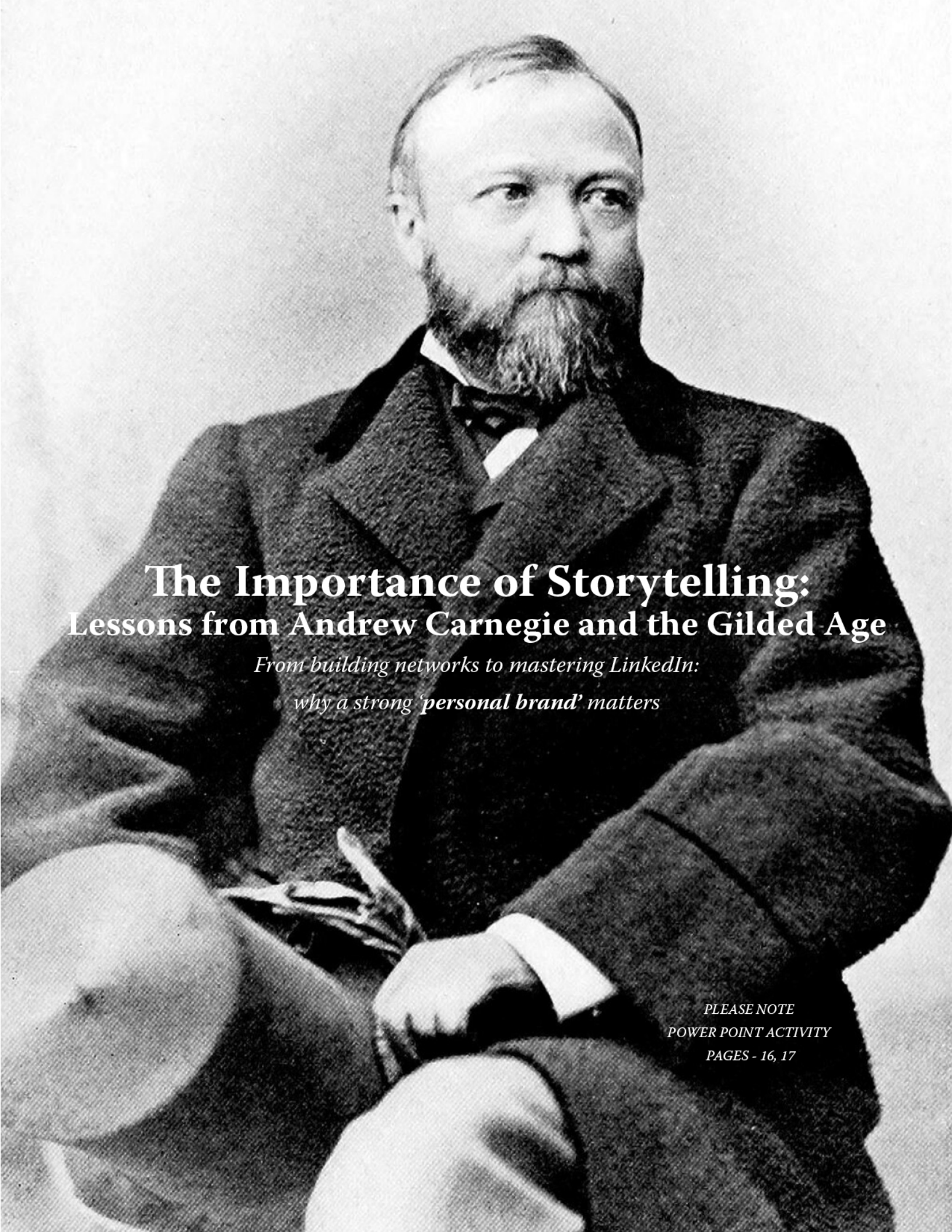




The Importance of Storytelling: Lessons from Andrew Carnegie and the Gilded Age

*From building networks to mastering LinkedIn:
why a strong 'personal brand' matters*

PLEASE NOTE
POWER POINT ACTIVITY
PAGES - 16, 17

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This booklet— from the inspiring story of Andrew Carnegie to the student activities—was created in 2025 through a week long collaboration between me, *Stephen Cronin*, and *ChatGPT (OpenAI)*, with daily working sessions.

My goal was to produce relevant, meaningful content that helps students build real-world competencies and habits for lifelong success in the dynamic, highly competitive, technology centric, global economy they will compete in.

- 2 I felt the process with ChatGPT helped me do this. My '*AI*' Collaborator reinforced the value of open, thought provoking dialogue—even between a human and '*AI*'. The collaboration improved my focus, surfaced fresh sources and perspectives, and sped up drafting—while I retained full judgment over accuracy, tone, and syllabus fit. Working with ChatGPT helped me fine tune my questioning skills to create relevant activities that connect history to the skills and behaviors students need for their lifelong success. ChatGPT often pushed me to be more specific in my prompts for responses more related to the class mission and the lessons Andrew Carnegie's story would provide students. '*AI*' also surprised me by providing useful angles I hadn't considered.

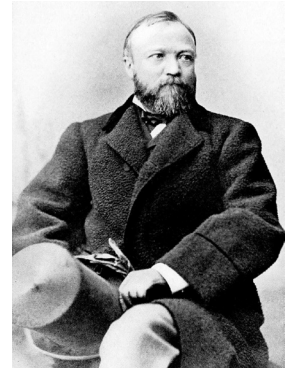
If you're thinking about engaging large language models (LLMs) for curriculum design, I'm happy to share what I learned:

stevecronin1949@gmail.com

class web site - **www.hopeliveskills.com**

COVER PORTRAIT

This 1878 photograph of the **richest man in the world**, Andrew Carnegie, when he was 42 or 43 years old, has been widely reproduced in many presentations of him for many years. The photographer's name was not documented. The photo was probably taken in a professional portrait studio which frequently did not credit the photographer.



**In the late 1800s,
Andrew Carnegie understood something we talk about today -
*personal branding.***

He sat for portraits with some of the most famous photographers of his time — like **Sarony** in New York and the **Pach Brothers** — who also photographed presidents, famous authors, and actors. If Carnegie was alive today - he'd probably go to the Greenwich Village studio of **Annie Leibovitz** at 305-311 West 11th Street, in New York City. Portrait photographs were more than just pictures to Carnegie.

**Carnegie's portraits were promotional tools.
He carefully chose how he appeared — serious, confident, and successful.**

Andrew Carnegie worked hard to build and protect a respected personal brand — partly because **he wasn't perfect**. Early in his business career, he sometimes did things that would be illegal today, like **insider stock deals**. **Insider trading** means using secret information **only** company owners and some politicians know about that gives them a huge advantage buying or selling valuable stocks or real estate - in the process, these businessmen and politicians make lots of money (\$) - **unfairly**. Many industrialists of the **Gilded Age** (Cornelius Vanderbilt, JP Morgan, Jay Gould, Andrew Carnegie) profited from **insider trading of** valuable railroad and telegraph **stocks**. During the Gilded Age, **insider trading** wasn't illegal, and most big industrialists saw it as 'smart business' not 'unethical'. But, there were critics (honest journalists and some politicians) who called **insider trading** unethical and damaging to the public good. A law was eventually passed in 1934 that made it illegal. Unfortunately, **insider trading** still happens today. Carnegie's brand was also damaged by his support of managers who treated employees working at Carnegie owned businesses harshly — most famously during the violent **Homestead Strike of 1892** at his steel works, which left workers dead and damaged **the Carnegie BRAND**. Carnegie eventually committed to **doing the right thing** by giving away 90% of his wealth to community causes - *libraries, scholarships, black American education, world peace, Carnegie Mellon University, museums, and more*. Because his name appeared so often in newspapers, books, and public spaces, **Carnegie focused on presenting a perception he wanted the public to have of him - a poor immigrant boy with a passion for reading and learning who rose to become one of the richest men in the world — and one of its most generous philanthropists.**

Despite Andrew Carnegie's mistakes, he does offer **valuable lessons** - *careful brand management, the advantages of a curious, forward-looking mind that always tried to 'anticipate' the next opportunity* AND finally, *it's never too late to 'do the right thing'.* **Like Andrew Carnegie,**

**we should be concerned how our BRAND is perceived,
especially in social media and when we meet influential people.**

If a potential employer or college admissions official saw your social media posts OR observed you in this class today, would it help you get the job you're applying for OR get you accepted into the University you hope to attend? **PERSONAL BRANDS MATTER.**

INTRODUCTION

This is the story of an American immigrant. Poor; made fun of for his patched clothes, foreign accent, and being short (5' tall).

He had only five years of formal schooling, from ages 8 to 12. When his family could no longer afford to let him go to school, his mother sent him to work. One of his

first jobs was in a cotton mill, changing spools of thread on factory machines for \$1.20 a week (about \$44 today).

By the time Andrew Carnegie was 35, he was a millionaire. Within decades, he would become the “*richest man in the world*”.

So, what happened? And more importantly, how did he do it?

The answer: Branding — PERSONAL BRANDING.

Despite his small stature, Carnegie created a powerful and highly respected **BRAND PERCEPTION** with the successful, influential people who controlled companies - He was always on time. His **work ethic was perceived by those who mattered as ‘exceptional’**; he always **‘did more than was expected’**. He created the perception of someone willing to accept new responsibilities and was ALWAYS curious about learning new things. Andrew Carnegie was **constantly reading** newspapers and industry reports which enabled him to be aware of current events; he quickly realized how this information could help his career goals. He **NETWORKED** regularly with influential people in his company and other emerging businesses (e.g. *railroads, telegraph, steel manufacturing, construction*, etc). He continuously thought about **FUTURE** opportunities for his career success. He was comfortable **ASKING QUESTIONS** - it was as if he was in Mr Cronin’s class learning that **“questions are more important than answers”**. There was no term **‘PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS’** in the 1800s that I could find in my research — i.e. collecting and analyzing **DATA** for patterns, and **ANTICIPATING** outcomes - but Carnegie absolutely practiced a version of it. He always seemed to make the right decision that put him in *‘the right place at the right time’*, as CARNEGIE biographer David Nasaw writes. The **CARNEGIE BRAND PERCEPTION** led to promotions, higher pay, and eventually the chance to start his own business at age 25.

Carnegie was also prescient, i.e. an inclination to ANTICIPATE - what opportunities might be waiting just around the corner.

This **prescience**, combined with his strong **personal brand** and **great networking skills**, gave him quicker job / career opportunities than almost anyone of his generation — these skills enabled him to become the richest man in America.

1848 – Net worth: **less than zero.**

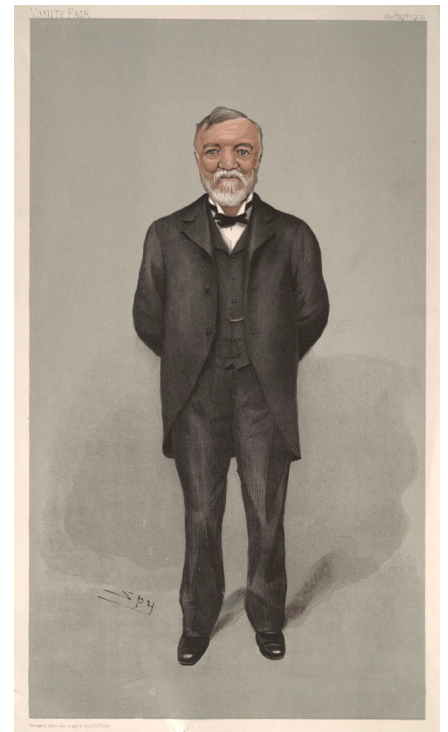
1865 – Millionaire **investor** in **railroads, steel bridges and mills.**

1875 – Founded Carnegie Steel.

1890 – Among the **richest** men in America.

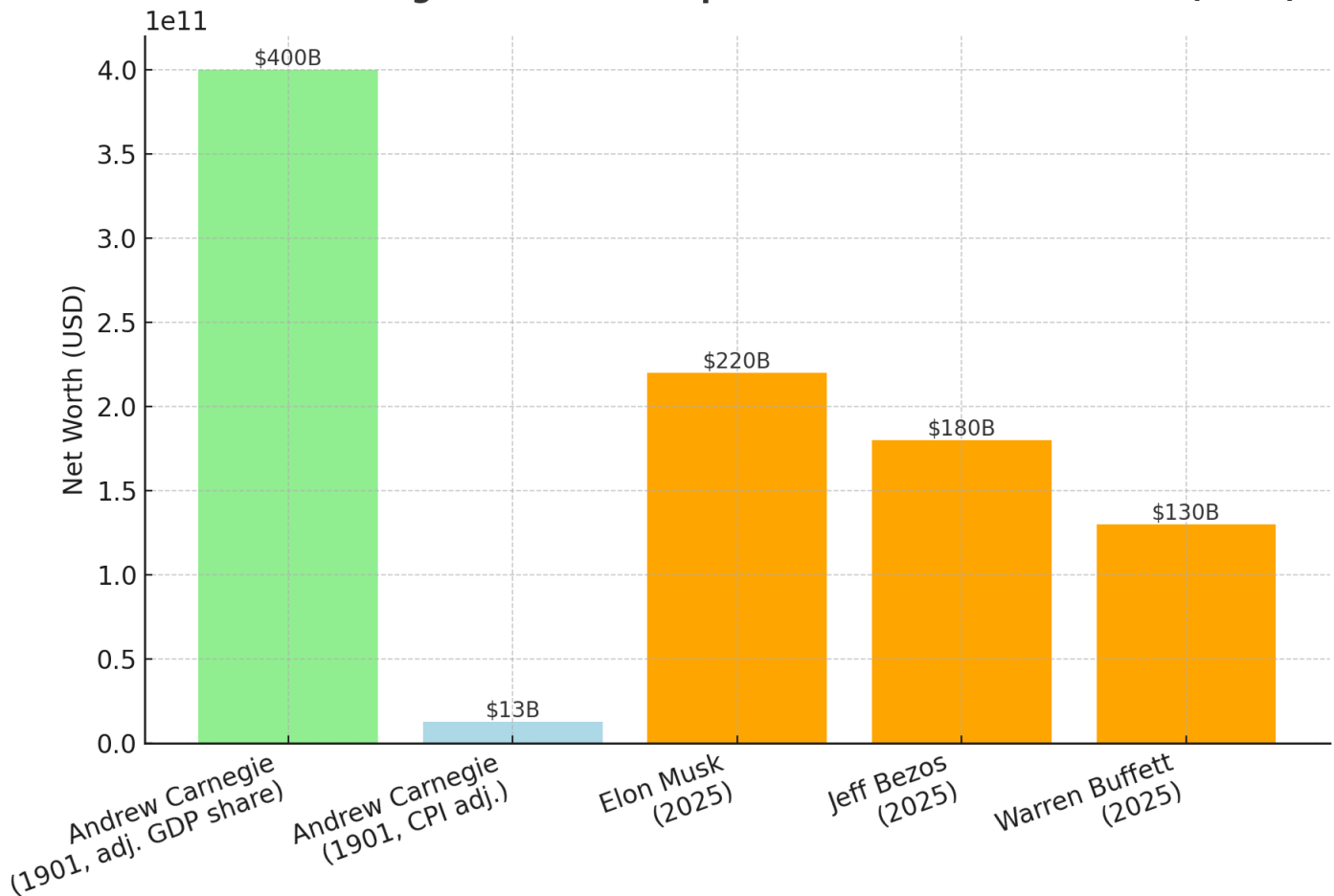
1901 – **Sold Carnegie Steel** to J.P. Morgan for **\$350 million.**

This fortune would equal about \$12.7 billion in 2025 dollars.



CARICATURE OF Carnegie drawn by Sir Leslie Matthew Ward (KNOWN PROFESSIONALLY AS “*Spy*”) for the London magazine **Vanity Fair**, 1903

Andrew Carnegie's Wealth Compared to Modern Billionaires (2025)



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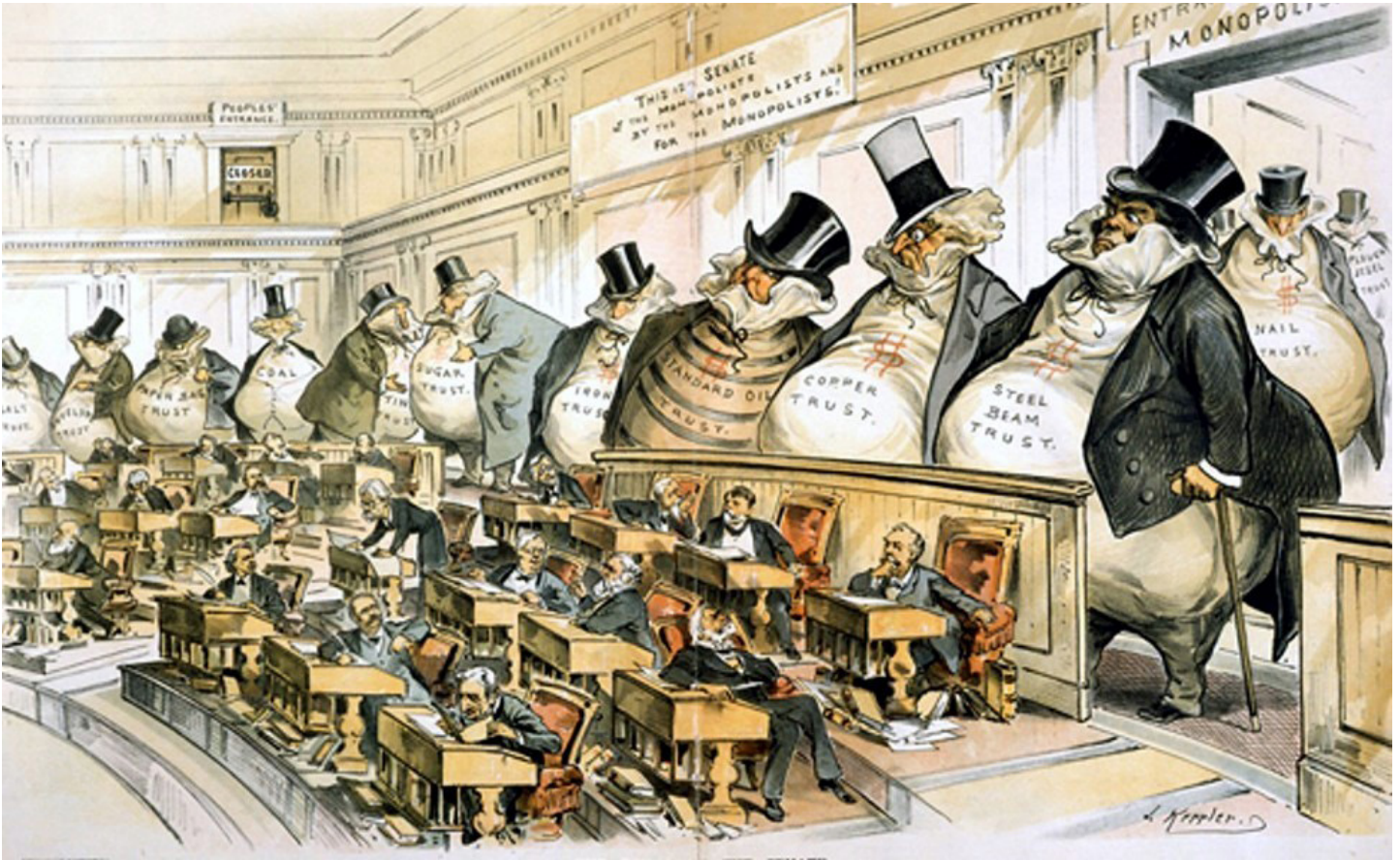
Andrew Carnegie built his reputation — his **PERSONAL BRAND** — through punctuality, effort, and dependability. But he also had something else: **prescience** — a curiosity **to ANTICIPATE** opportunities before others saw them. This combination set him apart and opened doors that led to his extraordinary success.

Now, think about yourself -
do you think you can be as successful as you hope to be?
YES or NO - circle one

Maybe not a billionaire like Carnegie -
but, **I truly believe**
each of you **CAN** have the lifestyle you desire with a good job and career to pay for it.

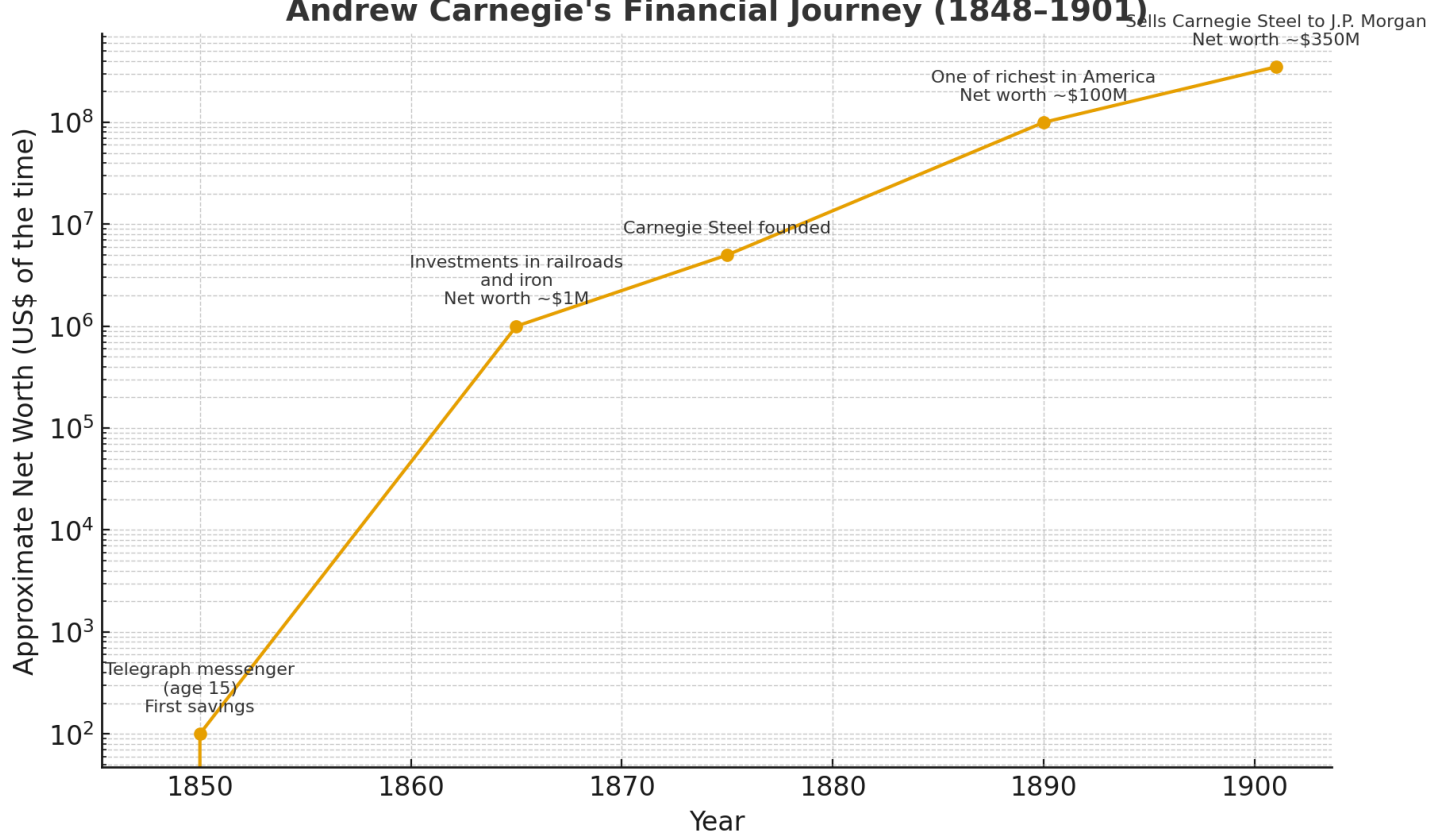
The mission of this class is to show you HOW.

It starts with YOUR **PERSONAL BRAND** and the **First Impression** people have when they meet you -



the "Bosses of the Senate" cartoon, published in **Puck** magazine in 1889, is one of the **most famous political cartoons of the Gilded Age**. This cartoon shows overbearing, wealthy businessmen overseeing the activities of elected, American politicians seated in the United States Senate. The cartoon criticized how America's government was being run, NOT by the politicians elected by America's citizens, but by wealthy businessmen - oil barons, steel magnates, railroad tycoons, sugar and coal companies. These businessmen gave lots of money and political support to make Senators wealthy and keep them in power. In return, the Senators did favors for the businessmen by passing favorable laws, lowering taxes, or ignoring unfair business practices that helped the wealthy grow even richer. This cartoon's purpose was to remind people that democracy weakens when leaders serve money instead of citizens.

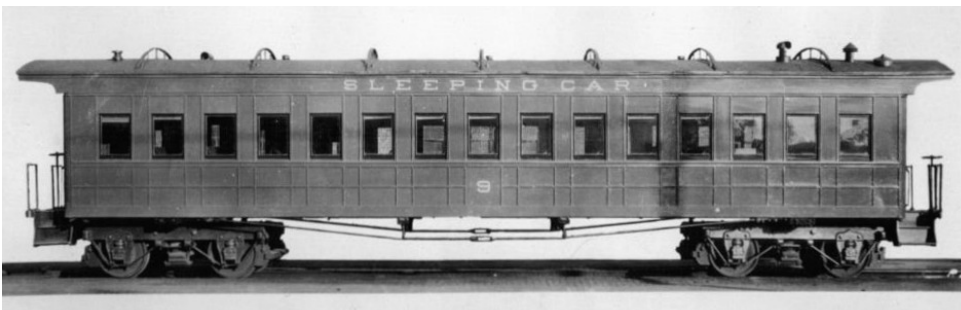
Andrew Carnegie's Financial Journey (1848-1901)



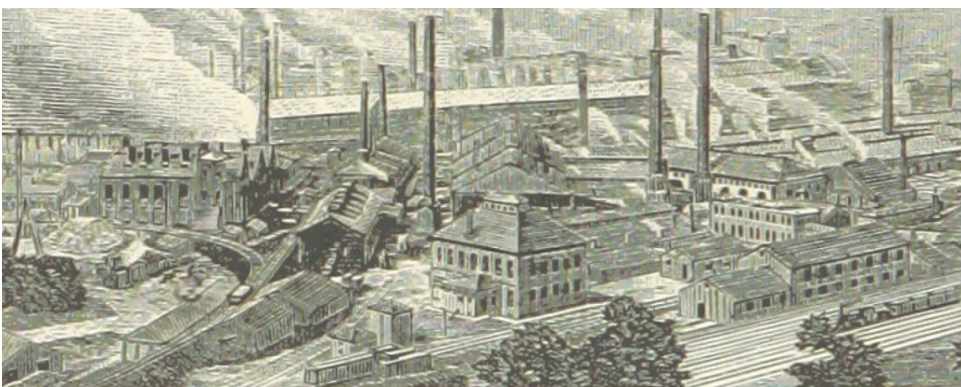


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Andrew Carnegie showed remarkable prescience (**ANTICIPATION**) by recognizing that America's future depended on rebuilding and expanding its **infrastructure DESTROYED DURING THE CIVIL WAR (1861-1865)** — **railroads, bridges, and factories**. He realized steel, stronger and more durable than wood or wrought iron, would be the essential material for rebuilding the nation. Carnegie started the **Keystone Bridge Company** in 1865 which then built **the Eads Bridge** in St. Louis (**shown above**). The Eads, completed in 1874, crossed the Mississippi River and became America's first major steel bridge. Carnegie promoted steel's strength by walking an elephant across the Eads. By investing his money before most in the new steel making process called the *Bessemer process*, Carnegie became the leader in America's infrastructure restoration after the Civil War and into the future. His foresight turned into a fortune as railroads, skyscrapers, and cities demanded more steel, making him the dominant industrialist of his time.



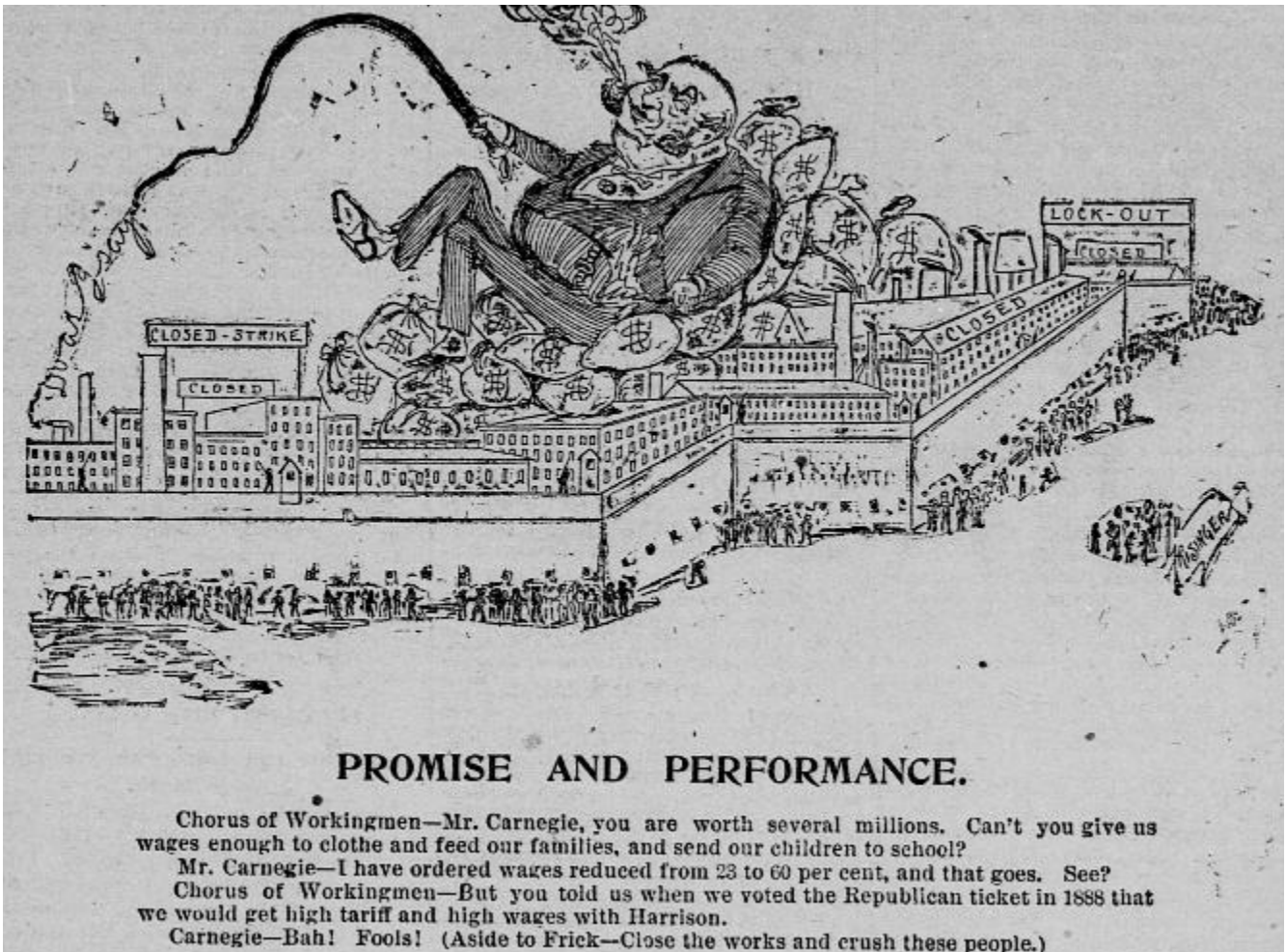
TOP LEFT IMAGE - Before Andrew Carnegie owned steel mills, **he ANTICIPATED the investment opportunity** in George **Pullman's new luxury sleeping cars** for railroads. Carnegie's investment proved profitable as railroads bought these cars for long-distance travelers, making overnight trips more appealing to passengers. He used **his NETWORK** of railroad executive **to convince them to buy** sleeping cars for their companies. This increased demand for the cars, profits for the Pullman company and Carnegie, a primary investor.



BESSEMER : THE EDGAR THOMSON STEEL WORKS AND BLAST-FURNACES.

BOTTOM LEFT IMAGE - Carnegie went to England to observe **Henry Bessemer's new method of making steel** that produced stronger steel, faster, and less expensively than ever before. Carnegie paid for the right to use Bessemer's steel making method in **new, modern steel mills** he was building in the United States. Steel soon became the backbone of the Second Industrial Revolution building and expanding **America's railroads, skyscrapers, and bridges**. This is another example of Carnegie **ANTICIPATING an opportunity** at **"the right place and the right time"**. Carnegie named his first steel mill after Edgar Thomson, president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, to honor him and secure his railroad as a key steel customer - Example of Carnegie's great **NETWORKING skills**.

THE BEST and WORST PERCEPTIONS of the ANDREW CARNEGIE BRAND



WORST - TOP – A cartoon in the St. Paul Daily Globe criticized Andrew Carnegie's management of his **Homestead Steel Works** in Pennsylvania in 1892.

Carnegie had invested heavily in new technology to increase the speed and volume of steel production. At the same time, his management team — led by Henry Clay Frick — slashed wages and tried to break the steelworkers' union. The workers went on strike to shut down mill operations. To protect the mill and bring in strikebreaker workers to keep the mill producing steel, Frick (with Carnegie's approval) hired the **Pinkerton Detective Agency**, a private security force. The arrival of the Pinkertons led to a **violent battle with the striking factory workers, resulting in deaths and injuries on both sides.**

BEST - BOTTOM – Carnegie is seated among **Black and white educators, students, and reformers** at **Tuskegee Institute** in Alabama (early 1900s) when American society was still deeply segregated. Supporting Black education in the **Jim Crow** era was controversial. Carnegie's willingness to publicly associate with African American leaders (like **Booker T. Washington**, who is also in this photo) created criticism from many Americans but also showed moral courage and praise from other parts of America. Carnegie gave \$600,000 (**\$21.8 million in 2025 dollars**) to fund more than 1,600 libraries for African American communities and provided millions more to Black colleges and educational programs across the South. (*wikipedia*)

The Interview: Andrew Carnegie and Stephen Cronin

based on Carnegie's autobiography and David Nasaw's New York Time's best selling biography of Andrew Carnegie

Mr Carnegie was nice enough to come to Rhode Island for our conversation. I thought it would be appropriate and pleasing to Mr Carnegie if we would meet on the Brown University campus at the John Hay Library.

Stephen – (with a firm handshake, good eye contact and a welcoming, appreciative smile) *Hello Mr. Carnegie. It's a pleasure meeting you. Thank you for making the trip to Rhode Island.*

Mr. Carnegie – *You're welcome, Stephen. It's my pleasure. What would you like to know?*

Stephen – *You were once the richest man in the world! More wealth, in today's money, than Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, or Warren Buffett. What's your 'secret sauce' for success?*

Mr. Carnegie – *Being in 'the right place at the right time'. I've said this many times.*

Stephen – *With respect, Sir — does that just mean 'luck'?*

Mr. Carnegie – *Not quite. People call it luck, but I believe it's 'preparation' meeting 'opportunity'. There are certain things that put you in 'the right place at the right time'.*

Stephen – *What are they, Sir?*

Mr. Carnegie – *First, knowing the right people. My NETWORK included successful, influential men. They opened doors for me. People like Colonel James Anderson, who shared his library with me... Tom Scott, President of the Pennsylvania Railroad, trusted me with a job with business responsibilities I could learn from and grow; he became my MENTOR... and J.P. Morgan, who bought my steel company.*

Stephen – *And 'why' did these men want to help you?*

Mr. Carnegie – *The perception they had of me - they liked what they saw. I was responsible — I finished what I started. I was respectful, friendly, and grateful. I read constantly — newspapers, manuals, anything new — so they knew I was learning skills for the future. Helping me wasn't just kindness; they knew it could help their companies too.*

Stephen – *In my class, we'd say you had a strong personal BRAND.*

Mr. Carnegie – *I understand. We didn't use that word, but every action and every word shaped how people saw me. If they trusted my BRAND, they gave me opportunities.*

Stephen – *Were there other parts of your success beyond NETWORKING and your BRAND?*

Mr. Carnegie – *Yes — two more. First, money sense. I saved carefully and invested wisely, even small amounts. I bought shares in businesses I researched and believed in — railroads, bridges, and oil. I didn't waste money on 'showing off'. My money worked for me. These stocks were making DIVIDEND PAYMENTS to me each year.*

Stephen – *So you treated every dollar like an employee that could earn more?*

Mr. Carnegie – *Exactly! And second — lifelong learning. I never stopped reading and asking questions. The world was changing fast — new technology, new industries, new opportunities. If I didn't learn, I'd be left behind.*

Stephen – *That sounds a lot like what I tell my students: your NETWORK, your BRAND, your MONEY-SENSE, and your LEARNING HABITS determine your chances of being "in the right place at the right time."*

Mr. Carnegie – *Tell your students — always do the right thing. Use their impressive BRAND to build a NETWORK of successful influential, people they can trust to help them, just as Tom Scott - my MENTOR, helped me. Encourage each student to find a trustworthy MENTOR.*



Mr Carnegie asked that I NOT invite the press. What he did allow is my daughter, Tara, to paint a portrait of him as he sat in the John Hay Library for our conversation. Tara is an illustrator, graphic designer and president of Kent Avenue Photography
- www.kentavenuephotography.com

The
Gospel of Wealth
And Other Timely Essays

By
Andrew Carnegie



New York
The Century Co.
1901

"The Gospel of Wealth" is one of many things Andrew Carnegie published to create a positive perception of his BRAND (June 1889). This essay presented his beliefs about social responsibilities for wealthy people.

Carnegie argued that **rich, wealthy people**
have a responsibility,
a moral duty,
to **donate their money to charities**
for the greater good of society,
rather than hoarding it
or
passing it on to their children.

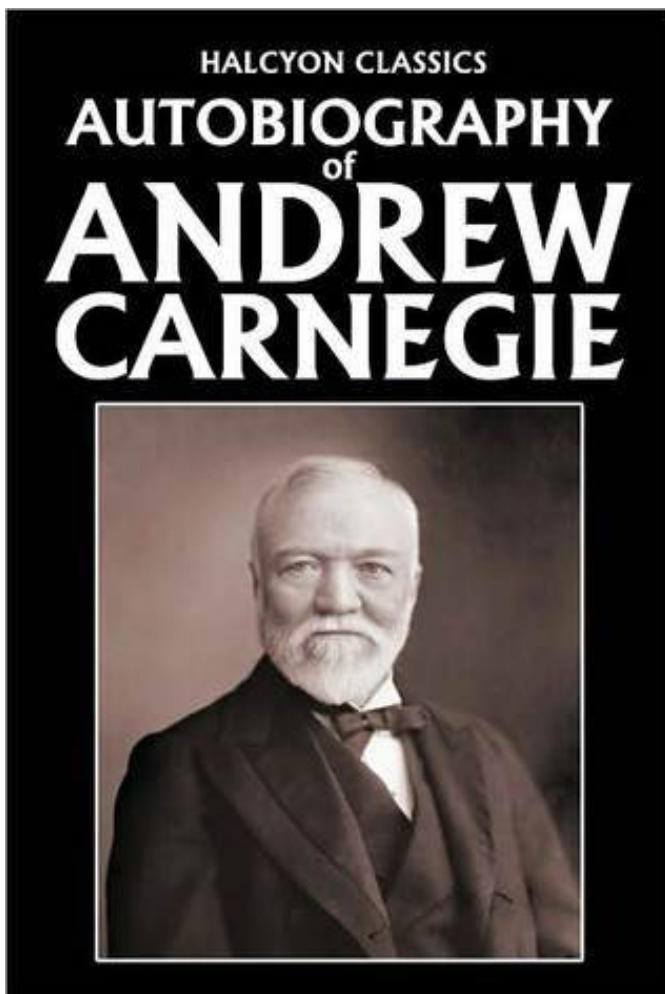
He insisted that wealth should be used during a wealthy person's life-time to build **libraries, schools,** and other institutions that **help people improve their skills for a successful future.** Carnegie disapproved of charities giving aid that kept the poor dependent on charitable or government assistance; instead,

he believed **aid** to the poor should
be used
to **develop their inherent talents**
that would help them
create opportunities
for jobs / careers - **success**
they aspire to.

"Help those who will help themselves, to provide part of the means by which those who desire to improve may do so," he wrote. Carnegie was convinced that future leaders could rise from their poverty because Carnegie himself had risen from poverty. Furthermore,

he believed the **poor held an advantage**
over the wealthy
because they often had **stronger work ethics.**

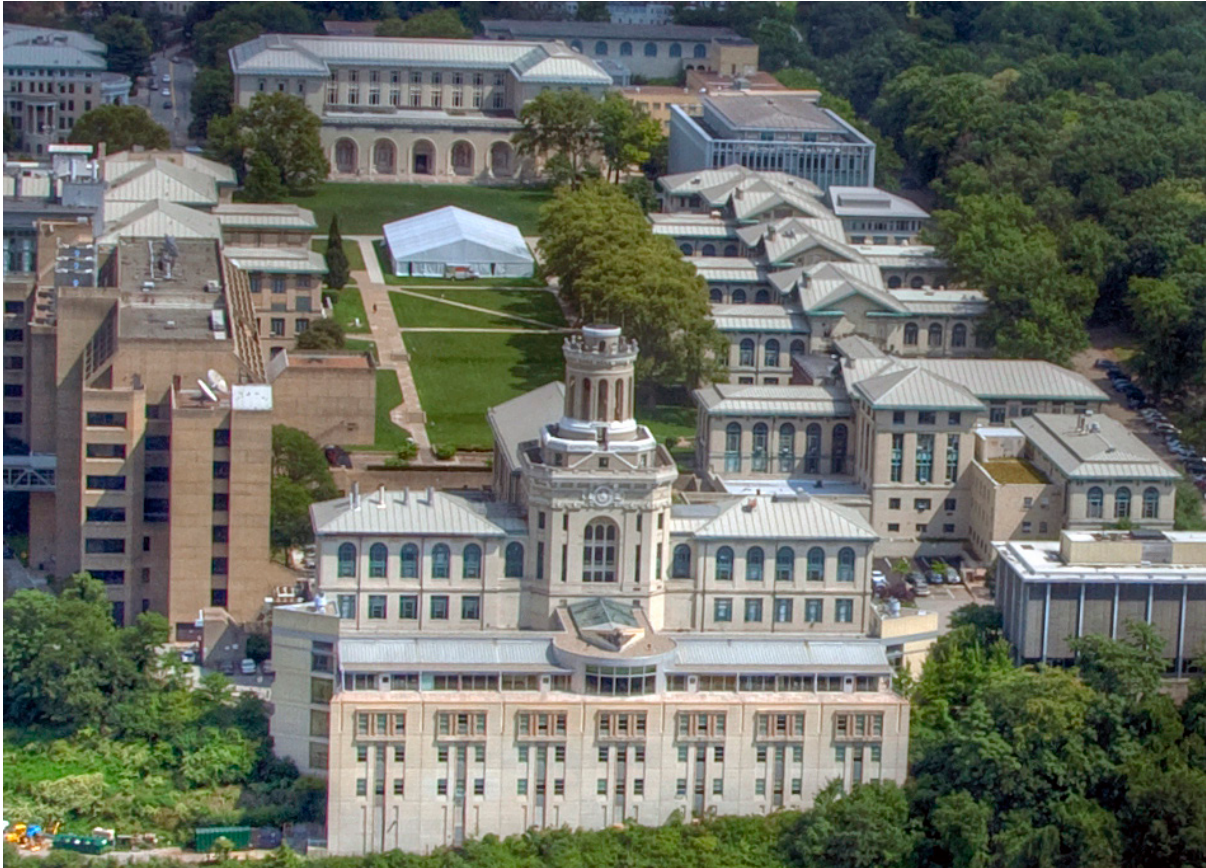
One way to control the story of your life is to **write it yourself.** That's what **Andrew Carnegie** did. (His **autobiography left photo**). Carnegie's funded foundation placed multiple copies of his autobiography in public libraries across the United States and Great Britain.





Carnegie's height: Biographer, David Nasaw, states Carnegie stood at 5 feet tall. AI ChatGPT states he was 5 feet 3 inches tall. Average American male height in the late 1800s - 5 feet 7 to 5 feet 8 inches. Andrew Carnegie was noticeably short. *"Yet, through ambition, networking, anticipation, and being in the right place at the right time, he became the richest man of his time. Success depends more on character and prescience than appearance."* (AI)

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Carnegie Mellon University is a private research university in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Established in 1900 by Andrew Carnegie as the Carnegie Technical Schools. In 1912, it became the Carnegie Institute of Technology. In 1967, it became Carnegie Mellon University through its merger with the Mellon Institute of Industrial Research, founded by Andrew Mellon, American banker, businessman, industrialist, philanthropist, art collector, and politician.

Carnegie's Time in History - America's **Gilded Age**

There was a time in American history -

between 1870 and 1900 called the **Gilded Age** —

and Andrew Carnegie was a part of it.

It was a time of amazing inventions -
the typewriter, telephone, electricity, steel bridges, Coca-Cola, and early automobiles.

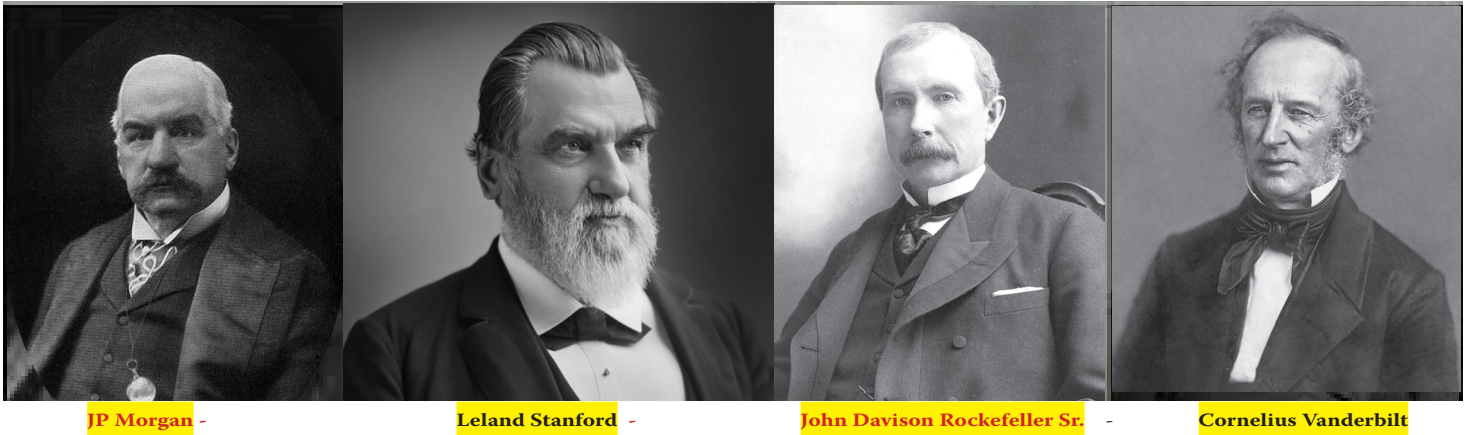


photo - the Duryea Motor Wagon (1893–1895). **Before Henry Ford**, there was Charles and Frank Duryea from Massachusetts. They built what is considered the first successful American **gasoline-powered car**. It looked like a horse drawn buggy with two seats rather than an automobile. There was a small engine under the carriage. These early cars had wooden wheels, open seats, and tillers instead of steering wheels. They didn't look sleek or fast, but they were revolutionary because they proved people could travel without horses.

And, fortunes — unimaginable **wealth** — were made by **investors, businessmen and financiers** who **anticipated** opportunities to invest and manage the companies they created, and, often, by corrupt **politicians** who bent the rules to give their network MORE opportunities for wealth.

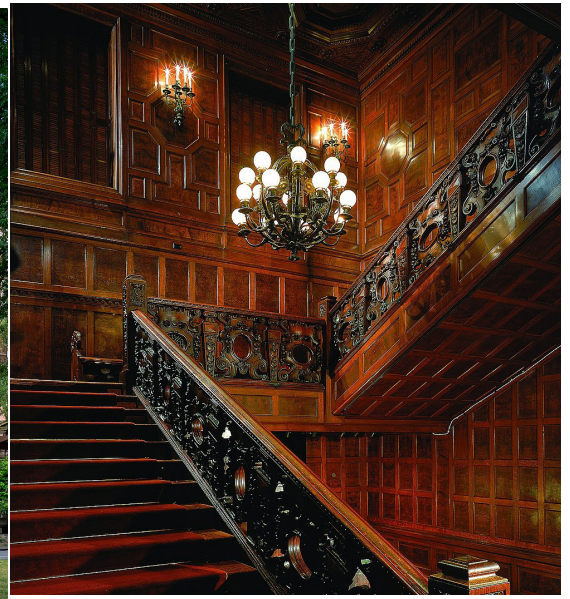
This was a time of **technological progress**, great **income inequality**
AND **corruption** — this was **the Gilded Age**.

Joining **INDUSTRIALISTS** like **Andrew Carnegie** - **US Steel** - during the Gilded Age of “*laissez-faire capitalism*” — when government placed few restrictions and rules governing businesses / companies were: **JP Morgan** - **Banking & Finance** - also reorganized railroads and bought U.S. Steel, **Cornelius Vanderbilt** - **Railroads & Shipping**, **John Jacob Astor** - America’s first multimillionaire - **Fur Trade & Real Estate**, **John Davison Rockefeller Sr** - **Standard Oil**, **Gustavus Swift** - **Meatpacking** - refrigerated railcars, **Philip Danforth Armour** - **Meatpacking** - large-scale food processing based in Chicago, **Jay Gould** - **Railroads & investment speculation often through stock manipulation**, **Henry Clay Frick** - **Coal, Steel, and Coke** - **Coke is a man-made** product created by purifying coal - purified coal is used as fuel in steel making - **Frick was Carnegie’s partner who ran the Homestead Steel Mill during the violent labor strike**), and **Leland Stanford** - **Railroads** - **Central Pacific** - **started Stanford University** - all entrepreneurs and deal makers with political connections and networks which helped them build their business empires.



Beyond creating and running successful companies, these wealthy families also built MANSIONS

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LEFT PHOTO - The Carnegie Mansion in New York City - RIGHT PHOTO - the grand staircase in the mansion

to display their wealth. In New York City, Carnegie built **the Carnegie Mansion** at 2 East 91st Street, completed between 1899 and 1902. In Newport, Rhode Island, the Vanderbilt family built **The Breakers**, completed in 1895 by **Cornelius Vanderbilt II**. With 70 rooms, it was the largest and most lavish mansion in Newport. The **Vanderbilts** jokingly referred to it as their “*summer cottage*”.



LEFT PHOTO - the entrance to *The Breakers* - a Gilded Age mansion located at 44 Ochre Point Avenue, **Newport, Rhode Island**. It was built between 1893 and 1895 as a summer residence for **Cornelius Vanderbilt II**, the son of **Cornelius Vanderbilt**. **RIGHT PHOTO** - the Great Hall off the entrance of the mansion. Over each of the six doors that lead from the Great Hall are limestone figure groups celebrating humanity's progress in art, science, and industry: Galileo, representing science; Dante, representing literature; Apollo, representing the arts; Mercury, representing speed and commerce; Richard Morris Hunt, representing architecture; and Karl Bitter, representing sculpture.

Andrew Carnegie **didn't** build a mansion in Newport, Rhode Island

like the families of many other famous industrialists of the Gilded Age.

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Carnegie's main Rhode Island connection was his significant donation to Brown University.

In 1906, Andrew Carnegie donated \$150,000 (**equivalent to \$5.25 million in 2024**) towards the construction of a new library building at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. At Carnegie's request, the library was named in honor of his late friend, the Secretary of State - John Hay - Brown University Class of 1858, United States diplomat, and the personal secretary to President Abraham Lincoln.. Carnegie also made multiple donations supporting libraries in several towns in Massachusetts.



John Hay Library - Brown University

Newspapers from the Gilded Age did sometimes list Andrew Carnegie among prominent visitors to Newport, Rhode Island; but this is difficult to confirm and, if correct, these visits were brief, probably social calls, not long standing stays. And, an occasional swim at **Easton's beach**, also called **First Beach** by today's locals, donning the **men's wool, one-piece, short-sleeved bathing suit** with shorts attached popular at that time in **Newport** was highly improbable for Carnegie.

Carnegie's leisure time was spent more in the Berkshires in western Massachusetts - (*Shadow Brook estate*).

BRAND PERCEPTIONS FROM the Gilded Age (c. 1870–1900)

Captains of Industry OR Robber Barons

Gilded Age businessmen could be seen as good Captains of Industry for building America,
AND / OR

evil Robber Barons for exploiting people and bending the rules to get rich.

Captains of Industry - This BRAND perception is wealthy business leaders of the Gilded Age who were seen as positive forces in America's growth. They built railroads, steel mills, banks, and oil refineries that created new jobs, expanded the American economy, and made the United States a world power. Many, like Carnegie, Vanderbilt, JP Morgan, and Rockefeller, gave away much of their fortunes to schools, libraries, and charities. Carnegie and Rockefeller were the two giants of philanthropy — each gave away the majority of their fortunes and deliberately tried to positively shape their BRAND legacy around generosity. Stanford's philanthropy placed his BRAND legacy close to the favorable legacies of Carnegie and Rockefeller. With his wife, Jane Stanford, he founded Stanford University in 1885 in memory of their only child, Leland Jr., who died at age 15. They endowed the university with about \$20 million (more than \$600 million today).

Robber Barons: This BRAND perception represents the same wealthy industrialists, but viewed in a negative way. Critics say these men became rich by exploiting their workers and used unfair business practices with the help of corrupt politicians to put smaller companies out of business. These industrialist also often paid low wages between \$1.50 to \$3.00 per day, depending on the job, skill level, and region of the country. They forced their employees to work long hours (sometimes 10 to 12 hours a day - 6 days a week). They often hired young children, as young as 5 and 6 years old to work in textile mills or coal mines alongside their parents. The common starting age for child labor was 8–10 years old. A child's pay was between 25¢ to 75¢ per day. Many were employed full-time, especially from poor families who depended on every person in the family working. Teenagers made up the largest share of child workers, often doing the most dangerous or exhausting tasks.

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BRAND PERCEPTIONS FROM THE GILDED AGE - "CAPTAINS OF INDUSTRY" vs "ROBBER BARONS"

Viewpoint	Captains of Industry	Robber Barons
Contribution to Growth	Built railroads, steel mills, oil refineries, banks, and shipping lines that transformed the U.S. into an industrial giant.	Built empires through monopolies, cutthroat competition, and market manipulation that crushed smaller businesses.
Innovation	Invested in new technologies (e.g., Bessemer steel, refrigerated railcars, efficient oil refining) that modernized industries.	Sometimes suppressed innovation if it threatened their profits.
Wealth & Opportunity	Created millions of jobs and opportunities, fueling immigration and urban growth.	Paid low wages, imposed long hours, and used harsh working conditions to maximize profits.
Philanthropy	Donated fortunes to build libraries, schools, universities, hospitals, and cultural institutions (Carnegie, Rockefeller, Stanford).	Gained wealth at the expense of workers and the public, then gave some away to polish reputations.
Use of Power	Expanded America's global influence and economic power.	Used political connections, bribery, and lobbying to tilt laws and government contracts in their favor. Made illegal payments to government politicians for special favors giving them advantages that other business people did not have

POWER POINT PRESENTATION - Seniors are asked each year at this school to create and present a power point slideshow as a graduation requirement. A power point displays information through a series of digital slides of images, charts, and a few words. **The best PowerPoint presenters don't read word-for-word from their slides. Instead, they use images to highlight parts of their presentation as well as make their ideas easier for the audience to understand.** Good presenters **speak to their audience with good eye contact.** Power points are used at a variety of events in many different settings - business, education and public presentations.

This activity asks EACH STUDENT to select ONE of the men from the list of *GILDED AGE INDUSTRIALISTS* on the next page and create a **3 to 5+ minute power point slideshow** which you will present to the class. The goal of your presentation is for the audience to have a clear understanding of the person you will introduce to them. You should provide both positive and negative perceptions of this person's BRAND, their most noteworthy accomplishments, where they lived, dates of their birth and death and any other information you believe is important for your audience to know.

I WILL OFFER MY OWN POWER POINT PRESENTATION BEFORE YOU CREATE AND PRESENT YOURS. THE PERSON I WILL INTRODUCE IN MY PRESENTATION IS SAMUEL HOUSTON.

OUR POWER POINT STANDARDS AND GRADE EXPECTATIONS

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Length: 3–5 minutes • **Slides:** 5–7 • **Topic:** Choose one Gilded Age Industrialist

Category	Excellent (A)	Proficient (B–C)	Needs Improvement (D–F)	
Content Accuracy	All facts (birth/death, industry, company, accomplishments) are accurate and complete.	Minor errors OR missing 1 required detail.	Several errors OR missing multiple key details.	
Balanced Perspective	Includes both <i>positive</i> and <i>negative</i> views (Captain of Industry & Robber Baron).	Mentions only one side OR very limited balance.	No balance — only positive or only negative.	
Visuals & Slides	Slides are clear, attractive, use strong visuals (images, charts, quotes). Minimal text.	Some visuals; too much text on a few slides.	Mostly text; visuals missing or unclear.	
Delivery & Presentation Skills	Confident, clear voice, good eye contact, engages audience; does not read slides.	Reads slides occasionally; uneven eye contact or pacing.	Reads slides word-for-word; little audience engagement.	
Organization & Timing	Presentation flows logically; stays within 3–5 minutes.	Mostly clear; timing slightly off (too short/long).	Disorganized OR far outside time limit.	
Audience Engagement	Ends with a thoughtful question OR engages class discussion.	Mentions class once but doesn't engage much.	No attempt to involve audience.	

N.B - The term “*Gilded Age*” comes from the title of an 1873 novel written by Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner - “*The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today*.” To ‘*gild*’ something means covering something of limited value with a thin layer of gold, making it look more valuable than it really is. Twain and Warner used the term “*Gild*” to criticize this period in history after the Civil War (roughly 1870s–1910), when some men in industry (*Carnegie, Vanderbilt, Rockefeller*, and more) made incredible amounts of money (*without an income tax*) **but** beneath the industrial growth and opulent expression of wealth (like mansions) there was deep poverty, corruption, and inequality. **Mark Twain satire at his best!**

person's name	product and company	philanthropy	"Robber Baron" accusations
Andrew Carnegie	Steel – <i>Carnegie Steel Company</i>	2,500+ libraries; Carnegie Hall; Carnegie Mellon University; peace initiatives	Cut wages, broke unions; Homestead Strike violence; harsh working conditions
John D. Rockefeller	Oil – <i>Standard Oil Company</i>	Donated \$500M+; University of Chicago; Rockefeller Foundation	Ruthless monopolist; used predatory pricing; crushed competitors; bribed politicians
Cornelius Vanderbilt	Railroads & Shipping – <i>New York Central Railroad</i> , steamship lines	Donated \$1M to found Vanderbilt University	Monopolistic practices; price wars; quote: "The public be damned!"
J.P. Morgan	Finance & Banking – <i>J.P. Morgan & Co.</i> , U.S. Steel, General Electric	Supported art & culture; Metropolitan Museum of Art; Morgan Library & Museum	Controlled markets; "money trust"; wielded government-level power without accountability
Henry Clay Frick	Steel & Coke – <i>H.C. Frick & Co.</i> ; partner in Carnegie Steel	Frick Art Collection and mansion donated as museum	Anti-union; ordered strikebreakers at Homestead (1892), leading to deaths; exploitative labor practices
Jay Gould	Railroads & Finance – <i>Erie Railroad</i> , Union Pacific	Little notable philanthropy; remembered mainly for speculation	Infamous stock manipulator; caused financial panics; bribed officials; called "most hated man of the age"
Leland Stanford	Railroads – <i>Central Pacific Railroad</i> , Southern Pacific Railroad	With Jane Stanford, founded Stanford University (\$20M endowment)	Exploited Chinese labor on railroads; used political power for subsidies; accused of corruption
Philip Danforth Armour	Meatpacking – <i>Armour & Company</i>	Founded Armour Institute of Technology; some charitable food programs	Low wages; unsanitary working conditions; accused of exploiting immigrant labor
Gustavus Swift	Meatpacking – <i>Swift & Company</i>	Limited personal philanthropy; later family donations to hospitals & universities	Dangerous and unsanitary factories; exploited workers; monopolistic control over meat distribution

N.B. - JOHN JACOB ASTOR 1 was NOT part of the Gilded Age in American history. He was born in 1763 and died in 1848 before history's official start of the Gilded Age. However, his son, **William Backhouse Astor Jr.**, inherited and enjoyed his father's fortune during the GILDED AGE. William B. Astor Jr. did not create or run major companies. He mostly managed the vast Astor real estate property and the money it created from rents in Manhattan (New York City.) William Jr. is often described as a quiet landlord who simply collected rents and enjoyed the income. His wife, Caroline "**Mrs. Astor**"; had one of the most **famous personal BRANDs in America** — she dominated New York and Newport, Rhode Island's high society, turning the Astor wealth into social power.. Their Newport "*cottage*" - was a MANSION - called "**Beechwood**", built in 1851 and later remodeled in 1881 by architect Richard Morris Hunt (who also designed *The Breakers* for the Vanderbilts). "**Beechwood**" became the center of Mrs. Astor's summer social season, where she hosted balls and gatherings for America's wealthiest families. If there was a place to be in the summer for America's wealthiest people, it was "**Beechwood**" in Newport, Rhode Island for one of Mrs Astor's famous parties. **Beechwood helped create Newport's reputation as America's social capital of the Gilded Age.**

Please complete this Feedback Survey after reading the preceding pages:

NAME _____

THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING - I value your honest feedback! Please take a few minutes to share your thoughts. Your input will help me improve future materials so I can fulfill the **MISSION OF THIS CLASS** - *introducing and developing skills and behaviors students can use THAT WILL help them compete for the lifestyle and career / jobs they hope for in the ever changing, technology driven, global economy.*

For Students

1. How interesting did you find the story of Andrew Carnegie? **PLEASE**, Circle one -

Very interesting - Somewhat interesting - Neutral - Not very interesting - Not interesting at all

2. Did his story help you understand how a **poor, immigrant** to America, like Andrew Carnegie, was able to **become so successful**? -

PLEASE, Circle one-

Yes, definitely - Somewhat - Not really

3. Did the story about HOW Andrew Carnegie created and promoted his **personal brand** cause you to think about HOW you can create and promote **your brand** for the successful life you aspire to? - **PLEASE**, Circle one

Yes A little No

4. Do you have a **NETWORK** of successful, influential, people you **trust** to give you **constructive criticism** when you need it? YES **or** NO

5. Do you have a **NETWORK** of successful, influential, people you **trust** to give you **career advice, introductions to leaders** working in careers / jobs **you're interested in**? YES **or** NO

• IF **NO**, why don't you have this kind of NETWORK - _____

• IF **YES**, what(s) is the reason these influential, successful, ethical people agreed to be part of your NETWORK? _____

6. Was there any **part of the Andrew Carnegie story that gave you hope** you could become the successful person you hope to be? YES **or** NO

• IF **YES**, what was that part of the Carnegie story that gave you hope? _____

• IF **NO**, what keeps you from believing you can become the person you would like to be? _____

7. What would make this activity better for future students? _____

8. For the last, NEW, professional, influential person you met, what **three words** are you **certain they would use** to describe their **FIRST IMPRESSION OF YOU** --- did you impress this person when they first observed you as you entered the place / room you met, were you professional in the way you greeted this person with a strong handshake, good eye contact, a smile, and a friendly, respectful, professional greeting?

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

1. Are those the words you want them to use? - YES **or** NO

3. Are you **certain** they would use these words? YES **or** NO

HOW PEOPLE of INFLUENCE PERCEIVE your Work Ethic & Reliability (BRAND)

9. How often do you show up to **class** 'on time' when you are supposed to show up? - **circle one**

- ALL THE TIME you are expected to be there
- RARELY
- SOME TIME
- NEVER

10. Do show up - to your **job**, if you have one - ON TIME, ALL THE TIME - YES **or** NO

11. Describe how **YOUR BRAND** is **NOW** being **PERCEIVED** by the people who know you like your teachers? **circle one**

- highly respected, impressed, recommend to colleges, jobs, etc
- not respected nor impressed; NEVER RECOMMEND
- sometimes respected, impressed; will not recommend for jobs

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Collaboration & Respect

12. In group projects, what role do you usually take on? - **circle one**

- a leadership role in collaborations and group discussions
- SOMETIMES speak up during a discussion or collaboration
- always speak up and contribute but not leading the group
- NEVER speak up nor contribute - too embarrassed

Opportunities & Prescience

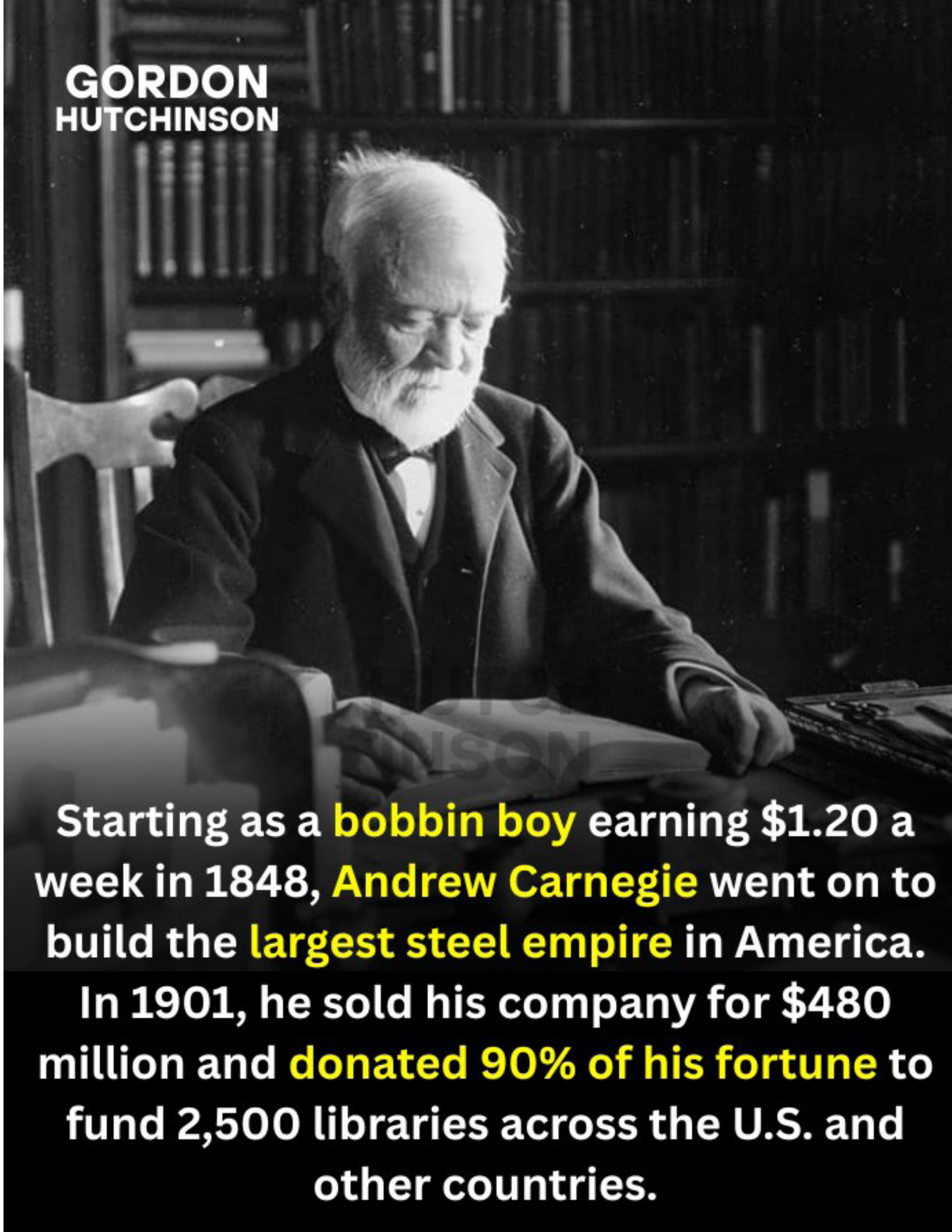
13. are you **regularly** trying to think about the future and **ANTICIPATE** the challenges and opportunities it may present you? YES **or** NO

14. What are you **ANTICIPATING** this month that could give you an opportunity or advantage to achieve the goals you have set for yourself?

15. If you could change **one** of your habits **this week** to strengthen your **BRAND** and improve your **ANTICIPATION / PRESCIENCE**, what would it be? (e.g., reading more so you are more aware of what's going on in the world for better career decisions; asking more questions, better time management to focus on priorities that what supports your goals; anticipating ahead, being more disciplined in your decision, more **NET-WORKING** of successful, influential, ethical people for lifetime advice and inspiration for lifetime success etc).

• _____

16. Establish your **LINKEDIN** page - **THEN**, send a **CONNECT REQUEST** to me, Mr Cronin within **7 days from today**.

A black and white photograph of Andrew Carnegie, an elderly man with a white beard, sitting at a desk in a library. He is wearing a dark suit and a bow tie, and is looking down at an open book on the desk. The background is filled with bookshelves containing many books.

**GORDON
HUTCHINSON**

Starting as a **bobbin boy** earning \$1.20 a week in 1848, **Andrew Carnegie** went on to build the **largest steel empire** in America.

In 1901, he sold his company for \$480 million and **donated 90% of his fortune** to fund 2,500 libraries across the U.S. and other countries.