

BRIEFING THE SENATOR

The Senator is happy to have you on staff. Your first assignment: the technology industry. The Senator needs you to investigate whether or not the big tech folks are becoming too monopolistic, and he needs to know what action he should take. He doesn't have time to read this stuff, which is why he has a staff to read it and summarize it so he can quickly understand the situation and make a decision.

You're already ahead of the game here – you read “Robber Barons and Silicon Sultans” (RBSS) at the end of Unit 6, a unit in which you learned all about monopolies, how they work, their positive and negative effects, etc. Now that the Progressive Era has unfolded, let's look back at monopolies then and now in a new article. This will give you the tools you need for your assignment.

“Techlash” is a secret memo we've uncovered that was circulated by the tech companies' legal team this week. Check out their e-mail address and company name – clever, no? How are they feeling about the business climate? Are they worried about government action? What does this mean for the average citizen?

You need to prepare a report of **no more than two pages**.¹ That's not open for debate; if it goes over two, we're not accepting it. In that report, you must do the following:

- Summarize the key points from RBSS. To what extent do the tech guys resemble the robber barons? What makes each era unique?
- Summarize the “Techlash” memo. What's got these guys worried? What are the elements that give them some breathing room, or some cover? What steps might they take to prevent government action?
- Where have we seen this before? Explain to the Senator what kind of actions the government took against trusts/monopolies (and what kind of actions it didn't take) between 1865 and 1920. How could that guide the government today?
- **YOUR RECOMMENDATION:** Should we be worried about these similarities? Do we need to act? Do the plans in “Techlash” sound like good approaches for dealing with the growing empires? Or is it not as big a deal as some would have us believe? The Senator wants your personal recommendation, but it needs to be based on what you've learned and read, not just some diatribe you saw on Aunt Theresa's Facebook page that was *really* convincing.²
- Check grammar and spelling. For crying out loud, it's the Senator. It's not just some reply to one of Aunt Theresa's Facebook rants. Edit your work. Be embarrassed if you turn in something full of typos – the computer helps you correct this stuff, right? You need at least **six** PowerWords™ in **bold**. Each of these must be at least six letters in length.³

Good luck. The Senator is counting on you.



Hello! I'm Pulitzer-Prize winner Doris Kearns Goodwin. Bill Brands is out sick this week, so I told him I'd step in. Feel free to read *The Bully Pulpit* for help with this unit!

¹ Times New Roman, 12 pt., double-spaced. Do the little things right.

² I'm sorry, but she's not an accredited academic source.

³ Yes, this eliminates “also” and “too” and other weak ones from the list. Push the envelope here, AP students.