# Labor Unions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Knights of Labor</th>
<th>American Federation of Labor (AFL)</th>
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| Who was eligible to join?     | - Second major labor union to be organized.  
- Organized in 1869.  
- Anyone who was a “producer” could join including farmers, workers, and women (both skilled and un-skilled)                                                                 | - Founded by Samuel Gompers in 1886.  
- Only skilled white workers could join. (They are harder to replace).                                                                                                                                                           |
| What were the goals of the union? | - sought a cooperative system of production (workers share in the wealth they create)  
- demands included a graduated income tax (the more you make, the more you pay), an end to child labor, temperance (no drinking), and an 8 hour work day | - Organized as a collection of loosely affiliated craft unions (carpenters union, typesetters union, brick layers union and so forth). Individual craft unions made demands specific to their union.  
- Gompers avoided involvement in politics.  
- Called for collective bargaining, better pay, and shorter hours (8 hour work day).                                                                                                                                 |
| What were the union’s methods of achieving its goals? | - Political participation (voting for candidates who were friendly towards labor – less effective for the K of L than for the AFL b/c women, blacks, and immigrants aren’t eligible to vote)  
- arbitration (when two arguing parties present their case to a neutral third party who decides the outcome.)  
- strike (as a last resort) | - political participation (voting)  
- strike (better able to use strike as a tool than the K of L's unskilled workers who were more readily replaceable.)                                                                                                               |
What was the public’s perception of the union?

- Viewed as communist (b/c of their cooperative production goal)
- Wealthy Americans/management did not like or trust
- Criticized for their willingness to admit all workers regardless of race, skill level, or gender
- By 1886, membership was 700,000, over the next 3 years membership dropped to 100,000

- Criticized for being elitist (exclude un–skilled workers, women, blacks, etc.)
- Wealthy Americans/management did not like or trust – resented the power skilled workers had

Which union do you feel had the more effective strategy and why?