

Progressive Era 1890 - 1920

As the industrial revolution spread from Europe to America in the late 1800's and early 1900's great changes began to take place. Large cities in the north such as New York saw large numbers of immigrants coming to start a new life. However many people in America learned that along with the new industries came many unintentional problems such as unsafe working conditions, unsanitary food environments, and abuse of labor. Reaction to these concerns forced some Americans to fight for changes in the new working environment.

- Progressivism is the term applied to a variety of economic, social, and political concerns that came about as rapid industrialization was introduced to America.
- Progressivism began as a social movement and grew into a political movement.
- They were people who believed that the problems society faced (poverty, violence, greed, racism, class warfare) could best be addressed by providing good education, a safe environment, and an efficient workplace.
- Progressives lived mainly in the cities, were college educated, and believed that government could be a tool for change. Many were newspaper reporters and political activists.
- Social reformers, like Jane Addams, and journalists, like Jacob Riis and Ida Tarbel, were powerful voices for progressivism. They concentrated on exposing the evils of corporate greed, combating fear of immigrants, and urging Americans to think hard about what democracy meant.
- Other local leaders encouraged Americans to register to vote, fight political corruption, and let the voting public decide how issues should best be addressed.
- The progressive movement began up north but as industry spread throughout the New South, many of the same concerns developed there as well.

Goals of the Progressive Movement

| Social Goals | Economic Goals | Political Goals |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fight poverty • Improve child labor laws • Improve working conditions • Allow women the right to vote • Prison reform – chain gangs, and renting prisoners out for slave labor • Outlaw alcohol • Reform living conditions (tenements) in large metropolitan cities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break up large corporations who control price • Regulate businesses to make sure they follow all laws to protect the worker • Decrease corporate power in government – do not allow corporations to pay politicians to vote for laws that will protect them instead of the common man. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure “the people” have a greater voice in government • Have more voters – allow women the right to vote • Limit the amount of black participation in elections |

Result of Progressive Movement:

By using various forms of the media, combined with organized protests, petitions, and the power of the vote, the Progressives exposed issues and informed thousands of Americans of the condition that existed in the country. These efforts will result in laws both locally and nationally being passed that will improve of the lives of millions of Americans.

Progressive Era Cubing Assignment: Blue Level

- You and your partner work together to answer five of the six sides of your cube.
- Write your answers on your paper.
- Everyone has to start with side one. Once you have written the answer to number one, you and your partner will roll the cube.
- The number that lands on top is the side you must answer.
- You are allowed to only skip one side.
- Once the assigned questions are complete you are required to complete a short essay response.
- All work must be turned in at the end of the period for a grade.

1. What is the Progressive Movement? Give a detail definition of the progressive movement showing you understand how and why the movement started.

2. Prohibition: Many women during the progressive movement pushed for a ban on alcohol. Look at the political cartoon and quote on prohibition below then answer the question that follows.

Building Up His Business



Source: Frank Beard, *The Ram's Horn*, September 12, 1896 (adapted)

This excerpt from the *National Temperance Almanac* of 1876 attacks "King Alcohol."

He has occasioned [caused] more than three-fourths of the pauperism [extreme poverty], three-fourths of the crime, and more than one-half of the insanity in the community, and thereby filled our prisons, our alms-houses [houses for the poor] and lunatic asylums, and erected the gibbet [gallows to hang people] before our eyes.

1. Based on this 19th-century cartoon and this quotation, state two effects that alcohol had on American society and why you think women led the charge to ban alcohol.

3. Right for Women to Vote:

Rose Schneiderman was an advocate for Women's Rights during the Progressive Era

" Women in the laundries stand for 13 and 14 hours in the terrible steam and heat with their hands in hot starch. Surely these women won't lose any more of their beauty and charm by putting a ballot in the ballot box." Rose Schneiderman

Answer: What did Rose Schneiderman say to people who considered voting unladylike?

4. Prison Reform: Read the text and observe the pictures to answer the question below.



Convict Leasing System

In an effort to resolve the problem of paying for an overcrowded state penitentiary, officials in Georgia approved the leasing of prisoners to private citizens during reconstruction. Provisional governor Thomas Ruger awarded the first convict lease to William A. Fort of the Georgia and Alabama Railroad on May 11, 1868. Fort was given 100 African American prison laborers for one year at the price of \$2,500. Fort was responsible for taking care of the prisoners' basic needs during the year that they were in his possession. This became known as the convict lease system and became slavery by another name. These workers lived and worked under unspeakable conditions, often worse than during slavery before the Civil War. Many were tortured or died in captivity. It was through the contributions of many forced laborers, America was industrialize. In some communities, black codes and Jim Crow laws were used to keep African Americans from voting as well as a way to keep men in prison for the convict leasing system.

1. Why do you think the convict leasing system was found mainly in the south and why did people like Rebecca Latimer Felton from Georgia fight against it? Think about why is was called slavery by another name by many people.

5. Meat Packing Industry: Read the following excerpt from Upton Sinclair's book *The Jungle* as well as the pictures below to gain an understanding of the meat packing industry. Then compare it to the ads that appeared in local newspapers at the same time.

"There would be meat that had tumbled out on the floor, in the dirt and sawdust, where the workers had trapped and spit uncounted billions of consumption [tuberculosis] germs. There would be meat stored in great piles in rooms;... and thousands of rats would race about on it.... A man could run his hand over these piles of meat and sweep off handfuls of dried dung of rats. These rats were nuisances, and the packers would put poisoned bread out for them; they would die, and then rats, bread, and meat would go into the hoppers together.... There were things that went into the sausage in comparison with which a poisoned rat was a tidbit."
 (Danzer et al. 2002)



Newspaper ads from the same time period:

Libby's
 (Natural Flavor)
Food Products

Winter or Summer—when the snow falls or the sun scorches, you will find no difference in the delicious flavor, wholesome quality, ease of preparation and the general goodness of

Libby's Natural Flavor Food Products

Libby's Ox-Tongues, Pork and Beans, Veal Loaf, Melrose Patt, Cottage Loaf, Concentrated Soups, etc., are all that highest skilled cooking can make them. Sold by grocers everywhere.

Our booklet, "Good Things to Eat," sent free upon request. Send five 2c stamps for Libby's Big Atlas of the World.

Libby, McNeill & Libby
 Chicago

Prepared and Placed by J. Walter Thompson Company.

Libby's

Picnic Basket

Libby's Good Things add to Good Times on every occasion. You can never equal

Libby's Natural Flavor Food Products

for wholesomeness—ease of preparation—delicacy of flavor.

| | | |
|------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Melrose Patt | Ham Loaf | Vienna Sausage |
| Boneless Chicken | Potted Tongue | Lunch Tongues |
| Potted Chicken | Veal Loaf | Cornd Beef Hash |

Your Grocer has them

Our booklet, "Good Things to Eat," sent free upon request. Send five 2c stamps for Libby's Big Atlas of the World.

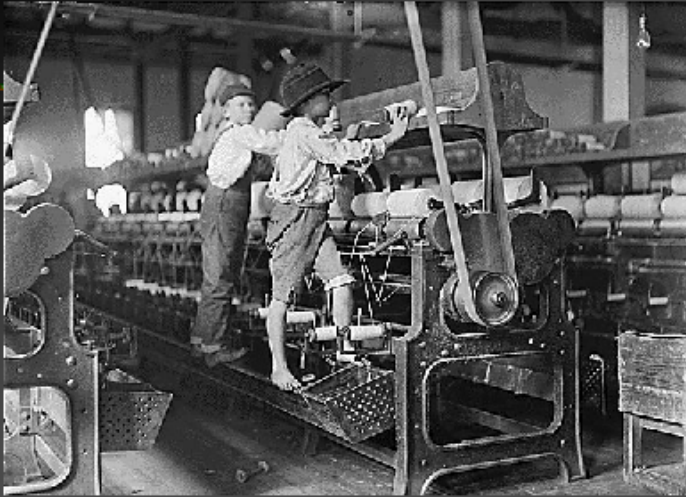
Libby, McNeill & Libby, Chicago

Prepared and Placed by J. Walter Thompson Company.

Answer the following questions: 1. Explain why the ads did not match the writings of Upton Sinclair?
 2. Why did things such as the meat packing industry interest progressives?

6. Child Labor:

Child Labor Photograph from Lewis Hine c. 1908



| Date | Percentage of Children Between the Ages of 10 and 15 Who Worked |
|------|---|
| 1890 | 18.1 |
| 1900 | 18.2 |
| 1910 | 15.0 |
| 1920 | 11.3 |

Use the picture and chart as well as your understanding of the Progressive Movement to answer the questions below

1. Use the photograph to identify two dangers that children faced at work in the cotton mills.

2. How did the percentage of working children between the ages of 10 and 15 change from 1890 to 1920 and why?

In 1916 the Georgia legislature passed a compulsory school attendance law, but enforcement was almost impossible because of the number of exceptions granted. By 1920 Georgia led the nation in the number of employed children aged ten to fifteen.

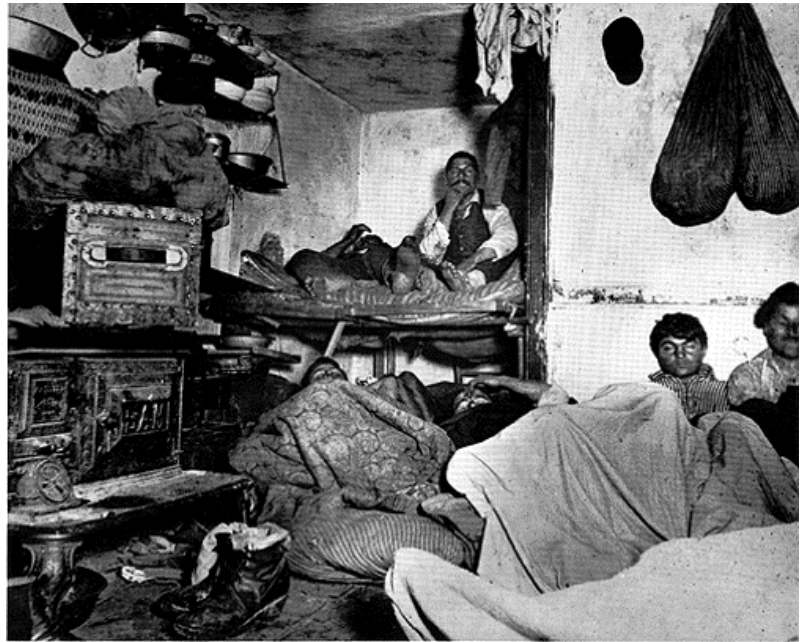
3. What does this say about the leaders as well as families in Georgia that allowed children to work rather than attend school? Compare this time with the time in Georgia when the leadership voted to start the first public college for the common man, UGA.

Challenge Questions: Complete the following to add up to an additional 10 points to this assignment.

Challenge Question #1 Read the following statement and look at the picture “Lodgers in a Bayard Street Tenement” (apartment in New York City) then answer: What problems does Jacob Riis see with life in city tenements? Give details from the reading and picture.

**Excerpt from How the Other Half Lives by
Jacob Riis**

“If we could see the air breathed by these poor creatures in their tenements,” said a well-known physician, “it would show itself to be fouler than the mud of the gutters.” Little improvement was apparent despite all that had been done. “The new tenements, that have been recently built, have been usually as badly planned as the old, with dark and unhealthy rooms, often over wet cellars, where extreme overcrowding is permitted,” was the verdict of one authority.



Challenge Question #2

The preamble of the Federal Constitution says: “We, the people of the United States...” It was we, the people; not we, the white male citizens, nor yet we, the male citizens, but we, the whole people, who formed the Union. And we formed it, not to give the blessings of liberty, but to secure them; not to the half of ourselves and the half of our posterity, but to the whole people women as well as men.

Susan B. Anthony

Answer: What argument was used by Susan B. Anthony to support the demand that women be given the right to vote?

Blue Level Short response:

Many say the progressive movement grew out of social concerns as a result of industrialization. However many of these changes came as a result of women. For example, women’s’ right to vote, prohibition, ban on convict lease system, and finally changes to child labor.

Compare the influence of women back then to women today. Have women influenced society? Were they successful back then and do they influence society today? What are some changes women have made?