

# CHAPTER 18

## THE AGE OF THE CITY

### Chapter Summary

In the years after the Civil War, America's cities boomed as people left the rural areas of Europe and the United States to seek jobs and other attractions offered by American cities. The rapid growth of cities caused many problems in housing, transportation, and health. Technological attacks on these problems barely kept pace, and city governments often resorted to boss rule to cope. The booming cities were places of intellectual ferment and cultural change. Urban dwellers found many ways to enjoy increased leisure time. Many Americans wanted to prove to skeptical Europeans that the nation had cultural as well as economic accomplishments to admire. American culture became more uniform through free public education, mass-market journalism, and standardized sports. Higher education, especially new state universities, reached out to a wider market. More and more women attended college in coeducational and single-sex institutions.

### Objectives

A thorough study of Chapter 18 should enable the student to understand

1. The patterns and processes of urbanization in late-nineteenth-century America.
2. The changes in the pattern of immigration in the late nineteenth century and the impact of global migration.
3. The new economic and social problems created by urbanization.
4. The relationship of both urbanization and immigration to the rise of boss rule.
5. The early rise of mass consumption and its impact on American life, especially for women.
6. The changes in leisure and entertainment opportunities, including organized sports, vaudeville, movies, and other activities.
7. The main trends in literature and art during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.
8. The impact of Darwinian evolution on the intellectual life of America.
9. The profound new developments in American educational opportunities.

### Main Themes

1. How the social and economic lure of the city attracted foreign and domestic migrants, and how these newcomers adjusted to urban life.
2. How rapid urban growth forced adaptations to severe problems of government mismanagement, poverty, inadequate housing, and precarious health and safety conditions.
3. How the urban environment served as the locus for new philosophical ideas, fresh approaches to education, rapid expansion in journalism, and a new consumerism.
4. How the new order of urban culture inspired serious writers and artists to render realistic portrayals of the seamy side of city life, while many middle- and upper-class Americans were engaging in expanded forms of leisure and entertainment.

**AP US History**  
**Chapter 18 Questions**  
**Assignment 1**

**Sources:**

**Textbook: pg. 489 to mid-pg. 501.**

**Questions:**

1. What were the attractions of the city that led to population expansion? What were the main sources of urban growth?
2. What were the factors that inspired the exodus of southern African Americans into cities, especially northern cities, that began in the late 19c?
3. What is meant by "push" and "pull" factors in population migrations?
4. How did the foreign immigrants of the 1890s and later differ from most of the earlier immigrants? What attracted them to the United States?
5. How did 19c and early 20c immigration to the United States fit in the context of worldwide, especially European, migration?
6. What social institutions and community actions helped facilitate immigrant adjustment to urban life in America? What were the barriers?
7. Which immigrant groups seemed to adapt better than most others to America? Why?
8. What were the strains caused by the desire of immigrants for assimilation? How did native-born Americans regard assimilation?
9. What efforts were made to restrict immigration in the late 19c? What ethnic group and other types of immigrants were specifically restricted?
10. What inspired the move toward the creation of expanded public spaces and public buildings in large American cities? What were the lasting legacies of this impulse?
11. What led to the development of residential suburbs around big cities?
12. Contrast the residential pattern of the working class and the poor with that of the wealthy and moderately well-to-do.
13. What was big city life like for the poor?
14. How did urban mass transit technology evolve from the Civil War era to the turn of the century?
15. What technological innovations made the development of the skyscraper possible and desirable?

**AP US History**  
**Chapter 18 Questions**  
**Assignment 2**

**Sources:**

**Textbook: mid-pg. 501 to 518.**

**Questions:**

1. How did big cities cope with the urban hazards of fire, disease, and sanitation? What were the environmental implications of dense urban development?

2. What was the typical middle-class attitude toward the problem of widespread urban poverty?
3. How did the big cities respond to violent crime at the end of the 19c?
4. What were the factors that contributed to the rise of political machines and their bosses?
5. How did the typical political machine operate? What were the pros and cons of boss rule in large cities?
6. What were the changes in income and purchasing power of the urban middle class and working class? Who made the greater gains?
7. How did the emergence of mass-market products along with chain stores, mail-order outlets, and the large department stores impact the lives of American families, especially women?
8. Why and how did Americans begin to change their attitudes toward leisure and consumption? What factors contributed to this new view?
9. How did the approaches to leisure vary by class?
10. Why did spectator sports become very popular at the turn of the 19c? What changes were beginning to occur in women's sports?
11. What were the main sorts of popular entertainment activities available to urban dwellers of the late 19c and early 20c? How did class considerations shape the types of activities enjoyed?
12. Why was the Fourth of July such an important holiday? How was it different in the South?
13. What important changes occurred in journalism and publishing in the decades after the Civil War?
14. What issues did the realist novelists explore? How did the realist authors approach these problems?
15. By the early 1900s, what movements in American visual art were becoming evident? How did these movements reflect the contrast between the genteel and modern approaches?
16. How did Darwinism challenge traditional American faith and contribute to the growing schism between cosmopolitan, mostly urban, and traditional, mainly rural, values [late 19c "culture wars"]?
17. How did the new social science disciplines of economics, sociology, and anthropology impact the intellectual view of contemporary and historic America?
18. Describe the evolution of free public schooling in the United States. What parts of the nation lagged in education?
19. What government and private actions combined to lead to the establishment or significant expansion of universities and colleges after the Civil War?
20. What opportunities for higher education were available to women in this era? What were the distinctive characteristics of the women's colleges?
21. Was America at the beginning of the 20c truly a "Melting Pot?" Is it today?