“The Trust Giant’s Point of View” Activity

Directions: Examine the cartoon and read the Background section. When you are finished, answer the questions that follow using complete sentences.

“The Trust Giant’s Point of View” (1900), Horace Taylor

Background
Between 1870 and 1911, John D. Rockefeller’s Standard Oil Company and Trust dominated the American oil business. Rockefeller’s combined companies, managed by a board of trustees, controlled nearly all the production, processing, and distribution of oil in the country. In 1892, the government tried to use the Sherman Antitrust Act to break up Standard Oil, but that effort failed. By 1900, when this political cartoon appeared, trusts controlled around four-fifths of American industry. The efforts of “trust-busting” Presidents Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson had some success, including the break-up of Standard Oil in 1911. Nevertheless, mergers and monopolies continued, and big business continued to exert a powerful influence over American life. Horace Taylor, the artist who created this cartoon, was born in New York City in 1864. He died in 1921. He

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specialized in cartoons that linked political commentary to social conditions. This cartoon may be his most famous.

Questions and Activities
1. How does this political cartoon portray Rockefeller’s Standard Oil Company?

2. How does it portray the government?

3. What opinion is the cartoonist expressing?