

DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION: THE PROGRESSIVE ERA

NAME: _____ **CLASS:** _____ **DATE:** _____

Historical Context:

The late 1800's and early 1900's were times of great reform in America. Tired of the poor working conditions, overcrowding of cities, political corruption and abuses by industrialists, people known as Progressives took it upon themselves to create change. By using various forms of the media, combined with organized protests, petitions, and the power of the vote, the Progressives exposed these issues, and informed thousands of Americans of the conditions that existed. The result was a short-lived era of reform, in which social, political, and industrial conditions were targeted and improved.

Directions: The following documents illustrate conditions that existed before, during, and after the Progressive Movement. Examine each document carefully and then answer the question that follows it.

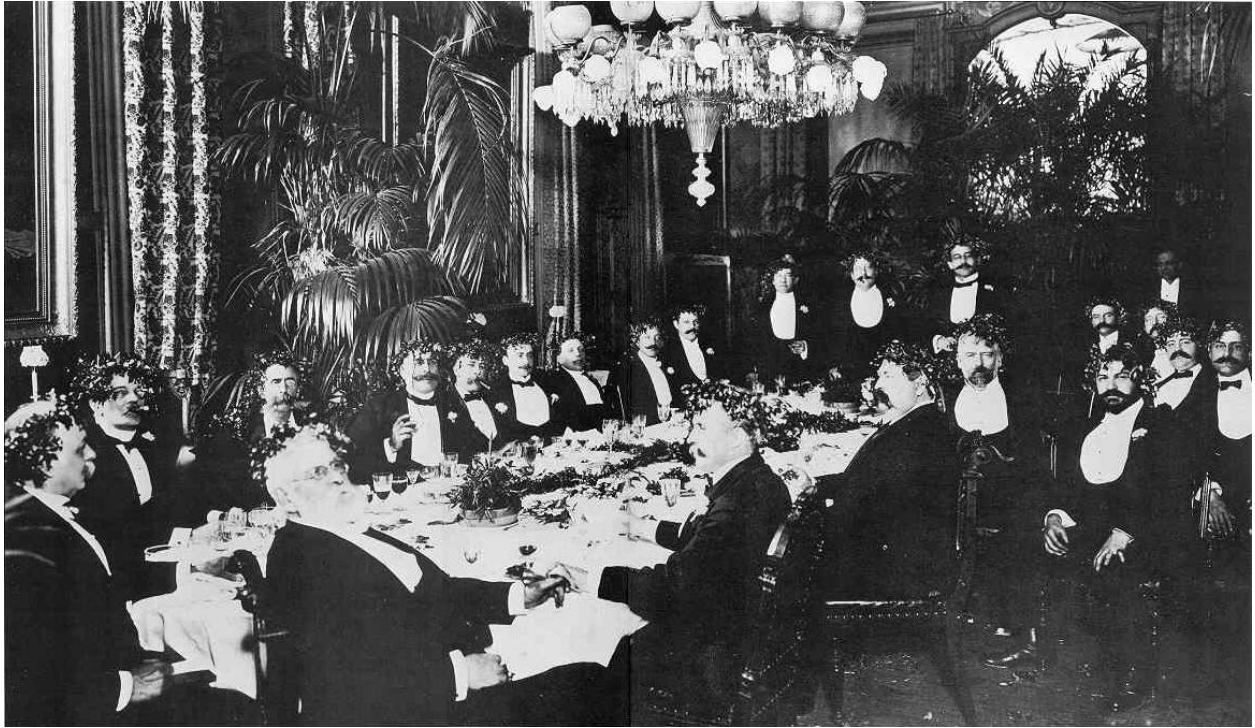
Document 1

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

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

1. What problems does Jacob Riis see with life in city tenements?

Document 2



1. What does this image suggest about some living conditions during the Gilded Age?

2. How do these conditions compare to those discussed in document 1?

Document 3

Excerpt from President Woodrow Wilson’s First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1913

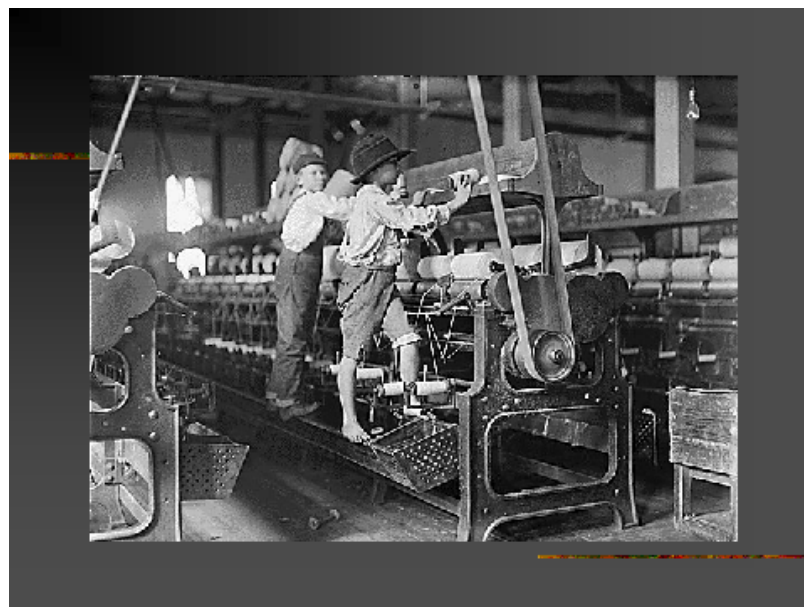
We see that in many things (our) life is very great...but...evil has come with the good...With riches has come inexcusable waste. We have squandered (wasted) a great part of what we might have used, and have not stopped to conserve the exceeding bounty of nature...We have been proud of our industrial achievements, but we have not ... stopped thoughtfully enough to count the human costs...(Our) great Government we loved has too often been made use of for private and selfish purposes, and those who used it had forgotten the people.

At last a vision has been (shown to) us of our life as a whole. We see the bad with the good...With this vision we approach new affairs. Our duty is to cleanse, to reconsider, to restore, to correct the evil...to purify and humanize every process of our common life...

1. Woodrow Wilson recognizes that "evil has come with the good." Identify three "evils" that Wilson discusses. (You do not need to identify the "good")

Document 4

Child Labor Photograph from Lewis Hine c. 1908



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

Document 5

Excerpt from *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair

"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. This is no fairy story and no joke...there were things that went into the sausage in comparison with which a poisoned rat was a tidbit."

1. According to Upton Sinclair, where did the poisoned rats ultimately end up?

Document 6

Date	Legislation	Purpose
1905	United States Forest Service established	Manage the nation's water and timber resources
1906	Meat Inspection Act	Regulate meat processing to ensure clean conditions
1906	Pure Food and Drug Act	Outlaw dishonest labeling of food and drugs
1913	Department of Labor established	Promote the interests of working people

1. Describe the common purpose of the legislative acts in the table above.

Document 7

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

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

1. What did Rose Schneiderman say to people who considered voting unladylike?

Document 8

From Theodore Roosevelt's Seventh Annual Message to Congress Dec. 3, 1907

To the Senate and House of Representatives:

The conservation of our natural resources and their proper use constitute the fundamental problem which underlies almost every other problem of our national life. . . .As a nation we not only enjoy a wonderful measure of present prosperity but if this prosperity is used aright it is an earnest of future success such as no other nation will have. The reward of foresight for this nation is great and easily foretold. But there must be the look ahead, there must be a realization of the fact that to waste, to destroy, our natural resources, to skin and exhaust the land instead of using it so as to increase its usefulness, will result in undermining in the days of our children the very prosperity which we ought by right to hand down to them amplified and developed.

1. What is the issue President Theodore Roosevelt is confronting here? Why is it such a big deal?

Document 9



1. Based upon this political cartoon, what do you think became the solution to the issue of conservation?

ESSAY QUESTION

Based upon the information you have gained from the document and any prior knowledge from past units...

What major social, economic, and political issues did America face during the Gilded Age? What solutions were brought forth by the progressives to begin dealing with these issues? Do you think remnants of the progressive era still affect us today? Explain.