that the revolution had been broken, that, as Mayor Hanson phrased it, 'Americanism' had triumphed over 'Bolshevism.'"

Gregory, James N., Professor. "Strike: Seattle General Strike Project." 1999. [Pacific Northwest Labor and Civil Rights History Project \(University of Washington\)](http://depts.washington.edu/labhist/strike/index.shtml). ©1999 - 2010. Seattle, WA. 13 November 2010 <<http://depts.washington.edu/labhist/strike/index.shtml>>.

TASK

You are an editorial writer for the Seattle Star Newspaper during this time of local turmoil. You are well-aware that there is an anti-strike sentiment in the local and national press; however, many of your neighbors and friends participated in the strike. You are well aware of their struggle first-hand; however, your editorial board has taken a strong stance against the strike.

Your task is to write an Opinion-Editorial (Op-Ed) piece in support of the strike that will be published in the daily paper. Remember that your position is at odds with your colleagues and many citizens in Seattle. You need to be prepared to present your Op-Ed to the class as well as answer questions from your classmates and teacher.

Your paper must be typed with standard 12 point font and consist of no more than 750 words. You must reference at least (2) first-hand accounts in support of your stance. You must also demonstrate that you have gained historical background on your topic and that your stance is well-supported and referenced.

Here's are some ideas to keep your op-ed on track:

- Express your opinion and base it on factual, researched or first-hand information.
- Be timely and controversial, but not outrageous. Be the voice of reason.
- Be personal and conversational; it can help you make your point.
- Have a clear editorial viewpoint and come down hard on one side of the issue. Don't equivocate.
- Provide insight and understanding; educate your reader without being preachy.
- Use clear, powerful, direct language.
- Appeal to the average reader. Clarity is paramount.

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RESOURCES

Internet

Gregory, James N., Professor. "Strike: Seattle General Strike Project." 1999. Pacific Northwest Labor and Civil Rights History Project (University of Washington). ©1999 - 2010. Seattle, WA. 13 November 2010 <<http://depts.washington.edu/labhist/strike/index.shtml>>.

McLain, John. "How to Write an Op-Ed." About Public Relations. 2010. Santa Barbara, CA. 13 November 2010 <http://www.aboutpublicrelations.net/ucmclaina.htm>>.

"No Compromise!" from *The Seattle Star* 10 February 1919: A1. Pacific Northwest Labor and Civil Rights History Project (University of Washington). ©1999 - 2010. Seattle, WA. 13 November 2010 <http://depts.washington.edu/labhist/strike/images/news/Star/STAR_19190210_P1.jpg>.

Rosenthal, Rob. "Oral Histories and Strike Memories." 1977. Pacific Northwest Labor and Civil Rights History Project (University of Washington). ©1999 - 2010. Seattle, WA. 13 November 2010 <<http://depts.washington.edu/labhist/strike/interviews.shtml>>.

Young, May, Mckelvey, John, et al. (History Committee of The General Strike Committee). "An Account of What Happened in Seattle and Especially in the Seattle Labor Movement, During the General Strike, February 6 to 11, 1919." March 1919. Flag.Blackened.Net. 2010. Chico, CA. 13 November 2010 <http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/hist_texts/seattle1919_p2.html>.

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ASSESSMENT

	Exceeds Standard (4)	Meets Standard (3)	Progressing Toward Standard (2)	Does Not Meet Standard (1)
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Demonstrates in-depth knowledge about the topic. - Makes connections and demonstrates insights about the historical context of the topic examined. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Demonstrates in-depth knowledge about the topic. - Demonstrates some understanding of the broader historical context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Demonstrates some new knowledge about the topic and the significance of events. - Makes at least (1) larger connection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates minimal new knowledge about the topic and the significance of events. - Larger connections not made
Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collects and presents specific, relevant, accurate evidence. - Uses key primary documents - Very effective use of at least (3) sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collects and presents specific, relevant and accurate evidence. - Adequate use of at least three varied sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collects and presents evidence that is not always specific, relevant or accurate. - Little use of at least three sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collects and presents minimal evidence that is not always relevant or accurate. - Uses fewer than three book sources. - Little evidence presented
Organization/ Writing Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organized so that all the parts support the whole. - Clear, compelling introduction; the conclusion effectively synthesizes strands of the main argument. - Confident writing style; student voice is evident; writes with lively, engaging language. - Grammar and punctuation are nearly flawless. - Sources properly referenced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organized so that most parts support the whole. - Clear introduction and well-constructed conclusion. - Writing is clear and focused; style is straightforward but not original. - Some grammar and punctuation errors, but does not impair understanding of content. - Most sources properly referenced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organized so that some parts support the whole. - Introduction and conclusion exist, but fail to set up argument. - Writing somewhat hampers understanding of content. - Numerous grammar and punctuation errors that interfere somewhat with understanding of content. - Some sources properly referenced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rarely or never makes connections of the parts to the whole. - Lacking discernible introduction or conclusion. - Writing is unclear with no particular style, individuality, or student voice. - Grammar and punctuation errors interfere with understanding of content. - Referencing of sources not appropriate for assignment.
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student presents an engaging, insightful, and entertaining account of the topic. - Student is able to answer questions and make strong connections during presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student confidently and strongly presents information that effectively supports the written paper. - Student is able to answer most questions and make some connections during presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student presentation mostly consists of repeating information in the paper. - Student can answer some questions and make few connections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation is short and does not demonstrate much knowledge of subject. - Student has difficulty answering questions and making connections during presentation.

Total Points _____

"11th Grade History Research Paper Rubric." The Beacon School. 2010. New York, NY. 13 November 2010
<http://www.beaconschool.org/departments/history/docs/11Historyrubric.pdf>.

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REFERENCES/CITATIONS

Crowder, Omar. "Seattle General Strike." NWESD Organization. 2009. Anacortes, WA. 13 November 2010 <http://www.nwesd.org/1510101216191755740/lib/1510101216191755740/7.1-3_Seattle.GeneralStrike.Crowder.11.pdf>.

"11th Grade History Research Paper Rubric." The Beacon School. 2010. New York, NY. 13 November 2010 <<http://www.beaconschool.org/departments/history/docs/11Historyrubric.pdf>>.

Gregory, James N., Professor. "Strike: Seattle General Strike Project." 1999. Pacific Northwest Labor and Civil Rights History Project (University of Washington). ©1999 - 2010. Seattle, WA. 13 November 2010 <<http://depts.washington.edu/labhist/strike/index.shtml>>.

"History Standards for Grades 5-12 United States." UCLA National Center for History in the Schools. 2005. Los Angeles, CA. 11 June 2010 <<http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards/us-standards5-12.html>>.

OSPI. "Washington State Social Studies Learning Standards." Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. 2010. Olympia, WA. 13 November 2010 <<http://standards.ospi.k12.wa.us/ComponentWithGLEs.aspx?subject=6,GLE&gl=12&ea=36&co=105>>.