

# Isaac Myers and Labor Unions

In this lesson, students will read about Isaac Myers, and hear how early Black labor leaders pushed through challenges to ensure more economic opportunities for Black workers.

|                       |   |                |
|-----------------------|---|----------------|
| Grades: 6-8           |   | Subject(s): SS |
| Focus Standard(s)     | D2.Eco.9.6-8 - Describe the roles of institutions such as corporations, non-profits, and labor unions in a market economy.  |                |
| Learning Objective(s) | Students will be able to define and explain the roles of corporations, non-profits, and labor unions in a market economy.   |                |
| Materials/Resources   | <a href="#">Isaac Myers's Fight for Fair Work</a>   |                |
| Vocabulary            | riots: public disturbances or fights<br>strike: protest that involves not doing one's job<br>labor unions: groups for workers' rights   |                |
|                       |   |                |
| Anticipatory Set      | Ask students to think and discuss the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think a labor union does?</li> <li>• Have you or your family members ever heard of workers going on strike? Why do you think workers might do that?</li> <li>• Can businesses, non-profits, and labor unions all help people? How?</li> </ul>   |                |
| Mini-Lesson           | Begin by defining key terms and discuss their roles in a market economy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Corporation:</b> A business owned by many people (shareholders) that sells goods or services for profit.</li> <li>• <b>Non-Profit Organization:</b> A group that helps people or supports a cause instead of making money.</li> <li>• <b>Labor Union:</b> A group of workers who join together to demand better wages and working conditions.</li> </ul> Ask students: How might these groups work together or against each other? |                |
| Guided Practice       | Distribute the article on Isaac Myers or have students log in to read the article individually or in pairs. Ask students to answer the following questions as they read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What challenges did Black workers face in the shipyards?</li> <li>• Why did Isaac Myers create the Chesapeake Marine Railway and Dry Dock Company?</li> </ul>   |                |
| Independent Practice  | <b>Role-Playing Debate</b><br>Assign students a role: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Business Owner who wants to keep costs low</li> <li>• A worker who wants higher pay and better working conditions</li> <li>• A Labor Union Leader who is trying to negotiate a fair trade</li> </ul> Have students prepare a one-minute speech explaining their point of view on their cause. Students may share their speech in small groups or, if time allows, with the whole class.  |                |

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Closure/Assessment | Assess student understanding by asking them to choose one of the following questions to answer. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Why are labor unions important in history and today?</li><li>● How did Isaac Myers change opportunities for Black workers?</li><li>● What would happen if workers didn't have unions?</li></ul> |
| Differentiation    | Adjust lexile® levels as needed; answer questions as a whole group; use accessibility features or read-to-me feature as needed; print copies of article  |