The Progressive Era
The Drive For Reform

**Origins of Progressivism**
Progressives were largely city dwellers. The Progressives tended to be educated professionals – doctors, lawyers, social workers, clergy, and teachers – with a wide range of concerns.

The Progressive movement demonstrated the rising power and influence of America’s middle class.

**Muckrakers Reveal the need for Reform**
Muckrakers helped bring reform issues to the attention of the public. Most were journalists & writers, but others were artists and photographers. Muckrakers investigated and exposed corruption and injustice through articles in mass-circulation magazines.

In 1906, the work of the muckrakers resulted in the passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act and the Meat Inspection Act.

**Historical Significance:** These two acts are the first pieces of legislation that helped to protect consumers.

In a collection of articles, The Shame of the Cities, Lincoln Steffens uncovered social political corruption. His reports exposed how the government of Philadelphia let utility companies charge their customers excessively high fees. He also showed how corrupt politicians won election by bribing and threatening voters.

Another influential muckraker was Jacob Riis, who turned his camera on the crowded, unsafe, rat-infested, tenement buildings where the urban poor lived. His major publication is How the Other Half Lives, which shocked the nation’s conscience and led to reforms.

When Upton Sinclair published The Jungle in 1906, he meant to open eyes to the plight of workers in the filthy dangerous Chicago stockyards. Instead, popular outrage focused on the wider-reaching threat of spoiled meat.

Congress quickly passed the nation’s first legislation regulating the meat, food, and drug industries.

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<th>Progressives Target a Variety of Reform</th>
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<td>Political Machines</td>
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<td>City Slums</td>
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<td>Harsh Working Conditions</td>
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<td>Big Business &amp; Trusts</td>
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<td>Suffrage for Women</td>
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Sinclair, disappointed by his failure to provoke more sympathy for the overworked, underpaid workers, noted “I aimed at the public’s heart, and by accident I hit it in the stomach.”

### Progressive Era Muckrakers

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<tr>
<th>Muckraker</th>
<th>Book/Article</th>
<th>Subject of Exposé</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ida Tarbell</td>
<td>History of the Standard Oil Company (1904)</td>
<td>Ruthless practices of Standard Oil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lincoln Steffens</td>
<td>The Shame of the Cities (1906)</td>
<td>Urban Political Corruption</td>
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<td>Jacob Riis</td>
<td>How the Other Half Lives (1890)</td>
<td>Life in New York tenements</td>
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<td>Upton Sinclair</td>
<td>The Jungle (1906)</td>
<td>Dangerous conditions in meatpacking industry</td>
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### Progressive Reform Society

Some Protestant church leaders became part of the Social Gossip movement, which worked to help poor city dwellers. Members of this movement also urged the end of child labor and a shorter workweek. They also pushed for the federal government to limit the power of corporations and trusts.

An important goal of many Progressives was to improve the lives of poor people in the cities. One approach was the settlement house.

#### Settlement House – A community center that provided social services to the urban poor. (ex. Child care and English classes)

Jane Addams became a leading figure in the settlement house movement. In 1889, Addams opened Hull House, a settlement house in Chicago. Over the years, Hull House grew to include 13 buildings and won much praise.

### Reform Government

- **A direct primary** allows voters, rather than party leaders, to select candidates to run for office.
- **The initiative** is a system that allows voters to petition the legislative to consider a proposed law.
- **In a referendum**, voters decide whether a given bill or constitutional amendment should be passed.
- **The secret ballot** prevents party bosses (and anyone else) from knowing how people vote.
The Progressive Era
Women Make Progress

Progressive Women Expand Reforms
A main goal of Progressive women was to improve family life. They pushed for laws that could help mothers keep families healthy & safe.

A main focus of this effort was the temperance movement, led by the Women’s Christian Temperance Union. Members felt that alcohol often led men to spend their earnings on liquor, neglect their families, and abuse their wives.

Temperance Movement – Movement aimed at stopping alcohol abuse and the problems created by it.

Historical Significance: Their work led to the passage of the 18th Amendment, which outlawed the production and sale of alcohol.

Carrie Nation was a progressive crusader for prohibition. She was the leader of the temperance movement. Nation would enter alcohol-serving establishments & attack the bar with a hatchet. She was sent to jail many times for her crimes, but would sell her hatchets for bail money.

The women’s movement also included a campaign for family planning. This campaign was led by Margaret Sanger, who began her work as a nurse caring for poor immigrant women in NYC.

The American Birth Control League founded by Sanger later became the Planned Parenthood Federation. Sanger’s movement was very controversial. She was arrested several times for sending information about contraception through the mail.

Women Fight for Suffrage
Stanton, Anthony, and Mott all died without achieving the objective of their life work. Carrie Chatman Catt reenergized the national suffrage movement by traveling around the country urging women to join the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA).

Catt abandoned the state-by-state efforts for women suffrage and pushed the women’s movement towards achieving suffrage at the national level.

Alice Paul formed the National Woman’s Party. Paul alienated many women by her use of militant tactics and her campaigning against Woodrow Wilson for reelection in 1916.
Historical Significance: The efforts of Catt and Paul convinced Congress to approve the 19th Amendment, which stated that the right to vote shall not be denied based on gender.

The Progressive Era
The Struggle Against Discrimination

African Americans Demand Reform
W.E.B. Du Bois founded the Niagara Movement in 1905 to promote the higher (college) education of African Americans. This movement denounced the idea of gradual progress.

They also believed that Booker T. Washington was too willing to compromise African Americans’ basic rights. The Niagara Movement never grew to more than a hundred strong.

W.E.B. Du Bois was the founder of the NAACP, which was aimed to help African Americans in all aspects of life.

NAACP focused on the battle for equal access to decent housing and professional careers like teaching. Leaders of the group planned the group’s strategy – to use the courts to challenge unfair laws.

The Progressive Era
Roosevelt’s Square Deal

Roosevelt Shapes the Modern Presidency
Theodore Roosevelt graduated from Harvard University in 1880. He began studying law at Columbia University before being elected to the NY State Assembly.

After 3 years of service and, after the deaths of his mother and wife, Roosevelt retired to a ranch in the West. There he developed a love of the wilderness. Roosevelt could not stay out of the spotlight, however.
By 1889, he returned to politics as president of NYC’s Board of Police Commissioners. He gained fame by fighting corruption and President McKinley noted him and named him Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

When the Spanish-American War broke out in 1898, Roosevelt resigned the post to form the Rough Riders, a volunteer cavalry unit that became famous during the war. At the end of the conflict, Roosevelt emerged a young war hero and was then elected governor of NY, where he pushed for Progressive Reforms.

His reform efforts annoyed Republican leaders, so they convinced McKinley to choose Roosevelt as his running mate so Roosevelt would leave NY. McKinley was reelected, but within a few months he was assassinated, and Roosevelt became President.

Roosevelt greatly expanded the power of the President. He used his office and its powers to convince Americans of the need for change and to push through his reform proposals.

He called his program the Square Deal, and its goals were to keep the wealthy and powerful from taking advantage of small business owners and the poor.

**Square Deal** – Teddy’s policy of using government power to protect common people from abuses of big business and powerful interests.

**Trustbusting & Regulating the Economy**

Roosevelt often stepped in with the authority and power of the federal government when there were conflicts between owners and laborers. Roosevelt sympathized with the overworked miners and factory workers and threatened owners to end labor disputes or federal government would step in. Workers began to get small pay raises and shorter hours.

**Historical Significance:** First time the US government took the side of labor in a dispute.

Roosevelt pushed Congress to pass the Elkins Act in 1903, which placed fines on railroads that gave special rates to favored shippers.

Roosevelt also got Congress to pass the Hepburn Act, which gave the government the authority to set and limit shipping costs. It also set maximum prices for ferries, bridge tolls, and oil pipelines.
Roosevelt and his administration enforces the Sherman Anti-Trust Act and they earn a reputation as “trustbusters.” Roosevelt was not interested in bringing down all large companies. He saw a difference between “good trusts” and “bad trusts.”

Big businesses could often be more efficient than small ones, he believed. He supported large corporations as long as they did business fairly.

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<tr>
<th><strong>Meat Inspection Act</strong></th>
<th><strong>Pure Food &amp; Drug Act</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>After reading The Jungle, Roosevelt brought about reform in proposing and signing into law the Meat Inspection Act, 1906.</td>
<td>This act places the same controls on other foods and on medicines.</td>
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<tr>
<td>All meat sold must be inspected.</td>
<td>It also banned the interstate shipment of impure food and the mislabeling of food and drugs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Must be marked by Federal inspectors and Graded.</td>
<td>The FDA monitors companies to make sure people are not hurt by dangerous substances or dishonest labels.</td>
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<td>Meat industry is cleaned up.</td>
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**The Government Manages the Environment**

Roosevelt’s deep respect for nature also shaped his politics. He was pleased that the federal government had established Yellowstone National Park in 1872 to protect wildlife, and he admired California naturalist John Muir, whose efforts had led Congress to create Yosemite National Park in 1890.

A highly controversial natural resource issue was water. In 1902, Roosevelt pushed Congress to pass the National Reclamation Act, which gave the federal government the power to decide where and how water would be distributed. This would make water from one state’s rivers and streams available to farmers in other states.

**Roosevelt & Taft Differ**

TR left the presidency after two terms in office. TR was still a powerful force in the Republican Party and used that power to get Secretary of War William Howard Taft elected.

Roosevelt expected Taft to continue his programs of managing business & natural resources, but Taft had his own agenda.

Taft pushed the Mann-Elkins Act (1910) which gave the government control over telephone & telegraph rates.
More importantly Taft dropped Roosevelt’s distinction between good and bad trusts. Taft was more relaxed when it came to trusts and did not follow the hard line set by the Sherman Antitrust Act.

Roosevelt began traveling the country speaking about what he called the New Nationalism—a program to restore the government’s trustbusting power. Roosevelt vowed to tackle the trusts in a third presidential term.

The Taft-Roosevelt battle split the Republican Party as the new election neared. Progressives bolted from the Republican Party and set up the Progressive Party (Bull-Moose Party).