



# DBQ: Progressive Era Reforms

## Using Evidence

**Theme:**  
Reforms

**Historical Context:** During the late 1800's and the early 1900's, Progressive Reformers worked to improve American society. Their goals included protecting consumers, regulating child labor, improving working conditions, and expanding democracy

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

### NOTES 4.3: Progressive Era DBQ

**Part A: Short answer questions** - Analyze the documents and answer the short answer questions that follow each document.

#### Document 1

...There were the men in the pickle rooms, for instance, where old Antanas had gotten his death; scare a one of these that had not some spot of horror on his person. Let a man so much as scrape his finger pushing a truck in the pickle rooms, and he might have a sore that would put him out of the world [lead to his death]; all of the joints in his fingers might be eaten by the acid, one by one. Of the butchers and floorsmen, the beef boners and trimmer, and all those who used knives, you could scarcely find a person who had the use of his thumb; time and time again the base of it had been slashed, till it was a mere lump of flesh against which the man pressed the knife to hold it. The hands of these men would be criss-crossed with cuts, until you could no longer pretend to count them or trace them. They would have no nails, - they had worn them off pulling hides; their knuckles were swollen so that their fingers spread out like a fan. There were men who worked in the cooking rooms, in the midst of steam and sickening odors, by artificial light; in these rooms the germs of tuberculosis might live for two years, but the supply was renewed every hour. There were the beef luggers, who carried two hundred pound quarters into the refrigerator cars, a fearful kind of work, that began at four o'clock in the morning, and that wore out the most powerful men in a few years...

Source: Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 1906

1. Based on this document, state **two** effects of poor working conditions in this factory.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Document 2

. . . In just one week a scandalized public had snapped up some 25,000 copies of *The Jungle*. Almost all of those readers missed the socialist message. Sinclair had hoped to draw their attention to “the conditions under which toilers [workers] get their bread.” The public had responded instead to the disclosures about corrupt federal meat inspectors, unsanitary slaughterhouses, tubercular cattle, and the packers’ unscrupulous [unethical] business practices. One of the most outraged readers was President Theodore Roosevelt. Few politicians have ever been as well-informed as Roosevelt, who devoured books at over 1,500 words per minute, published works of history, and corresponded regularly with leading business, academic, and public figures. Roosevelt recognized immediately that the public would expect government at some level—local, state, or federal—to clean up the meat industry. He invited Sinclair for a talk at the White House, and though he dismissed the writer’s “pathetic belief” in socialism, he promised that “the specific evils you point out shall, if their existence be proved, and if I have the power, be eradicated [eliminated].” Roosevelt kept his promise. With the help of allies in Congress, he quickly brought out a new bill, along with the proverbial [well-known] big stick. Only four months later, on June 30, he signed into law a Meat Inspection Act that banned the packers from using any unhealthy dyes, chemical preservatives, or adulterants. The bill provided \$3 million toward a new, tougher inspection system, where government inspectors could be on hand day or night to condemn animals unfit for human consumption. Senator Albert Beveridge of Indiana, Roosevelt’s progressive ally in Congress, gave the president credit for the new bill. “It is chiefly to him that we owe the fact that we will get as excellent a bill as we will have,” he told reporters. Once again, Americans could put canned meats and sausages on the dinner table and eat happily ever after. Or so it would seem. . . .

Source: James Davidson and Mark Lytle, *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection*, Alfred A. Knopf

2a. What **caused** President Roosevelt to sign into law the Meat Inspection Act?

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2b. According to this document, what was one **effect** of the Meat Inspection Act?

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## Document 3a

. . . During the same winter of 1890 three boys from a Hull-House club were injured at one machine in a neighboring factory for lack of a guard which would have cost but a few dollars. When the injury of

one of these boys resulted in his death, we felt quite sure that the owners of the factory would share our horror and remorse, and that they would do everything possible to prevent the recurrence of such a tragedy. To our surprise they did nothing whatever, and I made my first acquaintance then with those pathetic documents signed by the parents of working children, that they will make no claim for damages resulting from "carelessness." The visits we made in the neighborhood constantly discovered women sewing upon sweatshop work, and often they were assisted by incredibly small children. I remember a little girl of four who pulled out basting threads hour after hour, sitting on a stool at the feet of her Bohemian mother, a little bunch of human misery. But even for that there was no legal redress [remedy], for the only child-labor law in Illinois, with any provision for enforcement, had been secured [achieved] by the coal miners' unions, and was confined to children employed in mines. . . . There was at that time no statistical information on Chicago industrial conditions, and Mrs. Florence Kelley, an early resident of Hull-House, suggested to the Illinois State Bureau of Labor that they investigate the sweating system [sweatshops] in Chicago with its attendant [use of] child labor. The head of the Bureau adopted this suggestion and engaged Mrs. Kelley to make the investigation...

Source: Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull-House with Autobiographical Notes*, MacMillan, 1912

3a. Based on this document, identify **one** social problem Jane Addams wanted to reform.

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**Document 3b**

**First Factory Law of Illinois**

**FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS**

. . . 4. Children under 14 years of age prohibited from being employed in any manufacturing establishment, factory or work shop in the state. Register of children under 16 years shall be kept. The employment of children between ages of 14 and 16 years prohibited unless an affidavit by the parent or guardian shall first be filed in which shall be stated the age date and place of birth. Certificates of physical health may be demanded by the inspectors. . . .

Source: "Factories and Workshops", *Laws of the State of Illinois*, Thirty-Eighth General Assembly, 1893

3b. Based on this document, state **one** provision of the Illinois factory law.

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Document 4

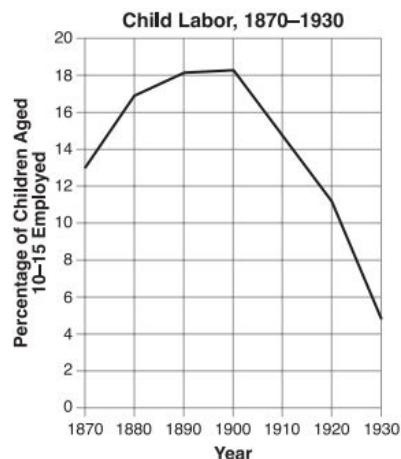
State Actions Affecting Working Conditions	
1911	Recommendations of Illinois Commission on Occupational Disease (1909) result in Illinois Occupational Disease Act (ventilation, sanitation, fumes, temperature)
1911	Wisconsin becomes first state to pass workman's compensation legislation
1911	Wisconsin legislature limits hours of labor for women and children
1911–1915	Recommendations of New York State Factory Investigating Commission result in dozens of new laws creating healthier and safer factory working conditions during New York's "golden era in remedial factory legislation"
1912	New York State Factory Investigating Commission requires automatic sprinklers for all floors above seventh floor of buildings; broadens regulation and inspection of workplace safety (fire escapes, safe gas jets, fireproof receptacles, escape routes, fire drills)
1912	Massachusetts passes first state minimum wage law
1913	Oregon law requires payment of overtime for workers in mills or factories (over ten hours a day)

4. Based on this document, identify **two** examples of how a state action resulted in the improvement of working conditions.

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Document 5



Source: United States Bureau of the Census (adapted)

5. What part did the Keating Owen Act (1916), National Child Labor Committee (1907), and Jane Addams play in advocating for the changes reflected by the graph above? \*\*Feel free to look up!

a. Keating Owen Act:

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b. National Child Labor Committee:

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c. Jane Addams:

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## Document 6a

### Bosses of the Senate



Source: Joseph J. Keppler, *Puck*, 1889 (adapted)

## Document 6b

“...The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, elected by the people thereof, for six years; and each Senator shall have one vote. The electors in each State shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the State legislatures...

Source: 17th Amendment, Section 1, 1913

6a. State **one** way the 17th amendment addressed the concern expressed in the cartoon.

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6b. How does document 6a & 6b represent an example of the progressive era notion of *direct democracy*?

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## Document 7

. . . Indeed, the growth of fundamental democracy in this country is astonishing. Thirty years ago the secret ballot was regarded as a passing craze by professional politicians. Twenty years ago it was a vital issue in nearly every American state. To-day the secret ballot is universal in American politics. Ten years ago the direct primary was the subject of an academic discussion in the University of Michigan by a young man named La Follette of Wisconsin. Now it is in active operation in over two-thirds of our American states, and over half of the American people use the direct primary as a weapon of self-government. Five years ago the recall was a piece of freak legislation in Oregon. To-day more American citizens are living under laws giving them the power of recall than were living under the secret ballot when [President] Garfield came to the White House, and many times more people have the power to recall certain public officers today than had the advantages of the direct primary form of party nominations when [President] Theodore Roosevelt came to Washington. The referendum is only five years behind the primary. Prophecy with these facts before one becomes something more than a rash guess. [With these facts in mind, predicting the future becomes something more than rash guessing.] . . .

Source: William Allen White, *The Old Order Changeth*, Macmillan, 1910

7. According to William Allen White, what were **two reforms** the Progressives supported to expand democracy?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

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b. \_\_\_\_\_

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### Document 8

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Source: 19th Amendment of the US Constitution 1919

8. How does the 19th amendment represent an example of the progressive era reformers goal of expanding democracy?

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### Part B REFLECTION:

1) Based on the documents, what were 3 goals of the Progressive era?

a) Goal #1:

b) Goal #2:

c) Goal #3:

2) For each goal you listed above, what were the conditions that led Progressive reformers to address this goal?

a) Goal #1:

b) Goal #2:

c) Goal #3:

3) For each goal listed, discuss the extent to which the goal was achieved.

**a) Goal #1:**

**b) Goal #2:**

**c) Goal #3:**