## **Contextualization & Synthesis...** Social Darwinism

## From the Revised 2015 Framework:

Students will... CONTEXTUALIZE...

Situate historical events, developments, or processes within the broader regional, national, or global context in which they occurred in order to draw conclusions about their relative significance. SYNTHESIZE ...

Make connections between a given historical issue and related developments in a different historical context, geographical area, period, or era, including the present. Make connections between different course themes and/or approaches to history (such as political, economic, social, cultural, or intellectual) for a given historical issue.

Key Concept 6.3: The Gilded Age produced new cultural and intellectual movements, public reform efforts, and political debates over economic and social policies.

- I. New cultural and intellectual movements both buttressed and challenged the social order of the Gilded Age.
  - A) Social commentators advocated theories later described as Social Darwinism to justify the success of those at the top of the socioeconomic structure as both appropriate and inevitable.
  - B) Some business leaders argued that the wealthy had a moral obligation to help the less fortunate and improve society, as articulated in the idea known as the Gospel of Wealth, and they made philanthropic contributions that enhanced educational opportunities and urban environments.
  - C) A number of artists and critics, including agrarians, utopians, socialists, and advocates of the Social Gospel, championed alternative visions for the economy and U.S. society.

## Social Darwinism: Herbert Spenser (1820-1903)

- societies evolve from lower (barbarian) to higher (civilized) forms
- "natural selection": most capable surviving, least capable dying out
- wrong to interfere with this process



Walter Rauschenbusch, leading thinker of the Social Gospel whose 1907 book, "Christianity and the Social Crisis," interpreted Christ's purpose to have been the regeneration of the social order. (Georgetown College)



- Advanced by Andrew Carnegie and other wealthy people
- Stated people of great wealth should set aside any money in excess of their needs for the good of the community
  - This allowed the wealthy to give as they see fit
  - It also toned down any feelings of guilt in acquiring such large fortunes

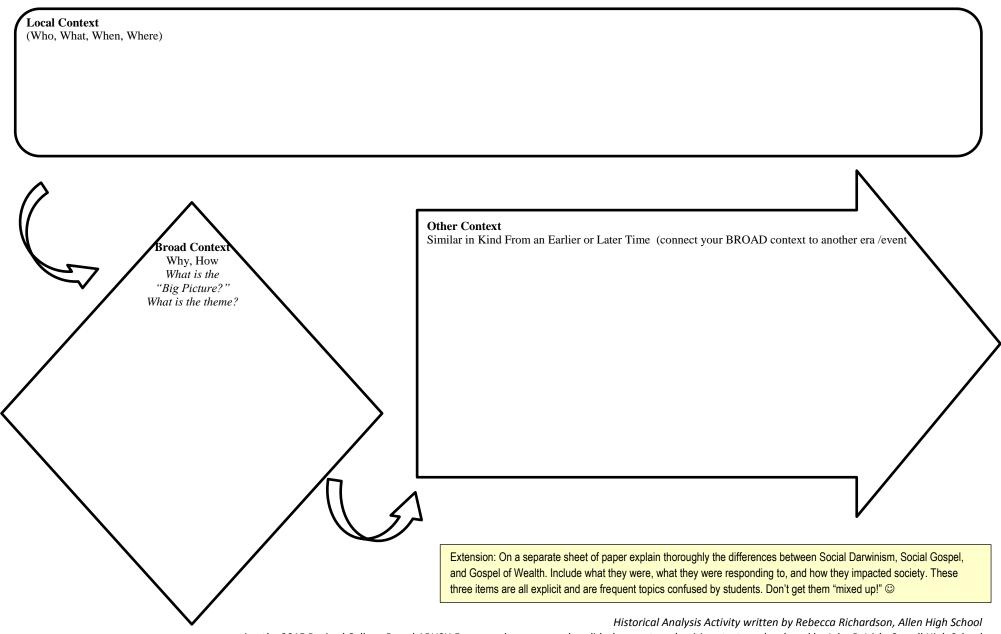
Historical Analysis Activity written by Rebecca Richardson, Allen High School

using the 2015 Revised College Board APUSH Framework, core.ecu.edu, slideshare.net, and writing strategy developed by John P. Irish, Carroll High School

## Contextualization & Synthesis... Social Darwinism

Directions:

Complete the activity by considering context and synthesis as well as the historical significance of Social Darwinism. Write in complete sentences and include at least one specific piece of evidence for each answer.



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