

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT

Lesson Title – Progressives Perspectives

Grade – US History 11: Level 2 (third of four academic levels – instructional, not remedial)

Length of class period – 48 Minutes

Inquiry – How was life in the Progressive Era a time of change in American society?

Objectives – Students will get an introduction to the Progressive Era. Students will evaluate primary source documents in the form of newspaper articles, photographs, magazine articles and book excerpts to develop an understanding of living in an earlier time period

Materials – All resources are included with this lesson plan.

Activities – Students can complete the work in two methods depending on the ability of the students.

1. Students can be broken up into five groups and each group will receive a source (4 of which are primary) and a guided question sheet. Students will work during the period to answer questions based on source and discuss amongst themselves the answers.
 - a. Students then will take their sources and answers into a jigsaw and share their answers with their new partners
 - b. Teacher will float through the room addressing any questions the students have and aiding students with special needs in the activity.
2. Students can be given the entire source packet and asked to complete each question sheet in response to the sources provided.

How will you assess what student learned during this lesson?

1. In scenario 1, the output in the written answers to the questions can be evaluated along with the students' performance in the jigsaw activity. I used a 10 point class work grade for the answers to the questions and a 10 point participation grade for the jigsaw activity.
2. In scenario 2, the answers to the question packet was used as a 25 point quiz grade.

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards –

- 1) demonstrate an understanding of the concept of culture and how different perspectives emerge from different cultures
- 2) describe the relationships among the individual, the groups and the institutions which exist in any society and culture

- 3) apply concepts from the study of history, culture, economics and government to the understanding of the relationships among science, technology and society
- 4) describe how the study of individual development and identity contributes to the understanding of human behavior

“The Jungle” – Upton Sinclair – 1906

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; all the joints of 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 those who worked in the chilling rooms, and whose special disease was rheumatism; the time limit that a man could work in the chilling rooms was said to be five years.

There were the wool pluckers, whose hands went to pieces even sooner than the hands of the pickle men; for the pelts of the sheep had to be painted with acid to loosen the wool, and then the pluckers had to pull out this wool with their bare hands, till the acid had eaten their fingers off. There were those who made the tins for the canned meat, and their hands, too, were a maze of cuts, and each cut represented a chance for blood poisoning. . . .

There were the "hoisters," as they were called, whose task it was to press the lever which lifted the dead cattle off the floor. They ran along upon a rafter, peering down through the damp and the steam, and as old Durham's architects had not built the killing room for the convenience of the hoisters, at every few feet they would have to stoop under a beam, say four feet above the one they ran on, which got them into the habit of stooping, so that in a few years they would be walking like chimpanzees.

Worst of any, however, were the fertilizer men, and those who served in the cooking rooms. These people could not be shown to the visitor—for the odor of a fertilizer man would scare away any ordinary visitor at a hundred yards, and as for the other men, who worked in tank rooms full of steam, and in some of which there were open vats near the level of the floor, their peculiar trouble was that they fell into the vats; and when they were fished out, there was never enough of them left 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! . . .

Upton Sinclair's "The Jungle"

Sinclair's investigation of the Chicago meatpacking industry flew off the shelves and informed the country about the conditions at the places where they got the meat for their dinner. Use the table and questions to discuss the problems facing the population at the time of the Progressives.

1. Fill in the following chart for four of the jobs discussed above.

Job Name	Actions of job	Risks of job	Risk to consumers

2. What kinds of problems are seen facing the workers in this meatpacking factory? (Give 3 examples)
3. What kinds of problems could the consumers see from meat purchased from this company? (Give 3 examples)
4. What do you find most surprising in Upton Sinclair's account of the meatpacking industry around the turn of the century? Why?
5. What do you think was Sinclair's purpose for writing this piece?
6. How do you think readers reacted to The Jungle when it first came out?

New York Times, March 26, 1911, p. 1. (Selections taken by Mr. Clifton)

I41 Men and Girls Die in Waist Factory Fire; Trapped High Up in Washington Place Building; Street Strewn with Bodies; Piles of Dead Inside

Three stories of a ten-floor building at the corner of Greene Street and Washington Place were burned yesterday, and while the fire was going on 141 young men and women at least 125 of them mere girls were burned to death or killed by jumping to the pavement below.

The building was fireproof. It shows now hardly any signs of the disaster that overtook it. The walls are as good as ever so are the floors, nothing is the worse for the fire except the furniture and 141 of the 600 men and girls that were employed in its upper three stories.

Most of the victims were suffocated or burned to death within the building, but some who fought their way to the windows and leaped met death as surely, but perhaps more quickly, on the pavements below.

All Over in Half an Hour.

The fire was practically all over in half an hour. It was confined to three floors the eighth, ninth, and tenth of the building. But it was the most murderous fire that New York had seen in many years.

The victims who are now lying at the Morgue waiting for some one to identify them by a tooth or the remains of a burned shoe were mostly girls from 16 to 23 years of age. They were employed at making shirtwaist by the Triangle Waist Company, the principal owners of which are Isaac Harris and Max Blanck. Most of them could barely speak English. Many of them came from Brooklyn. Almost all were the main support of their hard-working families.

There is just one fire escape in the building. That one is an interior fire escape.

A heap of corpses lay on the sidewalk for more than an hour. The firemen were too busy dealing with the fire to pay any attention to people whom they supposed beyond their aid. When the excitement had subsided to such an extent that some of the firemen and policemen could pay attention to this mass of the supposedly dead they found about half way down in the pack a girl who was still breathing. She died two minutes after she was found.

Leaped Out of the Flames.

At 4:40 o'clock, nearly five hours after the employes in the rest of the building had gone home, the fire broke out. Some of them escaped by running down the stairs, but in a moment or two this avenue was cut off by flame. The girls rushed to the windows and looked down at Greene Street, 100 feet below them.

Then they all began to drop. The crowd yelled "Don't jump!" but it was jump or be burned the proof of which is found in the fact that fifty burned bodies were taken from the ninth floor alone.

They jumped, they crashed through broken glass, they crushed themselves to death on the sidewalk. Of those who stayed behind it is better to say nothing except what a veteran policeman said as he gazed at a headless and charred trunk on the Greene Street sidewalk hours after the worst cases had been taken out:

"I saw the Slocum disaster, but it was nothing to this."

"Is it a man or a woman?" asked the reporter.
"It's human, that's all you can tell," answered the policeman.

It was just a mass of ashes, with blood congealed on what had probably been the neck.

Meantime the remains of the dead it is hardly possible to call them bodies, because that would suggest something human, and there was nothing human about most of these were being taken in a steady stream to the Morgue for identification.

"It's the worst thing I ever saw," said one old policeman.

Chief Croker said it was an outrage. He spoke bitterly of the way in which the Manufacturers' Association had called a meeting in Wall Street to take measures against his proposal for enforcing better methods of protection for employes in cases of fire.

The Triangle Waist Company employed about 600 women and less than 100 men. One of the saddest features of the thing is the fact that they had almost finished for the day. In five minutes more, if the fire had started then, probably not a life would have been lost.

How the fire started no one knows. On the three upper floors of the building were 600 employes of the waist company, 500 of whom were girls. The victims mostly Italians, Russians, Hungarians, and Germans were girls and men who had been employed by the firm of Harris & Blanck, owners of the Triangle Waist Company, after the strike in which the Jewish girls, formerly employed, had become unionized and had demanded better working conditions. The building had experienced four recent fires and had been reported by the Fire Department to the Building Department as unsafe in account of the insufficiency of its exits.

The building itself was of the most modern construction and classed as fireproof. What burned so quickly and disastrously for the victims were shirtwaists, hanging on lines above tiers of workers, sewing machines placed so closely together that there was hardly aisle room for the girls between them, and shirtwaist trimmings and cuttings which littered the floors above the eighth and ninth stories.

All Would Soon Have Been Out.

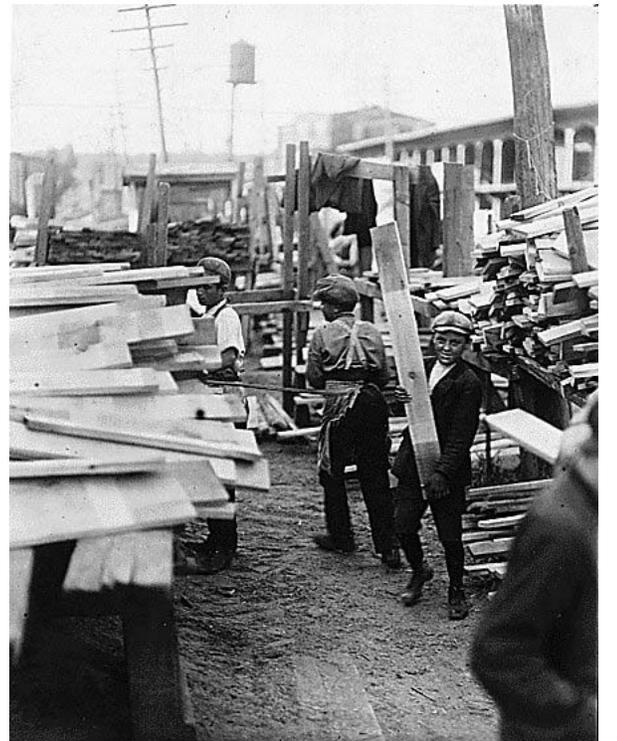
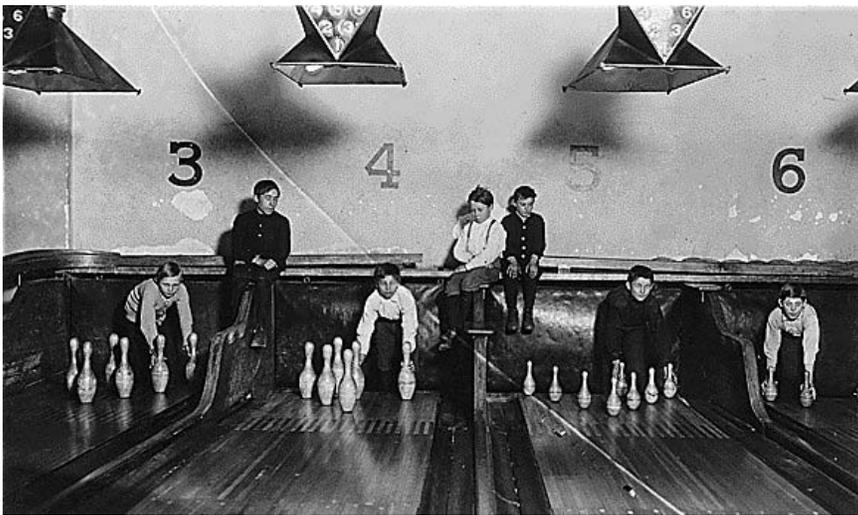
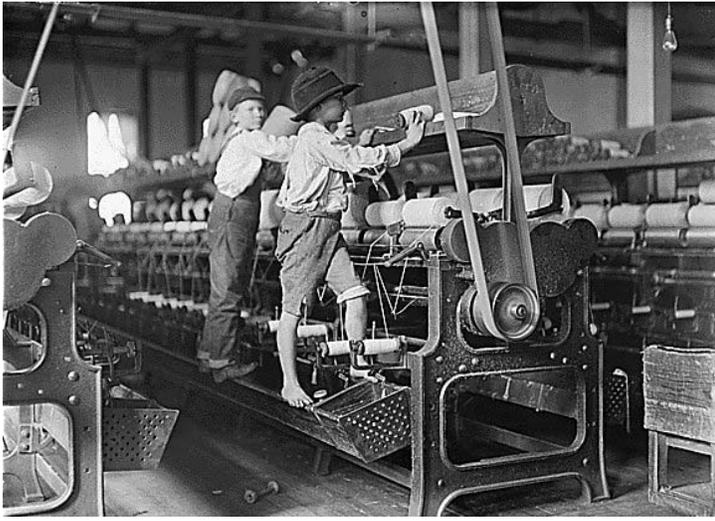
Strewn about as the firemen worked, the bodies indicated clearly the preponderance of women workers. Here and there was a man, but almost always they were women. One wore furs and a muss, and had a purse hanging from her arm. Nearly all were dressed for the street. The fire had flashed through their workroom just as they were expecting the signal to leave the building. In ten minutes more all would have been out, as many had stopped work in advance of the signal and had started to put on their wraps.

There were in the building, according to the estimate of Fire Chief Croker, about 600 girls and 100 men.

Questions:

1. Describe the make-up of the majority of the workers in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory.
2. What were the workers doing on the Saturday night when this tragedy struck?

3. How did the workers trapped in this situation meet their end?
4. What prevented the workers from escaping the fire?
5. What history did this building and business have with fire?
6. What were Mr. Harris and Mr. Blanck required to do to ensure the safety of their employees?
7. Why do you think the fire spread so quickly in the factory?
8. How would this story affect the common reader of the New York Times?
9. What can be done to attempt to prevent this tragedy from happening again? (Provide 3 Possibilities)
10. How might this change the opinion of society and government towards businesses in cities?



Picture 1 – Top left Picture 2 – Top right
Picture 3 – Middle left Picture 4 – Middle right
Picture 5 – Bottom left Picture 6 – Bottom right

Pictures of Child Labor

In each of the pictures above we see different occupations held by children in the early 20th century. Use the following questions to evaluate and form opinions on the impact of child labor on American society in the Progressive Era.

In the table below, complete the chart describing the work environment of each young worker. What dangers do each child in the pictures above face?

Picture #	
1. Thread bobbin boys	
2. Textile factory girl	
3. Coal mining	
4. Coal sorting	
5. Pin setting	
6. Carpenter's assistant	

1. Which of the above jobs would have been the best? Why might it be dangerous?
2. Which of the jobs above would have been the worst? Why might it be dangerous?
3. Why do parents / families send their children to these jobs every day?
4. Choose two children from the above pictures and describe them in detail.
5. Choose two jobs from above and explain why a company would use children to accomplish these tasks.

“History of the Standard Oil Company” – Ida Tarbell

There were at that time some 26 [oil] refineries in the town--some of them very large plants.... To the owners of these refineries, Mr. Rockefeller now went one by one, and explained [his plans]. "You see," he told them, "this scheme is bound to work. It means an absolute control by us of the oil business. There is no chance for anyone outside.... You are to turn over your refinery to my appraisers, and I will give you Standard Oil Company stock or cash, as you prefer, for the value we put upon it. I advise you to take the stock. It will be for your good." Certain refiners objected. They did not want to sell. They did want to keep and manage their [own] business. Mr. Rockefeller was regretful but firm. It was useless to resist, he told the hesitating.... "You can never make more money, in my judgment," said Mr. Rockefeller. "You can't compete with the Standard. We have all the large refineries now. If you refuse to sell, it will end in your being crushed."

6. How did Tarbell see Rockefeller's role in developing the Standard Oil Company?

7. What do you think Tarbell's opinion of Rockefeller was?

8. What was Rockefeller trying to do in acquiring more oil refineries in this example? Was there anything wrong with his activities?

9. What was the point of each of these articles? (Why did the authors write each of these?)

10. Both of these articles can be found in McClure's Magazine from 1904 – 1911. McClure's was a nationwide magazine that reached many homes for pleasure reading. Why was it essential at this time for muckrakers to do their job?

Theodore Roosevelt – From Rough-Rider to Steward of the People

During the Spanish-American War, Roosevelt was lieutenant colonel of the Rough Rider Regiment, which he led on a charge at the battle of San Juan. He was one of the most conspicuous heroes of the war.

Boss Tom Platt, needing a hero to draw attention away from scandals in New York State, accepted Roosevelt as the Republican candidate for Governor in 1898. Roosevelt won and served with distinction.

As President, Roosevelt held the ideal that the Government should be the great arbiter of the conflicting economic forces in the Nation, especially between capital and labor, guaranteeing justice to each and dispensing favors to none.

Roosevelt emerged spectacularly as a "trust buster" by forcing the dissolution of a great railroad combination in the Northwest. Other antitrust suits under the Sherman Act followed. On February 18, 1902 he directed the Justice Department to use the Sherman Anti-Trust Act to prosecute the Northern Securities Company run by J.P. Morgan. This marked an important shift in the scope of government. For the first time the federal government was taking an active, regulatory position in regard to business.

He worked to pass two landmark pieces of legislation - the Pure Food & Drug Act and a meat inspection bill. These laws were intended to protect consumers against the food industry - especially meat packing.

Roosevelt was also the first president to use the power of the federal government as a broker in the conflict between labor and capital. In May of 1902 the coal miners of eastern Pennsylvania went on strike. He threatened to send in federal troops to take charge of the mines. Eventually they gave in and agreed to arbitration.

Roosevelt steered the United States more actively into world politics. He liked to quote a favorite proverb, "Speak softly and carry a big stick. . . ."

Aware of the strategic need for a shortcut between the Atlantic and Pacific, Roosevelt ensured the construction of the Panama Canal. His corollary to the Monroe Doctrine prevented the establishment of foreign bases in the Caribbean and arrogated the sole right of intervention in Latin America to the United States.

He aggressively positioned the United States as a new world power in order to establish a leadership position and protect national security. For example, in 1901 the U.S. was the fifth strongest naval power in the world. By 1907 it was in second place behind Great Britain.

He won the Nobel Peace Prize for mediating the Russo-Japanese War, reached a Gentleman's Agreement on immigration with Japan, and sent the Great White Fleet on a goodwill tour of the world.

Some of Theodore Roosevelt's most effective achievements were in conservation. He added enormously to the national forests in the West, reserved lands for public use, and fostered great irrigation projects.

He crusaded endlessly on matters big and small, exciting audiences with his high-pitched voice, jutting jaw, and pounding fist. "The life of strenuous endeavor" was a must for those around him, as he romped with his five younger children and led ambassadors on hikes through Rock Creek Park in Washington, D.C.

Leaving the Presidency in 1909, Roosevelt went on an African safari, then jumped back into politics. In 1912 he ran for President on a Progressive ticket. To reporters he once remarked that he felt as fit as a bull moose, the name of his new party.

While campaigning in Milwaukee, he was shot in the chest by a fanatic. Roosevelt soon recovered, but his words at that time would have been applicable at the time of his death in 1919: "No man has had a happier life than I have led; a happier life in every way."

1. Read the biography above and fill out the following chart on President Roosevelt's various titles throughout his life.

Title or Nickname	Reason for gaining title or nickname
1.	
2.	
3.	

2. How did Roosevelt's influence in the Spanish-American War put him in the focus of American society?
3. How did Roosevelt change the opinion of government towards big business?
4. Give an example of how Roosevelt acted towards the American economy.
5. How did Roosevelt's foreign policy appear both aggressive and peaceful?

6. Give three situations where Roosevelt involved the United States in foreign politics?

7. How can Roosevelt be seen as a “Man of the People”?

8. Why was Roosevelt such a change of pace in the Presidency of the United States? (**Hint:** What did the previous Presidents do to make them noteworthy?)

9. How are Roosevelt’s actions at home and around the world linked? What comparisons can you draw?

10. As a person from the time period, why would you like or dislike Theodore Roosevelt as your President?