

Throughout the late nineteenth century, workers protested workplace changes imposed by management. In 1886, 100,000 workers amassed in Chicago to demand an eight-hour workday and Chicago police mobilized to break up the battle between unionists and strikebreakers. This upheaval led to the development of the American Federation of Labor (AFL)—skilled craft unions united under the leadership of Samuel Gompers. In 1914, Gompers gave the following congressional testimony, *The American Labor Movement: Its Makeup, Achievements, and Aspirations*. Read this excerpt, and then, answer the questions that follow to demonstrate your understanding of the characteristics, achievements, and goals of the AFL unions, as well as the changes that occurred in the American workforce between 1880 and 1920.

The American Labor Movement: Its Makeup, Achievements, and Aspirations (1914)

Samuel Gompers

Section 3

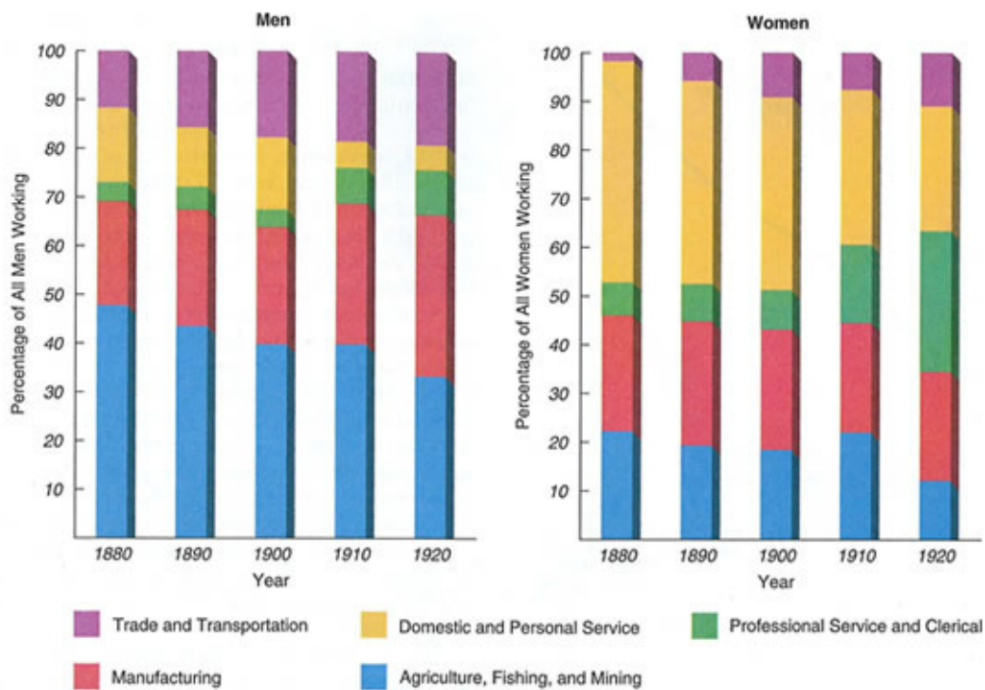
- 1 The general object of the Federation is to better the conditions of the workers in all fields of human activity. Economic betterment in all directions comes first. The Federation has from time to time formulated definite programs for such improvements, but it has always concerned itself with first questions first. The conventions have passed resolutions recommending concrete ameliorative measures.
- 2 The A. F. of L. has expressed itself in favor of shortening the workday in keeping with the increased productiveness of machinery. The demand and the movement for a shorter workday had been going on for nearly fifteen or twenty years prior to the organization of the A. F. of L., but it has had a more concrete form and expression since the A. F. of L. was organized in 1881.
- 3 The A. F. of L. declared that concerted effort should be made by the working people of the United States to secure the eight-hour workday. On May 1, 1886, the Federation offered its services to be helpful to the organizations in the establishment of the eight-hour workday by conferences between workmen and employers, by correspondence, by publications, agitation and education. Upon the recommendation of the A. F. of L. two piece-work trades enforced the eight-hour workday on May 1, 1886, and have maintained it from that day until this. As a result of the declaration

Source: Samuel Gompers, *The American Labor Movement: Its Makeup, Achievements and Aspirations* (1914).

In the following table, determine whether each of the statements about the AFL unions is true or false.

Statement	True	False
The AFL considered eighteen to be the ideal minimum age for workers.	☐	☐
By 1920, the majority of American wage workers belonged to unions.	☐	☐
The AFL wanted to improve the inspection process for workshops, factories, and mines.	☐	☐

The following bar graphs depict changes to the American workforce between 1880 and 1920, showing the distribution of male and female occupations on a decennial basis. Analyze these graphs, and then, answer the questions that follow to demonstrate your understanding of the changing U.S. economy.



Distribution of Occupational Categories Among Employed Men and Women, 1880-1920

Which sector of the economy showed the greatest growth in jobs between 1880 and 1920 as a percentage of all women working?

- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Trade and transportation
- ☐ Professional service and clerical

Which sector of the economy showed the greatest loss of jobs between 1880 and 1920 as a percentage of all women working?

- ☐ Domestic and personal service
- ☐ Professional service and clerical
- ☐ Manufacturing