

# The Progressive Era: The Era that Fixed the Corruption of the Gilded Age

## Background on the Progressive Era

The growth of industry after the Civil War changed American society. Immigrants crowded the cities seeking jobs. They often encountered poor working conditions, political corruption, and overcrowding. In the late 1800s and early 1900s reformers (*changing*) called Progressives began to address these and other problems in society.

The Progressive Era spanned about two decades (*over 20 years*) and it was characterized by social, political, and economic changes.

### Questions

1. What did immigrants often encounter once they moved to urban (*city*) areas?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What is a reformer? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many decades did the Progressive Era span over? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What was it characterized by?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Muckrakers

With the expansion of cities, newspapers, and magazines, writers were about to reach a larger audience. Investigative reporters who exposed the abuses of industrial society and the corruption of the government were called muckrakers. They got their name because they raked up the "muck" or dirt of American life. They examined poor business practices.

### Questions

1. How were writers able to reach a larger audience?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What did muckrakers expose?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. How did they get their name?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Famous Muckrakers

### Jacob Riis

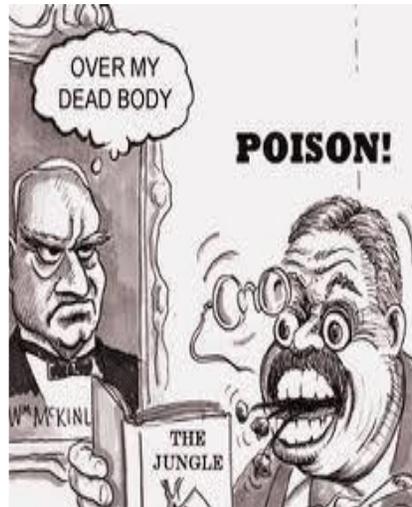
- Photographed conditions of the urban poor

### Ida Tarbell

- Showed John D. Rockefeller's ruthless business tactics

### Upton Sinclair

- Wrote *The Jungle* which exposed the meatpacking industry



## Achievements of Ida B. Wells



## ACTING AS AN AMAETUR HISTORIAN

Upton Sinclair's book *The Jungle* portrayed the new industrial economy as inhumane, destructive and uncaring.

"The meat would be shoveled into carts, and the man who did the shoveling would not be troubled to lift out a rat even when he saw one—there were things that went into the sausage in comparison with which a poisoned rat was a tidbit. There was no place for men to wash their hands before they ate their dinner, and so they made a practice of washing them in the water that was to be ladled with the sausage."

1. If you were living in the early 1900's and read this about how your meat was produced, how would you react? Why?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Jane Addams

Progressives were so shaken by abuses of industrial society that some even made individual efforts at social reforms. Jane Addams developed a settlement house that volunteers lived at to support immigrants. The main purpose was to help assimilate immigrants and allow them to have contact with a better class of Americans.

### Questions

1. What did Jane Addams develop?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What was the main purpose of the Settlement House?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Ida B. Wells

Another leading voice was Ida B. Wells, who was an advocate for anti-lynching (*murder by hanging*) and equality. Wells organized a national anti-lynching crusade.

### Questions

1. What two things was Ida B. Wells an advocate for?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The achievements illustrate Ida B. Well's contributions as –

- A. A religious leader
- B. An artist of the Harlem Renaissance
- C. A supporter of Prohibition
- D. An advocate of equality

### Booker T. Washington

Booker T. Washington was a prominent African American leader who argued that African Americans should seek gradual equality and focus on job training. He also wanted African Americans to use **vocational** skills (*skills using your hands*). Washington thought change would come eventually and that African Americans should start at the bottom and work their way up.

#### Questions

1. What did Booker T. Washington argue?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What kind of skills did he want African Americans to focus on?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Did he think change would happen overnight?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### W.E.B DuBois

W.E.B DuBois was one of the founders of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People). This was an early civil rights group for African Americans. W.E.B DuBois disagreed with Washington and was in favor of immediate racial equality. He thought Washington was not forceful enough in his goals.

#### Questions

1. What did W.E.B DuBois form? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What was it? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Why did he disagree with Booker T. Washington?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Theodore Roosevelt

Theodore Roosevelt took steps to stop anti-trust corporations (referred to as "The Trust Buster"). Alongside him, Progressives wanted people to have a **direct** voice in government. Initiative, Referendum, and Recall were created to end corruption and make **state government more directly accountable to the people**. These reforms sought to raise the level of public participation and give a more direct voice ins state government.

#### Questions

1. Who was the president that tried to stop anti-trust corporations?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What did Progressives want to give people?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What did initiative, referendum, and recall do?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What did reforms try to give people?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Multiple Choice Questions

1. Which of these was a major goal of Jane Addams's Settlement House movement?
  - A. The founding of women's colleges
  - B. The introduction of prison reform
  - C. The assimilation of immigrants
  - D. The establishment of public libraries
2. How did the publication of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* contribute to a change in the relationship between government and business?
  - A. Federal troops were mobilized to break strikes by labor unions
  - B. Government regulations requiring the inspection of food products were implemented
  - C. Congress created a regulatory agency to audit railroads
  - D. Laws were enacted that banned private companies from discriminating when hiring

The opponents of . . . recall, however they may phrase their opposition, in reality believe the people can not be trusted. On the other hand, those of us who espouse these measures do so because of our deep-rooted belief in popular government, and not only in the right of the people to govern, but in their ability to govern; and this leads us logically to the belief that if the people have the right, the ability, and the intelligence to elect, they have as well the right, ability, and intelligence to reject or to recall. . . .

— California governor Hiram Johnson, inaugural address, 1911

3. The reform discussed by Governor Johnson in this excerpt -
  - A. Required elected officials to communicate with the public
  - B. Provided citizens with more resources to run for office
  - C. Made elected officials more directly accountable to their constituents
  - D. Created new eligibility requirements for candidates for public office

### Theodore Roosevelt as a "Trust Buster"

Roosevelt was suspicious of big business. He revived the use of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act against big businesses, known as trusts. He opposed unfair, anti-competitive practices. Roosevelt tried to stop these practices.



Who is standing on top of the bear?

What does it say on the bears back?

Name one big business from the Gilded Age:  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Sherman Anti-Trust Act/Interstate Commerce Act

The Sherman Anti-Trust Act was formed to dissolve (*get rid of*) monopolies. This would make sure that there would be no unfair business practices. The Interstate Commerce Act was formed to regulate railroad rates (so that Rockefeller/others couldn't abuse them anymore).



