

Progressive Era DBQ

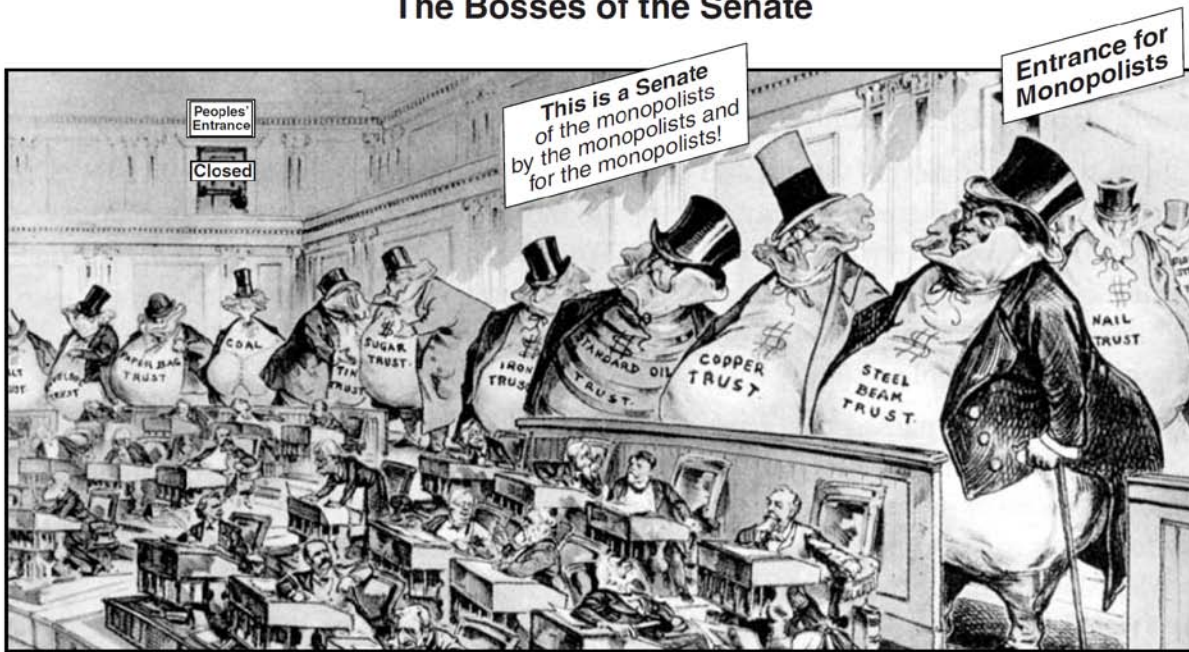
Historical Context: *During the late 1800s and early 1900s, Progressive reformers worked to improve the social, political, and economic problems in American society.*

Task: *Using information from the documents and you knowledge of United States history and government complete the following tasks:*

- Discuss three specific problems or injustices that were present in American life during the 1800s and early 1900s.
- Explain how reforms proposed during the Progressive Era attempted to address these problems.

- **Address all aspects of the task**
- **Support the theme with relevant facts, examples, and details.**
- **Use a logical and clear plan of organization.**
- **Introduce the theme by establishing a framework that is beyond a simple restatement of the task and conclude with a summation of the theme.**
- **Your essay must include an outline**
- **Please underline, highlight or use different color ink for outside information**

The Bosses of the Senate



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

1a. What are *two* political problems identified by Joseph J. Keppler in this cartoon?

Source 1b

... 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. . . .
— 17th Amendment, Section 1, 1913

1b. State *two* ways the 17th amendment addressed the concern expressed in the cartoon.

**People's Party [Populist] Platform
(Omaha Platform)
July 4, 1892**

. . . The conditions which surround us best justify our co-operation; we meet in the midst of a nation brought to the verge of moral, political, and material ruin. Corruption dominates the ballot-box, the Legislatures, the Congress, and touches even the ermine [robes] of the bench. The people are demoralized; most of the States have been compelled to isolate the voters at the polling places to prevent universal intimidation and bribery. The newspapers are largely subsidized or muzzled, public opinion silenced; business prostrated [crushed], homes covered with mortgages, labor impoverished, and the land concentrating in the hands of the capitalists. The urban workmen are denied the right to organize for self-protection, imported pauperized labor beats down their wages, a hireling standing army, unrecognized by our laws, is established to shoot them down, and they are rapidly degenerating into European conditions. The fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up the fortunes for a few, unprecedented in the history of mankind; and the possessors of these, in turn, despise the Republic and endanger liberty. From the same prolific womb of governmental injustice we breed the two great classes — tramps and millionaires. . . .

Source: National Economist, Washington, D.C., 1892

2. According to this political party platform, what were *five specific* problems that led to the formation of the Populist Party?

Source 3a

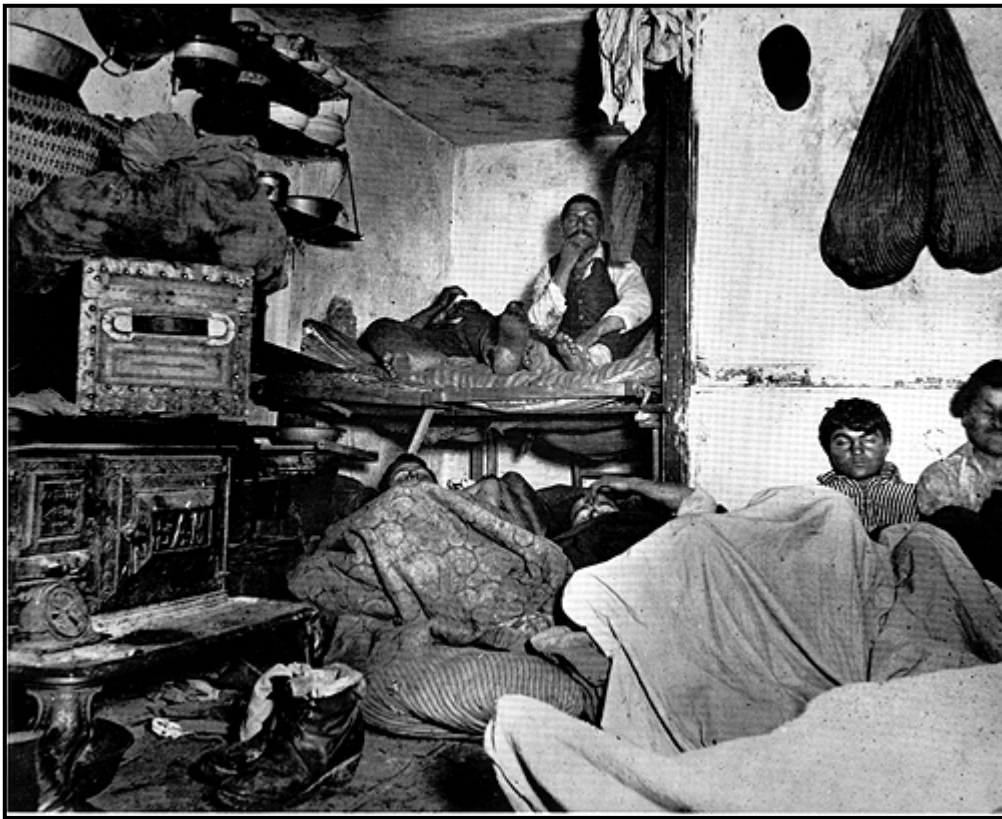


Photo by Jacob Riis, 1890

Source 3b

. . .Be a little careful, please. The hall is dark and you might stumble over the children pitching pennies back there. Not that it would hurt them: kicks and cuffs are their daily diet. They have little else . . . All the fresh air enters these stairs is from the hall-door that is forever slamming. . . Here is a door. Listen! That short, hacking cough, that tiny helpless wail – what do they mean? . . . The child is dying with measles. With half a chance it might have lived: but it had none. That dark bedroom killed it . . .

Source: Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890

3. Based on these documents, state *two* problems faced by cities in the United States in the late 1800s.

b. Identify one reform that was proposed by Progressives to improve this situation.

Source 4

. . . the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.

Source: United States Constitution, 18th Amendment, Section 1, 1919

4. Based on this document, state *two* ways reformers tried to stop the sale of intoxicating liquors in the United States.

Source 5

. . . There were the men in the pickle rooms, for instance, where old Antanas had gotten his death; scarce 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 the joints in his fingers might be eaten by the acid, one by one. Of the butchers and floorsmen, the beef boners and trimmers, 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 to 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 *three* effects of poor working conditions in this factory.

Source 6

. . . 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 slaughter houses, 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 TR, 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

2. According to this document, what action did President Theodore Roosevelt take to keep his promise to Upton Sinclair?

Source 7

. . . During the same winter 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. When the report was presented to the Illinois Legislature, a special committee was appointed to look into the Chicago conditions. I well recall that on the Sunday the members of this commission came to dine at Hull-House, our hopes ran high, and we believed that at last some of the worst ills under which our neighbors were suffering would be brought to an end. . . .

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

7. Based on this document, identify *two* social problems Jane Addams wanted to reform.

Source 8

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)

8. Based on this document, identify *two* examples of how a state's actions resulted in the improvement of working conditions.

Source 9

. . . 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

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

Source 10

. . . Women compose one-half of the human race. In the last forty years, women in gradually increasing numbers have been compelled to leave the home and enter the factory and workshop.

Over seven million women are so employed and the remainder of the sex are employed largely in domestic services. A full half of the work of the world is done by women. A careful study of the matter has demonstrated the vital fact that these working women receive a smaller wage for equal work than men do and that the smaller wage and harder conditions imposed on the woman worker are due to the lack of the ballot. . . .

The great doctrine of the American Republic that “*all governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed*,” justifies the plea of one-half of the people, the women, to exercise the suffrage. The doctrine of the American Revolutionary War that taxation without representation is unendurable [intolerable], justifies women in exercising the suffrage. One great advantage, however, of the suffrage is in raising women to a position of greater honor and dignity so that the children of the land shall show and feel greater reverence and honor for their mothers, and that the mothers may teach the elementary principles of good government while they are teaching them good manners, morality and religion. . . .

Source: Senator Robert Owen, Speech, 1910

10. Based on this document, state *two* reasons for giving women the right to vote.
