SUCCESS ACADEMY EDUCATION INSTITUTE

Extra, Extra!: The Progressive Era

1890–1925

Year 2
History Unit 6
Sourcebook

Lesson 1:
Individuals and the Progressive Era

Suffragists parade down New York City's Fifth Avenue, 1917 (Wikimedia)

How did individuals challenge societal ills during the Progressive Era?

The Progressive Era

The following text was adapted from the essays "The Politics of Reform" by historian Julie Des Jardins and "The Square Deal" by historian Kirsten Swinth, published by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

At the turn of the 20th century, there was a renewed impulse toward social and political reform. In the early 19th century, white, Protestant, middle-class Americans organized to improve the lives of the urban poor. After the Civil War, industrialization, urbanization, and immigration intensified the inequalities across the nation. The only solution appeared to be the legislating of social justice, the curbing of political corruption, and the regulating of corporations.

The ideologies of the Progressive movement were very diverse. Activists were religious Christians, socialists, or, in the case of Emma Goldman, even **anarchists** [*activists who believed in the destruction of government*]. Populists fought for social justice in rural America, while urban reformers focused their efforts on improving the living and working conditions of the urban poor. Some reformers believed in the superiority of the white race, while others fought for racial equality. Some favored the vote for women, while others thought it harmful to American society. For all their differences in politics and outlook, Progressives distrusted the corporate monopolies and political interests that had come to power, and wanted to keep their ability to exploit and dominate the rest of society in check.

Recognizing the social ills that came with growing disparities of wealth in the industrial world, Progressives approached the variety of problems with a wide range of solutions. Some tried to clean up city streets or build parks and playgrounds for the urban poor. Jacob Riis, a pioneer of photojournalism, compiled photographic images of New York City's slums in *How the Other Half Lives* to expose these social problems.

There was popular support for regulation and reform because in these years, investigative journalists, often referred to as muckrakers, exposed corruption and exploitation at every turn. They went undercover as industrial workers or government employees. Lincoln Steffens, for instance, exposed city government corruption in a column in *McClure's Magazine* titled "Shame of the Cities." Upton Sinclair's novel *The Jungle* provoked so much public outrage about the quality of processed meat that Roosevelt saw to the passing of the Pure Food and Drug Act in 1906.

Women were significantly involved in the social and political reform of this period too. Muckraker Ida Tarbell helped Steffens along, Ida B. Wells exposed the horrors of lynching in the South, and Sinclair's efforts were supported by the research of social scientist Florence Kelley. Union leader Mother Jones was arrested in her efforts for industrial laborers, and settlement workers such as Jane Addams worked in immigrant neighborhoods to teach practical skills and offer health clinics and recreational activities.

The movement that attracted the most women was the Temperance movement. Temperance was yet another way for women to protect children and family values. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) was the most successful national temperance organization in the 20th century, though women had campaigned against the evils of alcohol for decades.

Many temperance activists joined the fight for women's suffrage. Elizabeth Cady Stanton began the movement at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, but only after the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) was organized in 1890 and under the leadership of Carrie Chapman Catt did political parties begin to consider the vote for women.

Progressive reform's greatest failure was its participation in the legal and violent disenfranchisement of African Americans. Most Progressive reformers failed to join African American leaders in their fight against lynching. Many endorsed efforts by southern Progressives to enact literacy tests for voting and other laws in the name of good government that effectively denied black Americans the right to vote and reinforced Jim Crow segregation. By 1920, all southern states and nine states outside the South had enacted such laws.

Des Jardins, Julie, The Politics of Reform. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History)
Kirsten, Swinth. The Square Deal: Theodore Roosevelt and the Themes of Progressive Reform. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History)

Group 1: Frances Willard
Document A
The Temperance Movement

Read the section "Women's Christian Temperance Union" on the PBS Roots of Prohibition website.

Document B
Frances Willard: Women's Christian Temperance Union

The temperance movement, which gained traction in the mid–19th century, set the tone for the reform efforts of the Progressive Era. The following text was excerpted from an address delivered by Frances Willard, head of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), at the 20th Annual Conference of the WCTU in 1893.

The "Do Everything Policy" was not of our choosing but is an evolution as inevitable as any traced by the naturalist or described by the historian. Woman's genius for details, and her patient **steadfastness** [*firmness*] in following the enemies of those she loves "through every lane of life," have led her to **antagonize** [*struggle against*] the alcohol habit and the liquor traffic just where they are, wherever that may be. If she does this, since they are everywhere, her policy will be "Do Everything."

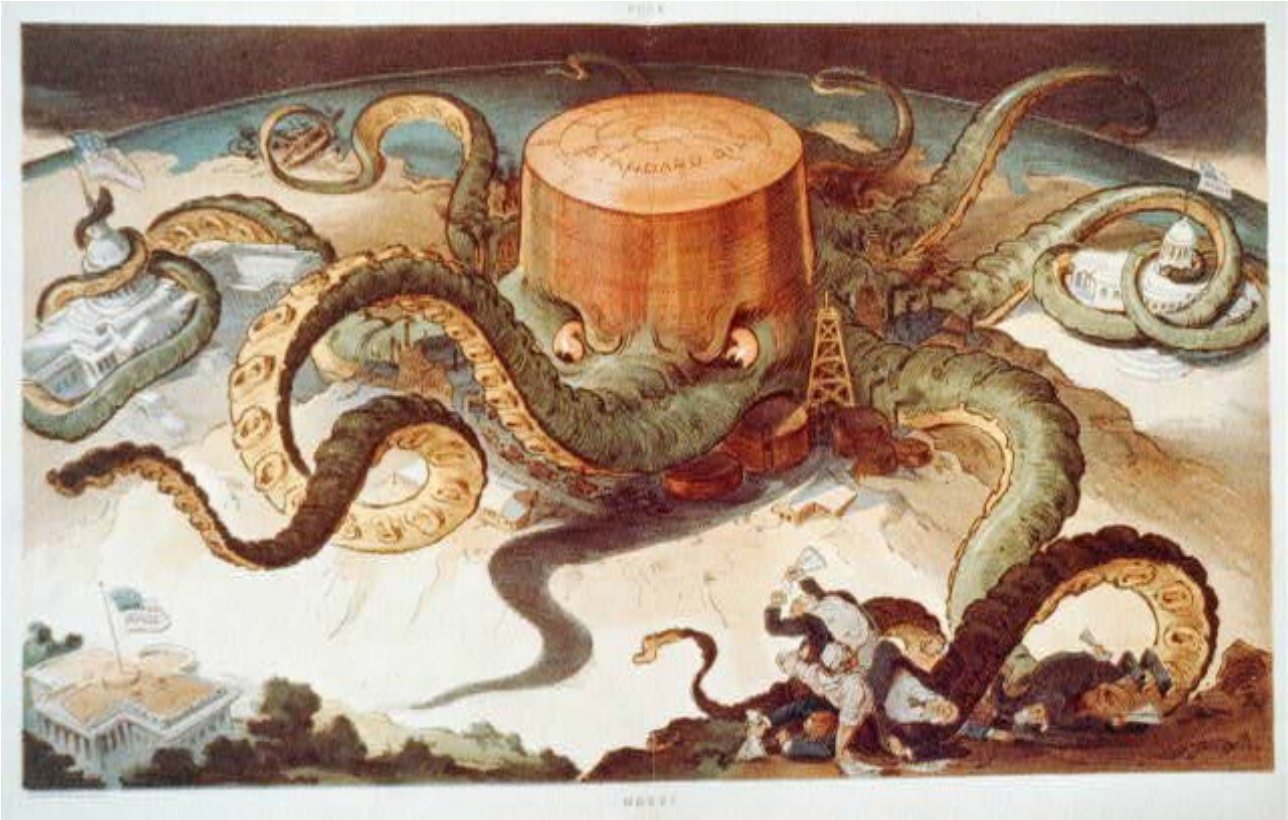
Everything is not in the Temperance Reform, but the Temperance Reform should be in everything . . . . Every question of practical philanthropy or reform has its temperance aspect, and with that we are to deal . . . .

A Bill has been for many years before Congress for the appointment of a commission on the investigation of the liquor traffic . . . . The vast importance of this measure is demonstrated by the ceaseless efforts of the whiskey power to defeat its passage, in which they have thus far been successful, and are likely to be for many years to come. The power of the saloon is nowhere more **conspicuously** [*noticeably*] clear than in the annual defeat of this great measure . . . . If Congress persists in its refusal, why shall not the WCTU make a sweeping and thorough investigation of the liquor traffic?

Courtesy of Library of Congress.

Group 2: Ida Tarbell
Document A
Antitrust Muckrakers

Many muckrakers attempted to expose the harmful effects of large trusts on small businesses. Ida Tarbell was one of the most famous antitrust muckrakers. Tarbell, whose family had suffered financially as a result of John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil trust, set out to investigate Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company. In 1902, as a journalist for McClure's Magazine *— a magazine that became famous for its muckraker journalism — Tarbell first published what became a series of installments exposing the Standard Oil Company's trusts. Her critique attempted to convince the public that monopolies and trusts were having a dangerous impact on American society.*



"Next!" (1904) represents Standard Oil as an octopus, wrapping its tentacles around the United States Capitol, a "State House," and the White House. Muckraker political cartoonists played an important role alongside the journalists. Cartoons like this helped inspire reformers to limit corporations' control over American politics and society. (Library of Congress)

Document B
The History of the Standard Oil Company

John Rockefeller wanted to establish ***vertical control*** *[*control of all aspects of making and selling a product — for example, the mining, refining, and shipping processes*] of the oil industry. In 1871, the Pennsylvania Railroad set up the South Improvement Company. This was a corporate scheme intended to benefit the railroads and Standard Oil, which gave each other special, secret deals, and promised to work exclusively with each other, hurting the business of competing companies. In the excerpt below, muckraker Ida Tarbell describes these practices and how they affected other businesses in* The History of the Standard Oil Company, *published in 1904.*

By January 18, the president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, J. Edgar Thompson, had put his signature to the contract. Soon after Mr. Vanderbilt and Mr. Clark signed for the Central system, and Jay Gould and General McClellan signed for the Erie. The contracts to which these gentlemen put their names fixed rates of freight for crude oil to all the great refining and shipping centers — New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and Cleveland. For example, the standard rate on shipping crude oil to New York was $2.56. On this price the South Improvement Company was given a refund of $1.06 for its shipments; it was also given in cash a similar amount for each barrel of crude oil shipped by companies not in the agreement. Similar deals were given for all points — Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Boston, and Baltimore . . . .

The advantages received by the railroad were a regular amount of freight — the Pennsylvania was to have 45 percent of the Eastbound shipments, the Erie and Central each 27.5 percent [of shipments], while West-bound freight was to be divided between them . . . .

There were at that time about 26 refineries in the town — some of them very large plants. All of them were feeling more or less the discouraging effects of the last three or four years of railroad discriminations in favour of the Standard Oil Company.

To the owners of these refineries, Mr. Rockefeller went one by one and explained the South Improvement Company. “This scheme is bound to work. It means an absolute control by us of the oil business. There is no chance for anyone outside. But we are going to give everybody a chance to come in. You are to turn over your refinery to me, and I will give you Standard Oil Company stock or cash, for the value we put upon it . . . .” Certain refiners objected . . . . They did want to keep and manage their business . . . . [Yet] it was useless to resist, he told the hesitating; they would certainly be crushed if they did not accept his offer, and he pointed out in detail how **beneficent** [*kind*] the scheme really was … ending competition, keeping up the price of refined oil, and eliminating speculation. Really a wonderful plan for the good of the oil business.

Tarbell, Ida, The History of the Standard Oil Company. 1904. Courtesy of Internet Archives, Archive.org.

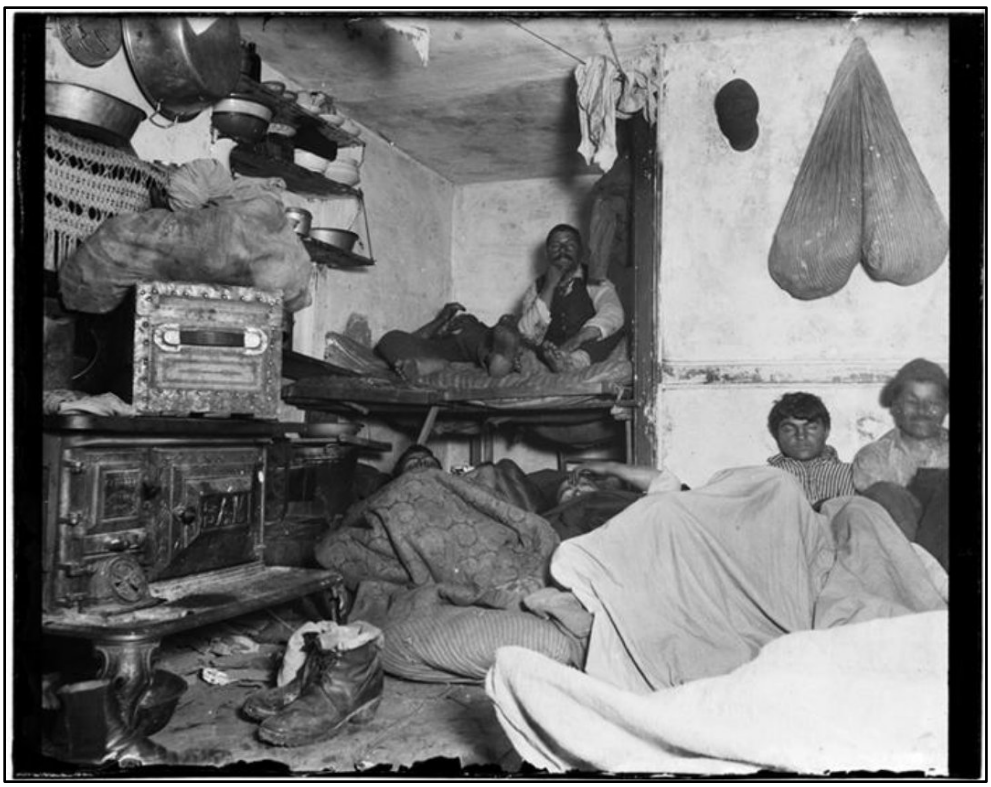
Group 3: Jacob Riis
Document A
Jacob Riis's Photographs

Photographic journalist Jacob Riis published a book of photographs, How the Other Half Lives*, in 1890 to illustrate the dangerous and inhumane living conditions of poor immigrants in New York City. Riis used flash photography, a relatively new invention at the time, to vividly illustrate the tenements and slums for his readers. Riis also wrote glum, harsh accounts of New York's slums, horrifying New York's middle and upper classes. Below are photographs from* How the Other Half Lives.

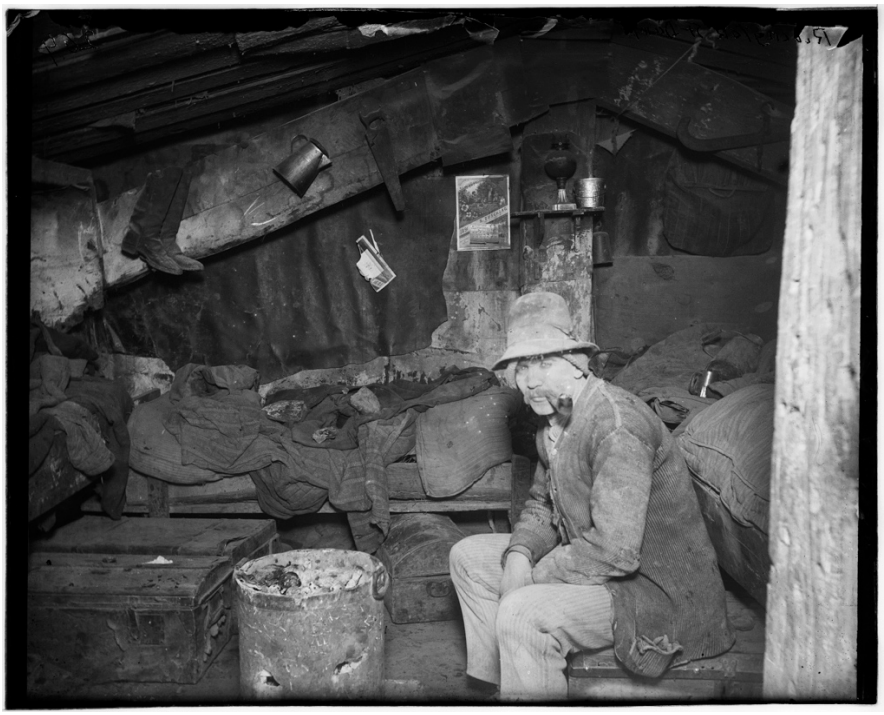
New York slum district, ca. 1890 (Jacob A. (Jacob August) Riis (1849-1914) / Museum of the City of New York. 90.13.4.102)

A boy in a glass factory, ca. 1890 (Lewis Wickes Hine (1874-1940) for Jacob A. (Jacob August) Riis (1849-1914) / Museum of the City of New York. 90.13.3.185)

Mulberry Street, 1888 (Flickr)



Lodgers crowded in a Bayard Street tenement, 1889 (Flickr)



Man in his tenement living quarters, 1892 (Jacob A. (Jacob August) Riis (1849-1914) / Museum of the City of New York. 90.13.1.208)

Girl and a baby on a doorstep, 1890 (Jacob A. (Jacob August) Riis (1849-1914) / Museum of the City of New York. 90.13.1.43)

Blind beggar, 1890 (Collins for Jacob A. (Jacob August) Riis (1849-1914) / Museum of the City of New York. 2008.1.4)

A typical tenement, 1890 (Jessie Tarbox Beals for Jacob A. (Jacob August) Riis (1849-1914) / Museum of the City of New York. 90.13.3.125)

Bohemian cigar makers at work in their tenement, 1890 (Flickr)

Document B
How the Other Half Lives

Below is an excerpt from Jacob Riis's How the Other Half Lives, *written in 1890.*

Poverty always goes along with dirt and disease, and Jewtown is no exception. The diseases these people suffer from are not due to **intemperance** [*lack of moderation*] or immorality, but to ignorance, lack of suitable food, and the foul air in which they live and work. The homes of the Hebrew quarter are its workshops also. Every member of the family, from the youngest to the oldest, works, shut in the stuffy rooms, where meals are cooked and clothing washed and dried besides, all day long. It is not unusual to find a dozen persons — men, women, and children — at work in a single small room. It has happened more than once that a child recovering from small-pox, and in the most contagious stage of the disease, has been found crawling among heaps of half-finished clothing that the next day would be offered for sale on the counter of a Broadway store . . . .

What, then, are the bald facts with which we have to deal in New York? I. That we have a tremendous, ever swelling crowd of wage-earners which it is our business to house decently. II. That it is not housed decently. III. That it must be so housed here for the present, and for a long time to come . . . . IV. That it pays high enough rents to entitle it to be so housed, as a right. V. That nothing but our own laziness is in the way of so housing it . . . . VI. That the security of the one no less than of the other half demands, on sanitary, moral, and economic grounds, that it be decently housed. VII. That it will pay to do it. As an investment, I mean, and in hard cash. This I shall immediately proceed to prove . . . .

Riis, Jacob. How the Other Half Lives. 1890. Courtesy of University of Washington.

Group 4: Jane Addams
Document A
Jane Addams: "Immigrants and Their Children"

Jane Addams, known as the mother of social work, founded the Hull House in Chicago in 1889. Hull House served as a settlement house, sheltering immigrants and helping them integrate into and adjust to American life. Addams's Hull House and immigrant work sparked the Progressive Era's later reform efforts for the urban poor and immigrant laborers. The following is an excerpt from Jane Addams's book Twenty Years at Hull-House *(1910). This passage comes from a chapter called "Immigrants and Their Children."*

An Italian girl who has had lessons in cooking will help her mother to connect the entire family with American food and household habits. That the mother has never baked bread in Italy — only mixed it in her own house and then taken it out to the village oven — makes all the more valuable her daughter's understanding of the complicated cooking stove. The same thing is true of the girl who learns to sew, and more than anything else, perhaps, of the girl who receives the first simple instruction in the care of little children — that skillful care which every tenement-house baby requires if he is to live through his second summer . . . . Through civic instruction in the public schools, the Italian woman slowly becomes urbanized … and the habits of her entire family were modified. The public schools in the immigrant neighborhoods deserve all the praise as Americanizing agencies.

Addams, Jane. Twenty Years at Hull-House. 1910. Courtesy of Stanford History Education Group.

Document B
Hilda Satt Polacheck: *The Story of a Hull-House Girl*

The following is an excerpt from Hilda Satt Polacheck's book I Came a Stranger: The Story of a Hull-House Girl*, written in 1953 about her experiences at Hull House in 1896.*

Several days before Christmas 1896 one of my Irish playmates suggested that I go with her to a Christmas party at Hull-House . . . . I asked her if there would be any Jewish children at the party. She said that there were Jewish children at the parties every year and that no one was ever hurt . . . . The thought began to **percolate** [*develop*] that things might be different in America. In Poland it had not been safe for Jewish children to be on the streets on Christmas . . . .

At the party, the children of the Hull-House Music School sang some songs, that I later found out were called "Christmas carols." I shall never forget the … sweetness of those childish voices. All feelings of religious intolerance and **bigotry** [*prejudice*] faded. I could not connect this beautiful party with any hatred or superstition that existed among the people of Poland.

As I look back, I know that I became an American at this party. I was with children who had been brought here from all over the world. The fathers and mothers, like my father and mother, had come in search of a free and happy life. And we were all having a good time at a party, as the guests of an American, Jane Addams.

Polacheck, Hilda Satt. I Came a Stranger: The Story of a Hull-House Girl. 1953. Courtesy of Stanford History Education Group.

Group 5: Lincoln Steffens
Document A
The Shame of the Cities

Muckraker Lincoln Steffens hoped to expose political corruption in cities. In his book The Shame of the Cities*, published in 1904, he hoped to expose the relationship between corrupt political machines and wealthy businessmen who supported them. Below is an excerpt from Steffens's book.*

The typical American citizen is a businessman. The spirit of business is profit, not patriotism; individual gain, not national prosperity.

"My business is sacred," says the businessman in his heart. "Whatever helps my business, is good; it must be. Whatever hurts it, is wrong; it must be. A bribe is bad, that is, it is a bad thing to take; but it is not so bad to give one, not if it is necessary to my business . . . ."

We are responsible, not our leaders, since we follow them. We let them divert our loyalty from the United States to some "party"; we let them boss the party and turn our democracies into **autocracies** [*dictatorships*]. We cheat our government and we let our leaders **loot** [*steal from*] it, and we let them bribe our **sovereignty** [*independence*] from us. We are content to let them pass bad laws, giving away public property in exchange for money.

Steffens, Lincoln. The Shame of the Cities. 1904. Stanford History Education Group.

Document B
"Tweed Days in St. Louis"

Journalist Lincoln Steffens published the following article, "Tweed Days in St. Louis," in 1902. In it he describes the political corruption in the city.

The corruption of St. Louis came from the top . . . .

Public spirit became private spirit, public business became private greed. Around about 1890, public **franchises** [*licenses*] and privileges were sought not only for legitimate profit and common convenience, but for **loot** [*stealing*]. Taking but slight and always selfish interest in the public councils, the big men misused politics. The riff-raff, catching the smell of corruption, rushed into the Municipal Assembly, drove out the remaining respectable men, and sold the city — its streets, its **wharves** [*docks*], its markets, and all that it had — to the now greedy businessmen and bribers. In other words, when the leading men began to devour their own city, the herd rushed into the trough and fed also . . . .

From the Assembly, bribery spread into other departments. Men empowered to issue peddler's licenses and permits to citizens who wished to erect awnings or use a portion of the sidewalk for storage purposes charged an amount in excess of the prices stipulated by law, and pocketed the difference. The city's money was loaned at interest, and the interest was converted into private bank accounts. City carriages were used by the wives and children of city officials. Supplies for public institutions found their way to private tables; one itemized account of food furnished to the poorhouse included California jellies, imported cheeses, and French wines! A member of the Assembly caused the incorporation of a grocery company, with his sons and daughters the stockholders, and succeeded in having his bid for city supplies accepted although the cost for his goods was in excess of his competitors'! In return for the favor, he supported a measure to award the contract for city printing to another member, and these two voted "yes" on a bill granting to a third person the exclusive right to furnish city **dispensaries** [*medical clinics*] with medicine.

[New York] cannot catch the Tammany [Hall political machine] men, and [St. Louis] will not be able … to break the St. Louis ring. But, for the rest of us, it does not matter about St. Louis . . . . The point is that what went on in St. Louis is going on in most of our cities, towns, and villages. The problem of city government in America has not been solved. The people may be tired of it, but they cannot give it up — not yet.

Steffens, Lincoln. Tweed Days in St. Louis. 1902. Courtesy of The UNZ Review UNZ.org.

Group 6: Upton Sinclair
Document A
"*The Jungle* and the Progressive Era"

*The following text was adapted from the essay "*The Jungle *and the Progressive Era" by historian Robert Cherny, published by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.*

The publication of Upton Sinclair's 1906 novel *The Jungle* produced an immediate and powerful effect on Americans and on federal policy, but Sinclair had hoped to achieve a very different result. In 1904, the leading socialist weekly in the country, the *Appeal to Reason,* offered Sinclair $500 (equivalent to about $11,500 in 2008) to prepare an **exposé** [research *article exposing something*] on the meatpacking industry. Upon arriving in his hotel in Chicago, Sinclair is said to have announced, "I am Upton Sinclair, and I have come to write the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of the labor movement." For seven weeks, he prowled the streets of Packingtown, the residential district next to the stockyards and packing plants. He posed as a worker and slipped into the packing plants to gain firsthand knowledge of the work.

The book he produced, *The Jungle,* followed a fictional family of Lithuanian immigrants in Chicago. From an opening chapter that recounts the joyous wedding of the main character, Jurgis Rudkus, Sinclair traced the family's experience with work in Packingtown. In the process, he exposed in disgusting detail the inner workings of the meatpacking industry.

Sinclair described the afflictions of packinghouse workers, from severed fingers to **tuberculosis** [*lung disease*] and blood poisoning. He wrote of men who "fell into the vats; and when they were fished out, there was never enough left of them to be worth exhibiting — sometimes they would be overlooked for days, till all but the bones of them had gone out to the world as **Durham's Pure Leaf Lard** [*meat product from meatpacking plants sold to the public*]!" And he told of scheming real-estate salesmen and crooked politicians.

In late February 1905, the *Appeal to Reason* began to publish Sinclair's work as a serial, one chapter per week, and the paper's sales boomed to 175,000 per issue. Between April and October, the complete version also appeared in four installments in a small socialist quarterly magazine called *One-Hoss Philosophy.*

Doubleday Publishers offered to publish *The Jungle* as a stand-alone book as long as they could verify the truth of Sinclair's descriptions of the packing plants. Things were as bad as Sinclair had reported, maybe worse. The book was released on January 25, 1906, and created an international sensation, selling 25,000 copies in six weeks. It has never been out of print and was made into a movie in 1913.

Cherny, Robert, The Jungle and the Progressive Era. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History)

Document B
Upton Sinclair: *The Jungle*

Below is an excerpt from Upton Sinclair's The Jungle, *detailing the horrors of Chicago's meatpacking industry.*

It was only when the whole ham was spoiled that it came into the department of Elzbieta [a main character from *The Jungle*]. Cut up by the two-thousand-revolutions-a-minute flyers, and mixed with half a ton of other meat, no odor that ever was in a ham could make any difference. There was never the least attention paid to what was cut up for sausage; there would come all the way back from Europe old sausage that had been rejected, and that was mouldy and white — it would be … dumped into the **hoppers** [*meat-processing machines*], and made over again for home consumption. There would be meat that had tumbled out on the floor, in the dirt and sawdust, where the workers had tramped and spit uncounted billions of consumption germs. There would be meat stored in great piles in rooms; and the water from leaky roofs would drip over it, and thousands of rats would race about on it. It was too dark in these storage places to see well, but a man could run his hand over these piles of meat and sweep off handfuls of the dried rats' poop. 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. The meat would be shovelled into carts, and the man who did the shovelling would not trouble 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** [*small piece of food*].

Workers in a meatpacking factory (Library of Congress)

Sinclair, Upton. The Jungle. Courtesy of Encyclopedia.com.

Lesson 2:
Suffrage and Anti-Suffrage

Annie Kenney and Christabel Pankhurst, leaders of the WSPU in the United Kingdom, 1908 (Wikimedia)

Why did Americans disagree on women's suffrage?

Homework
Women's Suffrage

Read the section "The Struggle for Women's Suffrage" in the article "Overview of the Progressive Era" on the University of Houston Digital History website. Then, read the articles "Failure Is Impossible," "The Drive for the Vote Begins," "The Movement Splits," "The First Breakthroughs," "New Arguments and New Constituencies," and "Opponents of Suffrage," all on the University of Houston Digital History website.

Document A
Women's Rights and the Constitution

In the following excerpt, the National Woman Suffrage and Educational Committee discusses women's suffrage and the rights of the Constitution in 1871, encouraging all women to support the cause for equal rights.

You [women] are taxed without representation, tried by a jury not of your peers, punished by judges and officers not of your choice, bound by laws you have had no voice in making, many of which are especially burdensome upon you as women; in short, your rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are daily limited, simply because you have always been denied the right to vote, the one weapon of protection and defense in a republican form of government . . . .

The full rights of citizenship … [should be] provided for by the original Constitution, and by the recent amendments [14th and 15th amendments] you [should be] recognized as citizens of the United States, whose rights, including the fundamental right to vote, may not be denied by the United States, nor by any State . . . .

Courtesy of Library of Congress.

Document B
Elizabeth Cady Stanton: Address to the House Committee

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, one of the major leaders of the suffrage movement, made the following address to the House Committee on the Judiciary during a hearing of the Woman Suffrage Association on January 18, 1892.

In discussing the rights of woman, we are to consider, first, what belongs to her as an individual, in a world of her own, the [controller] of her own destiny . . . . Secondly, if we consider her as a citizen, as a member of a great nation, she must have the same rights as all other members, according to the fundamental principles of our Government. Thirdly, viewed as a woman, an equal factor in civilization, her rights are still the same: happiness and development . . . .

The strongest reason for giving women all the opportunities for higher education, for the full development of her **faculties** [*abilities*], forces of mind and body; for giving her the most enlarged freedom of thought and action; a complete **emancipation** [*freedom*] from all forms of bondage, of custom, dependence, superstition; from all the crippling influences of fear, is the solitude and personal responsibility of her own individual life . . . .

Stanton, Elizabeth Cady. January 18, 1892. Courtesy of Hanover College History Department,History.Hanover.edu.

Document C
Molly Elliot Seawell: Anti-Suffragist

Not everyone agreed that women's suffrage was right; many men and women disagreed with the movement and tried to stop the passage of a women's suffrage amendment. The following is an excerpt from Molly Elliot Seawell, an anti-suffragist from Virginia who published an anti-suffrage book, The Ladies' Battle*, in 1911.*

It has often been pointed out that women should not pass laws on matters of war and peace, since no woman can do military duty. But this point applies to other issues, too.

No woman can have any practical knowledge of shipping and navigation, of the work of trainmen on railways, of mining, or of many other subjects of the highest importance. Their legislation, therefore, would not be intelligent, and the laws they devised to help sailors, trainmen, miners, etc., might be highly offensive to the very people they tried to help.

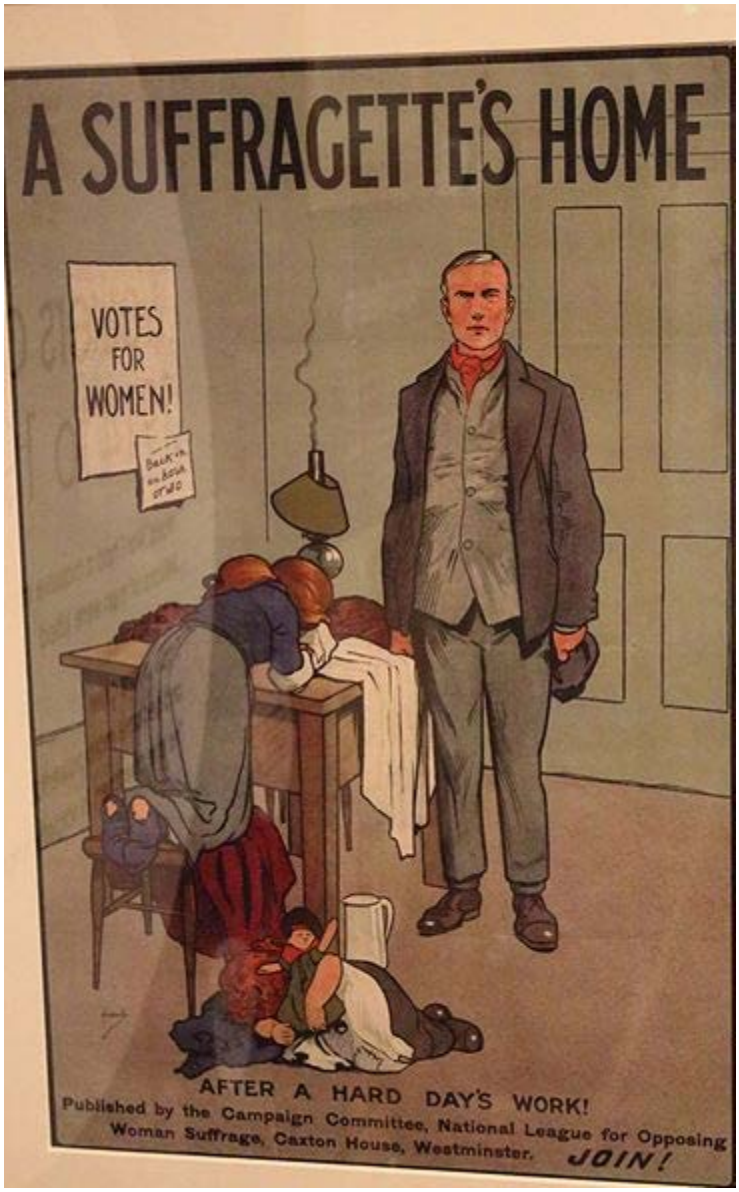
If sailors and miners refused to obey the laws, who would have to enforce them? The men! The entire execution of the law would be in the hands of men, backed up by irresponsible voters (women) who could not lift a finger to catch or punish a criminal. And if all the dangers and difficulties of executing the law lay upon men, what right have women to make the law?

Also, there seems to be a close relationship between suffrage and divorce. Political differences in families, between brothers, for example, who vote on differing sides, do not promote harmony. How much more **inharmonious** [*conflicting*] must be political differences between a husband and wife, each of whom has a vote which may be used as a weapon against the other? What is likely to be the state of that family, when the husband votes one ticket, and the wife votes another?

Seawell, Molly Elliot. The Ladies' Battle. 1911. Courtesy of Stanford History Education Group.

Document D
"A Suffragette's Home"

Some Americans believed a woman could not fulfill her role as a mother and wife while also engaging in politics. As a result, anti-suffrage groups circulated images like this to fight suffrage. The following poster was published by the National Committee for Opposing Woman Suffrage in 1912.



(Wikimedia)

Lesson 3: The Jim Crow South

"Negro drinking at 'Colored' watercooler in streetcar terminal," Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, by Russell Lee, 1939 (Library of Congress)

How did *Plessy v. Ferguson* and Jim Crow promote a culture of white supremacy in the United States?

Homework
The Jim Crow South

*Read the articles "Jim Crow Segregation: The Difficult and Anti-Democratic Work of White Supremacy" on the National History Education Clearinghouse Teachinghistory.org website and "*Plessy *v.* Ferguson*" on the PBS The Rise and Fall* of Jim Crow *website.*

***Plessy* v. *Ferguson*, Dissent**

Justice John Marshall Harlan, a Southern former slave owner, issued the court's only dissent in the Plessy v. Ferguson *case. Harlan argued against the court's assertion that the Louisiana law discriminated equally against both blacks and whites. Below is an excerpt from Harlan's dissent.*

It was said in argument that the **statute** [*law*] of Louisiana does not discriminate against either race, but **prescribes** [*establishes*] a rule applicable alike to white and colored citizens . . . . Everyone knows that the statute in question had its origin, not so much to exclude white persons from railroad cars occupied by blacks, as to exclude colored people from coaches occupied by or assigned to white persons . . . .

… The white race deems itself to be the dominant race in this country. And so it is, in prestige, in achievements, in education, in wealth, and in power. So, I doubt not, it will continue to be for all time . . . . But in view of the constitution, in the eye of the law, there is in this country no superior, dominant, ruling class of citizens . . . . In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law . . . .

In my opinion, the judgment this day rendered will, in time, prove to be quite as **pernicious** [*harmful*] as the decision made by this tribunal in the Dred Scott Case . . . .

If evils will result from the **commingling** [*interaction*] of the two races upon public highways established for the benefit of all, they will be infinitely less than those that will surely come from state legislation regulating the **enjoyment** [*possession*] of civil rights upon the basis of race. We boast of the freedom enjoyed by our people above all other peoples. But it is difficult to reconcile that boast with a state of the law which, practically, puts the **brand** [*label*] of servitude and degradation upon a large class of our fellow citizens, our equals before the law. The thin disguise of "equal" accommodations for passengers in railroad coaches will not mislead anyone, nor atone for the wrong this day done.

Harlan, John Marshall. Courtesy of OurDocuments.gov.

Station 1: Lynching and Racial Violence
Lynching in the United States

Examine the image "Map of 73 Years of Lynchings" on the New York Times *website and watch the video "The Origins of Lynching Culture in the United States" on the Facing History and Ourselves website.*

Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases

Journalist Ida B. Wells investigated the stories of lynchings in the South and published her findings in a series of pamphlets, Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases, *between 1892 and 1894. Below is an excerpt from one of her pamphlets.*

A house was found burned down near Montgomery, Ala., in Monroe County; also the burned bodies of the owners and melted piles of gold and silver . . . . The suggestion of the whites was that as there are nearly 200 Negroes living within five miles of the place, thus some of them must have been the perpetrators.

Upon this "suggestion" probably made by the real criminal, the mob acted upon the "conclusion" and arrested ten Afro-Americans, four of whom, they tell the world, confessed to the deed of murdering Richard L. Johnson and outraging his daughter, Jeanette. These four men were taken from jail, hanged, shot, and burned while yet alive . . . .

Wells, Ida B., Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases. 1892-1894. Courtesy of Gutenberg Project, Gutenberg.org.

Station 2: Voter Disenfranchisement
Louisiana State Constitution

After Reconstruction, many voting restrictions were adopted in the South to halt the vote of freedmen. One restriction aimed specifically at African Americans was the "Grandfather Clause," which allowed men to register to vote only if they could have voted in 1867 (before African Americans were allowed to vote in the South) or descended from someone who could vote in 1867. The following excerpt of Article 197 from the Louisiana law of 1898 was typical of many such restrictions. These restrictions reduced overall voting levels by more than a third and black voting rates by almost two-thirds.

Section 3

The elector shall be able to read and write, and shall demonstrate his ability to do so when he applies for registration, by making, under oath in the English language, or his mother tongue, an application containing the essential facts necessary to show that he is entitled to register and vote, entirely written, dated and signed by him, in the presence of the registration officer or his deputy, without any assistance . . . .

Section 4

If he be not able to read and write … then he shall be entitled to register and vote if he shall, at the time he offers to register, be the true owner of property [worth at least] three hundred dollars … and on which … all taxes due shall have been paid . . . .

Section 5

No male person entitled to vote under the Constitution or statutes of any State of the United States where he resided on January 1st, 1867, or at any date prior, shall be denied the right to register to vote based on his failure to possess the educational or property qualifications required by this Constitution. Nor shall any son or grandson of any such person older than twenty-one years of age at the date of the adoption of this Constitution, nor male person of foreign birth, who was naturalized prior to the first day of January 1898, be denied for these reasons . . . .

1898. Courtesy of History Matters, George Mason University, HistoryMatters.GMU.edu.

Literacy Tests

Literacy tests were another common form of voter disenfranchisement. Although in theory these laws applied to anyone who was illiterate, literacy tests were often only given to African American voters.

In this political cartoon from 1879, a white Southerner writes, in almost indecipherable English, "Education Qualification. The black man ought to be educated so that he can vote with us whites. Mr. Solid South." (Library of Congress)

Station 3: Segregation
Frederick Douglass: "The Race Problem"

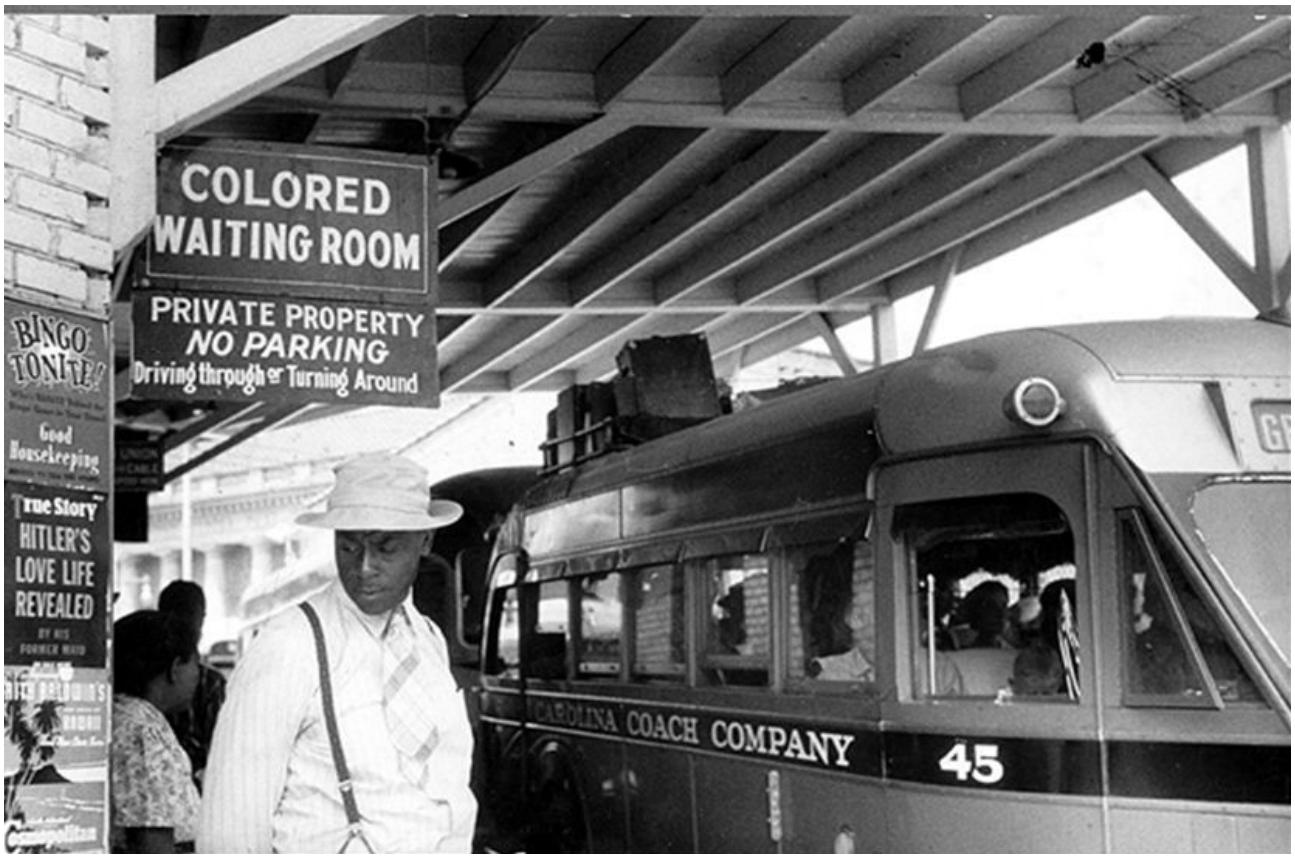
Frederick Douglass delivered his speech "The Race Problem" in 1890 at the Metropolitan A.M.E. Church in Washington, D.C.

The true problem is not the negro, but the nation. Not the **law-abiding** [*law-following*] blacks of the South, but the white men of [the South], who use fraud, violence, and persecution to break the law, **trample on** [*disrespect*] the Constitution, corrupt the ballot-box, and defeat the goals of justice. The true problem is whether these white **ruffians** [*villains*] shall be allowed by the nation to go on in their lawless actions, dishonoring the Government . . . . The United States Government made the negro a citizen, will it protect him as a citizen? This is the problem. It made him a soldier, will it honor him as a patriot? This is the problem. It made him a voter, will it defend his right to vote? This is the problem. This, I say, is more a problem for the nation than for the negro.

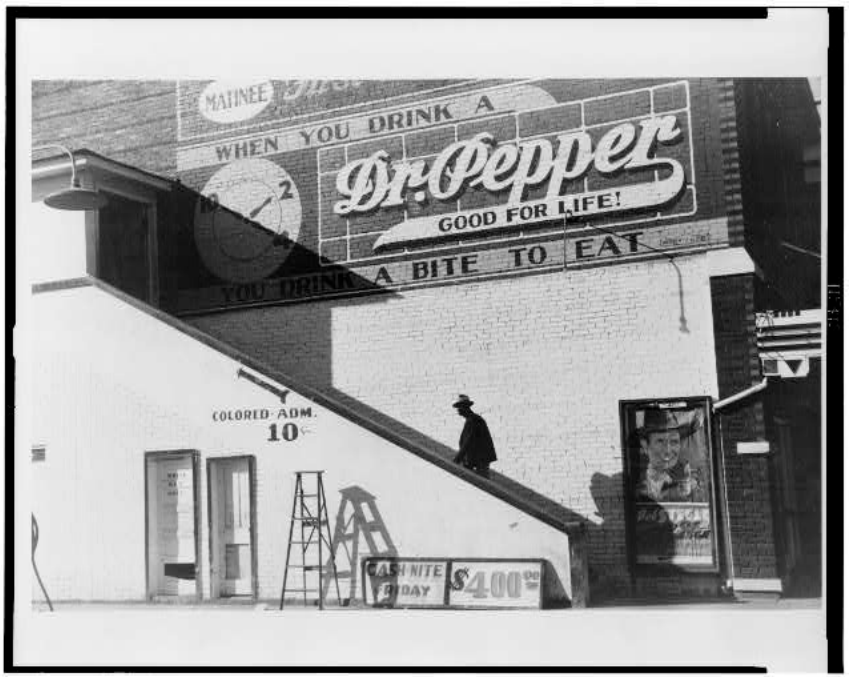
Douglass, Frederick, The Race Problem. 1890. Courtesy of National Humanities Center, NationalHumanitiesCenter.org.

Segregation

The Court's decision in Plessy *v.* Ferguson *ushered in an era of legally sanctioned racial segregation.*



A segregated waiting area at a Southern train station, May, 1940 (Library of Congress)



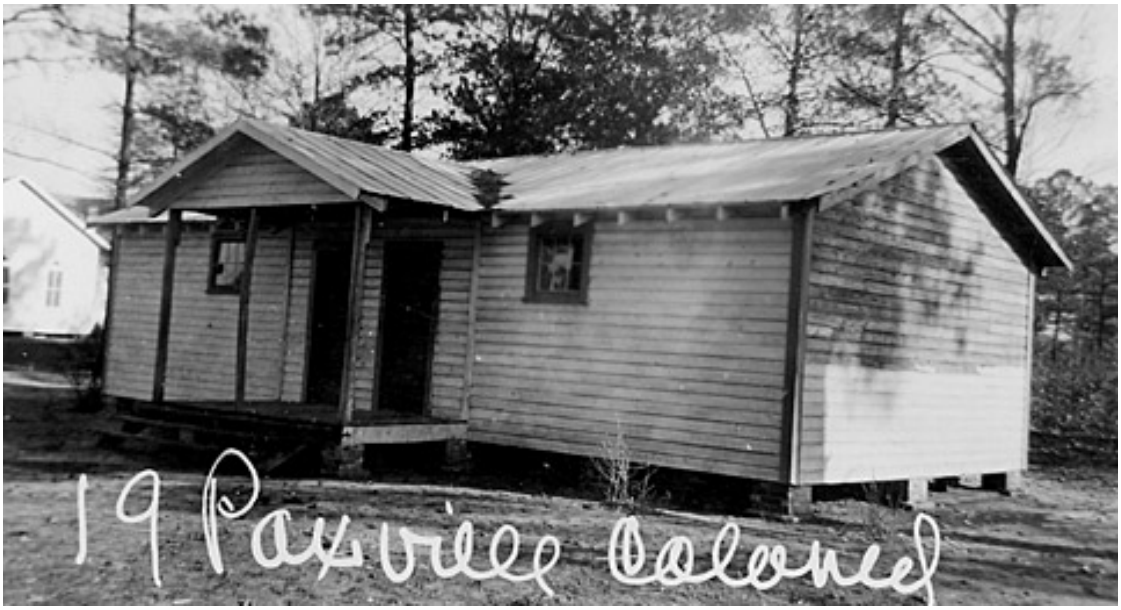
Man going to the "colored" entrance of a movie theater, 1939 (Library of Congress)

A segregated movie theater in Leland, Mississippi, June 1937 (Library of Congress)

Cafés and restaurants in the South had designated "white" and "colored" entrances and sections to separate white and African American customers, May, 1940. (Library of Congress)

Colored vs. White Schools

The Plessy *v.* Ferguson *decision had an especially profound impact on schools. While schools for white children often received significant funding, new books, and quality buildings, schools for African American children often received little money, second- and third-hand school materials, and decrepit buildings. The images below illustrate this discrepancy in schooling.*



"Colored" and "white" schools in Paxville, South Carolina. In some Southern states, white schools received two to three times more money per student than did black schools. Black taxpayers in several states not only bore the entire cost of their own schools but helped support white schools as well. (Library of Congress)

Station 4: A Story of Segregation
A Journey Southward

Charles Chesnutt, an African American author, wrote his novel A Journey Southward *based on his own observations traveling in the South in 1901. The following excerpt is from the chapter called* "The Marrow of Tradition." *We enter the scene as two doctors — Dr. Burns, a white doctor, and Dr. Miller, an African American doctor — are seated together on a train.*

"Excuse me, sir," said the conductor, addressing Dr. Burns, "but did I understand you to say that this man was your servant?"

"No, indeed!" replied Dr. Burns indignantly. "The gentleman is not my servant, nor anybody's servant, but is my friend . . . ."

"This is a day coach, and is distinctly marked 'White,' as you must have seen before you sat down here . . . . The law gives me the right to remove him by force. . . . ."

"You shall not go alone," said Dr. Burns stoutly, rising in his turn. "A place that is too good for you is not good enough for me. I will sit wherever you do."

"I'm sorry again," said the conductor … "I dislike to interfere, but white passengers are not permitted to ride in the colored car."

The colored doctor took up his suitcase and crossed the platform to the car ahead. It was an old car, with faded upholstery, from which the stuffing projected here and there through torn places. Apparently the floor had not been swept for several days. The dust lay thick upon the window sills, and the watercooler, from which he tried to get a drink, was filled with stale water. Having composed himself, Miller had opened a newspaper … when the rear door of the car opened to give entrance to Captain George McBane, who took a seat near the door and lit a cigar . . . .

"Porter," he demanded of the colored train attendant who passed through the car a moment later, "is this a smoking car for white men?"

"No, suh," replied the porter . . . .

"Well, I have paid first-class fare, and I object to that man's smoking in here. You tell him to go out."

"I'll tell the conductor, suh," returned the porter in a low tone. "I'd jus' as soon talk ter the devil as ter that man." The white man had spread himself over two seats, and was smoking vigorously, from time to time spitting carelessly in the aisle, when the conductor entered the compartment.

"Conductor," said Miller, "this car is plainly marked 'Colored.' I have paid first-class fare, and I object to riding in a smoking car."

"All right," returned the conductor, frowning irritably. "I'll speak to him." He walked over to the white passenger, with whom he was evidently acquainted, since he addressed him by name. "Captain McBane," he said, "it's against the law for you to ride in the nigger car."

"Who are you talkin' to?" returned the other. "I'll ride where I damn please."

"Yes, sir, but the colored passenger objects. I'm afraid I'll have to ask you to go into the smoking car."

"The hell you say!" replied McBane. "I'll leave this car when I get good and ready, and that won't be till I've finished this cigar. See?" He was as good as his word. … Finally McBane, having thrown the

stump of his cigar into the aisle and added to the floor a finishing touch in the way of **expectoration** [*spitting*], rose and went back into the white car.

Chesnutt, Charles. A Journey Southward. Courtesy of National Humanities Center, NationalHumanitiesCenter.org.

Lessons 4–5:
Standing Up to Discrimination

Photograph of W.E.B. Du Bois by C. M. Battey, 1918 (Library of Congress)

How did African Americans challenge Jim Crow and segregation?

Homework
African American Response to Jim Crow

Read the article "Building the Black Community: The Church" on the University of Houston Digital History website and the articles "Ida B. Wells," "W.E.B. Du Bois," and "Booker T. Washington" on the PBS The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow *website.*

Document A
Ida B. Wells: "Lynch Law in America"

Muckraker and civil rights activist Ida B. Wells dedicated her life to exposing and fighting against lynching in the United States. Many people justified lynching as "deserved killings," even though almost none of the victims had been tried for their crimes. The following is an excerpt from Wells's speech "Lynch Law in America," which she gave in 1900.

Our country's national crime is lynching. It is not the creature of an hour, the sudden outburst of uncontrolled fury, or the unspeakable brutality of an insane mob. It represents the cool, calculating deliberation of intelligent people who openly [swear] that there is an "unwritten law" that justifies them in putting human beings to death without complaint under oath, without trial by jury, without opportunity to make defense, and without right of appeal . . . .

Negroes were killed for disputing over terms of contracts with their employers. If a few barns were burned, some colored man was killed to stop it. If a colored man **resented** [*disliked*] the **imposition** [*forcing*] of a white man and the two came to blows, the colored man had to die, either at the hands of the white man then and there or later at the hands of a mob that speedily gathered. If he showed a spirit of courageous manhood, he was hanged for his pains . . . . In fact, for all kinds of offenses — and, for no offenses — from murders to misdemeanors, men and women are put to death without judge or jury . . . .

In many cases there has been open expression that the fate of the victim was only what he deserved . . . . No matter that our laws presume every man innocent until he is proved guilty; no matter that it leaves a certain class of individuals completely at the mercy of another class.

Wells, Ida B. Lynch Law in America. 1900. Courtesy of BlackPast.org.

Document B
Booker T. Washington: "Atlanta Compromise"

Booker T. Washington was born a slave in 1856 and was nine years old when slavery ended. He became the principal of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, a school designed to teach industrial skills to black Americans. Washington was a skillful politician and speaker, and he won the support of whites in both the North and the South. Those supporters donated money to the school. On September 18, 1895, Booker T. Washington gave a speech known as the "Atlanta Compromise" before a mostly white audience in Atlanta.

Ignorant and inexperienced, it is not strange that in the first years of our freedom we began at the top instead of at the bottom; that a seat in Congress or the state legislature was more attractive than starting a dairy farm or garden.

A ship lost at sea for many days passed a friendly ship and sent out a signal, "Water, water; we die of thirst!" The answer from the friendly ship at once came back, "Cast down your bucket where you are." A second time the signal, "Water, water; send us water!" ran up from the distressed ship, and was answered, "Cast down your bucket where you are . . . ." The captain of the distressed **vessel** [*ship*], at last **heeding** [*listening to*] the **injunction** [*order*], cast down his bucket, and it came up full of fresh, sparkling water.

To those of my race I would say: "Cast down your bucket where you are" — cast it down in making friends with the Southern white man, who is your next-door neighbor. Cast it down in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service . . . . No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem. It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top.

To those of the white race who look to foreign immigrants for the prosperity of the South, I would repeat what I say to my own race, "Cast down your bucket where you are." Cast it down among the eight millions of Negroes, whose **fidelity** [*loyalty*] and love you have tested . . . . As we have proved our loyalty to you in the past … so in the future, in our humble way, we shall stand by you with a devotion that no foreigner can approach . . . . In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress.

Washington, Booker T. Atlanta Compromise. 1856. Courtesy of Stanford History Education Group.

Document C
W.E.B. Du Bois: *The Souls of Black Folk*

The most influential public critique of Booker T. Washington came in 1903 when black leader and intellectual W.E.B. Du Bois published the essay excerpted below in his book The Souls of Black Folk*. Du Bois rejected Washington's message and instead called for political power, insistence on civil rights, and the higher education of African American youth. Du Bois was born and raised a free man in Massachusetts and was the first African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard.*

The most striking thing in the history of the American Negro since 1876 is the rise of Mr. Booker T. Washington. His leadership began at the time when Civil War memories and ideals were rapidly passing; a day of astonishing commercial development was dawning; a sense of doubt and hesitation overtook the freedmen's sons.

Mr. Washington came at the psychological moment when whites were a little ashamed of having paid so much attention to Negroes [during Reconstruction], and were concentrating their energy on dollars. Mr. Washington practically accepts the alleged inferiority of the Negro races. Mr. Washington withdraws many of the high demands of Negroes as men and American citizens. He asks that black people give up, at least for the present, three things —

First, political power; Second, insistence on civil rights; Third, higher education of Negro youth — and concentrate all their energies on industrial education, the accumulation of wealth, and the **pacifying** [*calming down*] of the South. As a result of this **tender of the palm-branch** [*peace offering*], what has been the return? In these years there have occurred:

1. The **disfranchisement** [*taking away the right to vote*] of the Negro; 2. The legal creation of a distinct status of civil inferiority for the Negro; 3. The steady withdrawal of aid from institutions for the higher training of the Negro.

Mr. Washington's doctrine has tended to make the whites, North and South, shift the burden of the Negro problem to the Negro's shoulders and stand aside as critical **spectators** [*onlookers*]; when in fact the burden belongs to the nation, and the hands of none of us are clean if we do not all work on righting these great wrongs.

Du Bois, W.E.B., The Souls of Black Folk. 1903. Stanford History Education Group.

Lesson 6:
The Revival of the KKK

A still from Birth of a Nation*, 1915 (Wikimedia)*

Why did the KKK regain prominence at the end of the Progressive Era?

Homework
"When Bigotry Paraded Through the Streets"

Read the article "When Bigotry Paraded Through the Streets" by historian Joshua Rothman on the Atlantic *website.*

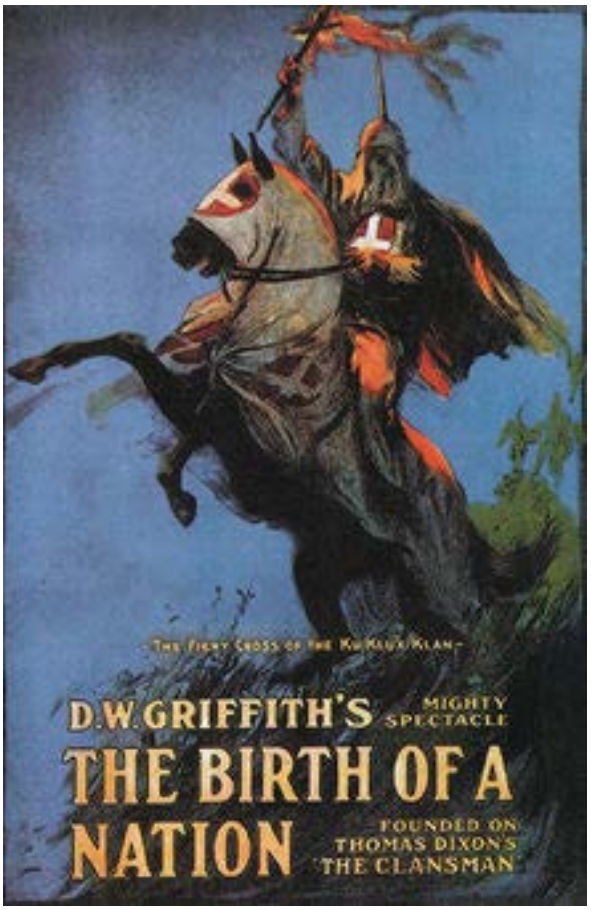
Ku Klux Klan members hold a march in Washington, D.C., on August 9, 1925. (Library of Congress)

Document A
Birth of a Nation

Birth of a Nation *is a 1915 epic American silent film that shows the origins of the Civil War through Redemption. The film, although in many ways a major cinematic triumph, controversially retells the story of the Civil War. In* Birth of a Nation*, slaves are happy to be slaves, the Northerners are aggressive and ruthless, freed men are lustful and immoral, and the KKK is heroic and righteous. The story was based on the Dunning School of history's version of Reconstruction, in which the South was a victim of the aggressions of the North and African Americans were unworthy of true freedom. This history was so popular that President Woodrow Wilson attended a screening of* Birth of a Nation *in the White House.*

Birth of a Nation *used "blackface" to depict the African Americans in the film: White actors put black paint on their faces and bodies to portray the African American characters. This tradition developed in the 1850s in "minstrel" shows, in which white actors would portray dumb, complacent slaves for popular entertainment. Although minstrel shows had become less popular by the 20th century, discriminatory hiring practices in entertainment combined with racist tradition encouraged the continuation of blackface, as seen in the film.*

On YouTube, watch the scene from Birth of a Nation *where Gus, an African American, is about to be "put to trial" by the KKK for the rape of a white woman.*



A movie poster for Birth of a Nation*, 1915 (Wikimedia)*

Document B
Madison Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race*, 1916

Madison Grant's The Passing of the Great Race *is known today as the "Manifesto of Scientific Racism." Madison Grant was a lawyer and amateur anthropologist. He was also a eugenicist, which meant he tried to use "science" to justify the superiority of the "Nordic" race and the scientific inferiority of the other races, most notably the African race. His book was the foundation for the formation of the second KKK.*

*Note: The text below is **extremely** racist and is only included to demonstrate the point of view of many Americans during this time period.*

There exists to-day a widespread belief in the power of environment, as well as of education and opportunity to alter heredity . . . . It has taken us fifty years to learn that speaking English, wearing good clothes, and going to school and to church, does not transform a negro into a white man . . . .

As long as the dominant imposes its will on the servient race … the negroes will be a valuable element in the community, but once raised to social equality, their influence will be destructive to themselves and to the whites. If the purity of the two races is to be maintained, they cannot continue to live side by side, and this is a problem from which there can be no escape.

Grant, Madison. The Passing of the Great Race. Courtesy of J.R.'s Rare Books and Commentary, JRBooksOnline.com.

Document C
Klansmen Manual

The following text was adapted from a Klansmen manual from 1925.

I. Mobilization

This is its primary purpose: "To unite white male persons, native-born, **Gentile** [*not-Jewish*] citizens of the United States of America, who owe no allegiance of any nature or degree to any foreign government, nation, institution, ruler, person, or people … under a common oath into a brotherhood of strict regulations."

II. Cultural

The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan is a movement devoting itself to the needed task of developing a genuine spirit of American patriotism . . . . They are to organize the patriotic sentiment of native-born white, Protestant Americans for the defense of distinctively American institutions . . . .

III. Fraternal

The movement is designed to create a real brotherhood among men who are akin in race, belief, spirit, character, interest, and purpose.

IV. Beneficent

"To relieve the injured and the oppressed . . . ."

V. Protective

1. *The Home. "To shield the sanctity of the home* . . . ." Every influence that seeks to disrupt the home must itself be destroyed . . . .
2. *Womanhood.* The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan declares that it is committed to "the sacred duty of protecting womanhood"; and announces that one of its purposes is "to shield ... the chastity of womanhood . . . ."
3. *The Helpless.* "To protect the weak, the innocent, and the defenseless from the [harm] of the lawless, the violent, and the brutal . . . ."
4. *American Interests.* "To protect and defend the Constitution … and to protect the people from all invasion of their rights from any source whatsoever."

Vl. Racial

"To maintain forever white supremacy . . . .To maintain forever the God-given supremacy of the white race."

Klansmen Manual. 1925. Courtesy of Center for History and New Media, George Mason University, CHNM.GMU.edu.

Document D
The Spread of the KKK

The KKK's mass appeal in the 1920s helped it to expand beyond the South and into the northern and western United States. This cartoon, "The Creeping Shadow," was published in the Afro-American in Baltimore, on October 3, 1925. (Afro American Newspapers and Archives Research Center)

Document E
Klan Violence

Lynching and violence escalated with the resurgence of the KKK. African Americans as well as Jews, immigrants, and "immoral" people were the primary targets of violence. This cartoon, "Their Christmas Tree," was published in Judge *on December 16, 1922. (AmericaninClass.org)*

Lessons 7–9:
A Progressive Government?

"Colonel Roosevelt on his tour through New Jersey before the convention," 1912 (Library of Congress)

To what extent did the U.S. government adequately respond to the social issues of the Progressive Era?

Homework
Progressive Presidents

Watch the video "Progressive Presidents" on the Crash Course History *channel on YouTube.*



Theodore Roosevelt (1901–1909) *William Howard Taft (1909–1913)* *Woodrow Wilson (1913–1921)*
(WhiteHouseHistory.org.)

Progressive Era Reform Movements

(Infographic: Reform Movements of the Progressive Era)