

# The Progressive Era

## 1900–1914

### Teaching Resources

#### Chapter Instructional Objectives

After you have taught this chapter, your students should be able to answer the following questions:

1. How did progressivism and organized interest groups reflect the new political choices of Americans?
2. Why did progressives believe in the ability of individuals to affect positive change? How has this idea manifested itself in political reform efforts?
3. What reforms did American women, African Americans, and urbanites seek?
4. Why and how did President Roosevelt expand the federal government's power within the economy?
5. How did President Wilson seek to accommodate his progressive principles to the realities of political power?

#### Chapter Annotated Outline

- I. The Course of Reform
  - A. The Middle-Class Impulse
    1. The term *progressivism* embraces a widespread, many-sided effort after 1900 to build a better society; there was no single progressive constituency, agenda, or unifying organization.
    2. The urban middle class occupied the center of progressive action as exemplified by Jane Addams, the founder of the settlement movement and Hull House.
    3. The urban middle class experienced a generational crisis that reflected a crisis of personal faith acted out by reforming American society to meet their Christian mission.
    4. They felt a sense of urgency to reform society in part because they were not insulated from the ills of industrialism.
  - B. Progressive Ideas
    1. The starting point for progressive thinking was that if the facts could be known, everything else was possible. They placed great faith in scientific management and academic expertise and also felt that it was important to resist ways of thinking that discouraged purposeful action.
    2. Progressives thought the Social Darwinists of the Gilded Age wrong in their belief that society developed according to fixed and unchanging laws; they agreed instead with philosophers such as William James, who denied the existence of absolute truths and advocated a philosophy called **pragmatism**, which judged ideas by their consequences.
    3. Progressives prided themselves on being tough-minded, but in truth were unabashed idealists.
    4. Protestant churches translated progressive-like thinking into a major theological doctrine—the Social Gospel—under its leading exponent Walter Rauschenbush; progressive leaders often grew up in homes imbued with evangelical piety or struggled through crises where their religious strivings could be translated into secular action.
    5. The progressive mode of thought nurtured a new kind of reform journalism when, at the turn of the century, editors discovered that readers were most interested in the exposure of mischief in America.
    6. The term **muckraker** was given to journalists who exposed the underside of American life; however, in making the

public aware of social ills, muckrakers called the people to action.

#### C. Women Progressives

1. Middle-class women, who had long carried the burden of humanitarian work in American cities, were among the first to respond to the idea of progressivism.
2. Josephine Shaw Lowell founded the New York Consumers' League in 1890 to improve the wages and working conditions for female clerks in the city stores by "white listing" progressive businesses.
3. The league spread to other cities and became the National Consumers' League in 1899, and, under the leadership of Florence Kelly, became a powerful lobby for protective legislation for women and children.
4. Among the achievements of the National Consumer's League was the 1908 Supreme Court decision of *Muller v. Oregon*, which limited women's workdays to ten hours. Argued by Louis D. Brandeis, the case cleared the way for a wave of protective laws for women and children and helped usher in a maternalistic **welfare system** in the United States.
5. Settlement houses, such as Hull House founded by Jane Addams, helped to alleviate social problems in the slums and also helped to satisfy the middle-class residents' need for meaningful lives.
6. Women activists breathed new life into the suffrage movement by underscoring the capabilities of women.
7. Social reformers founded the National Women's Trade Union League in 1903, which was financed and led by wealthy supporters. The League organized women workers, played a considerable role in their strikes, and trained working-class leaders such as Rose Schneiderman and Agnes Nestor.
8. Inspired by British suffragists, around 1910 American suffrage activity picked up and its tactics shifted; Alice Paul began to use confrontational tactics to get women the vote by rejecting the state-by-state route and advocating a constitutional amendment that would grant the right to vote to women everywhere.
9. Paul organized the militant National Woman's Party in 1916. Meanwhile, the more mainstream National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) was rejuvenated under the leadership of Carrie Chapman Catt, who organized a

broad-based campaign to push for a constitutional amendment for woman suffrage.

10. In a fundamental shift, younger women—college-educated and self-supporting—began to refuse to be hemmed in by the social constraints of women's "separate sphere." The term **feminism**, just starting to come into use, originally meant freedom for full personal development.
11. Feminists were militantly pro-suffrage because they considered themselves fully equal to men, not a weaker sex entitled to men's protection.
12. Disputes led to the fracturing of the women's movement, dividing the older generation of progressives from their feminist successors who prized gender equality higher than any social benefit.

#### D. Urban Liberalism

1. A shift occurred in the center of gravity within progressivism by 1910, as reflected in the career of California Governor Hiram Johnson. A new strain of progressive reform known as urban liberalism emerged from the partnership of urban middle-class reformers, machine bosses, and the working class.
2. This new breed of urban middle-class reformers pressured the state to take over the needs of the urban poor from the urban political machines that had run ward politics since the Civil War.
3. Also confronting the bosses of the traditional political machine were leftist parties like the Socialist Party, which elected a congressman in 1910 and ran Eugene Debs as a presidential candidate in 1912.
4. Urban liberalism was also driven by nativism in the form of moral reform movements and immigration restriction that intensified after World War I.
5. Although city machines adopted urban liberalism, trade unions did not, and rejected state attempts to interfere in labor affairs.
6. As the major spokesmen for unions, Samuel Gompers preached that workers should not seek from government what they could accomplish by their own economic power and self-help, a process known as **voluntarism**, a creed that weakened substantially during the progressive years.
7. Over time as muckraking exposés revealed labor exploitation, labor retreated from voluntarism by embracing urban liberals'

progressive legislation, especially in the area of industrial hazards since liability rules, based on **common law**, favored employers and not injured workers.

8. But health insurance and unemployment compensation, popular in Europe, conjured up images of state-induced dependency among the urban liberal reformers. These major social reforms remained beyond the reach of urban liberals in the Progressive Era.
  9. It would take a major depression during the 1930s to enable reformers to fashion a permanent state solution to poverty.
- E. Reforming Politics
1. Like the Mugwumps, progressive reformers attacked the boss rule of the party system, but did so more adeptly and more aggressively, though their ideals of civic betterment elbowed uneasily with their politician's drive for self-aggrandizement.
  2. Progressive politicians, especially Robert La Follette, felt that the key to reforming party machines was to reclaim the power to choose candidates. The progressives took that power away from the bosses and gave it to voters in a **direct primary**.
  3. Many progressive politicians—Albert B. Cummins of Iowa, William S. U'Ren of Oregon, and Hiram Johnson of California—all skillfully used the direct primary as the stepping stone to political power; they practiced a new kind of popular politics, which was a more effective way to power than the backroom techniques of machine politicians.
  4. The ballot initiative enabled citizens to seek direct redress for issues important to them, and the recall empowered them to remove officeholders in whom they had lost confidence.
  5. Like the direct primary, the initiative and the recall had as much to do with power relations as with democratic idealism, since many progressives excelled at garnering popular support.
- F. Racism and Reform
1. The primary originated in the South and by 1903 it was operating in seven southern states. In the South, the primary was a *white* primary; since by 1900 the Democratic nomination in the South was tantamount to election, barring African Americans from the party primary effectively barred them from political participation.
  2. This exercise of white supremacy was justified by labeling southern blacks as an “ignorant electorate,” a racism accepted by leaders such as Taft, who assured southerners that “the federal government has nothing to do with social equality,” and Wilson, who signaled that he favored segregation of the U.S. civil service.
  3. The foremost black leader of his day, Booker T. Washington, spread a doctrine known as the Atlanta Compromise, which was seen as being “accommodationist.”
  4. Washington's Tuskegee Institute in Alabama advocated industrial education, and Washington thought that black economic progress was the key to winning political and civil rights.
  5. Younger, educated blacks thought Washington was conceding too much and became impatient with his silence on segregation and violence against blacks, such as the 1908 Springfield, Illinois, race riot.
  6. The Niagara Movement, led by William Monroe Trotter and W. E. B. Du Bois, defined the African American struggle for rights: they proclaimed black pride, insisted on full civic and political equality, and resolutely rejected submissiveness.
  7. Sympathetic white progressives formed the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909.
  8. The NAACP's national leadership was dominated by white leadership. But the editor of the *Crisis*, W. E. B. Du Bois, was an African American, and he used that platform to demand equal rights for blacks.
  9. The National Urban League took the lead on social welfare, uniting in 1911 the many agencies serving black migrants arriving in northern cities.
  10. In the South, welfare work was the province of black women, who utilized the southern branches of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, which had started in 1896.
- II. Progressivism and National Politics
- A. The Making of a Progressive President
1. Like many budding progressives, Theodore Roosevelt was motivated by a high-minded Christian upbringing, but he did not scorn power and its uses.
  2. During his term as governor of New York, Roosevelt asserted his confidence in the

government's capacity to improve the life of the people.

3. Roosevelt was chosen as William McKinley's running mate by Republicans who hoped to neutralize him, but became president in 1901 after McKinley's assassination.
  4. As president, Roosevelt adroitly used the patronage powers of his office to gain control of the Republican Party and displayed his activist bent.
  5. Emphasizing conservation over preservation, Roosevelt backed the Newlands Reclamation Act, expanded the national forests, upgraded land management, and prosecuted violators of federal land laws.
  6. In an unprecedented step, Roosevelt intervened personally in a strike by the United Mine Workers in 1902 and appointed an arbitration commission to end it.
  7. Roosevelt was prepared to use all his presidential authority against the "tyranny" of "irresponsible" business.
- B. Regulating the Marketplace
1. Roosevelt was troubled by the threat that big business posed to competitive markets.
  2. The mergers of individual businesses into **trusts** decreased competition; bigger business meant power to control markets. By 1910, 1 percent of the nation's manufacturers accounted for 44 percent of the nation's industrial output.
  3. With the passage of the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890, the federal government had enabled itself to enforce firmly established common laws in cases involving interstate commerce, but the power had not been exercised.
  4. In 1903 Roosevelt established the Bureau of Corporations in order to investigate business practices and to support the Justice Department's capacity to mount anti-trust suits.
  5. After winning the presidential election, Roosevelt became the nation's trust-buster, taking on corporations such as Standard Oil, American Tobacco, and Du Pont.
  6. In the *Trans-Missouri* decision of 1897, the Supreme Court held that actions restraining or monopolizing trade automatically violated the Sherman Antitrust Act.
  7. Roosevelt was not antibusiness, and he did not want the courts to punish "good" trusts, so he exercised his presidential prerogative to decide whether or not to prosecute a trust.
  8. In 1904 U.S. Steel approached Roosevelt with a deal—cooperation in exchange for preferential treatment. This "gentlemen's agreement" appealed to Roosevelt because it met his interest in accommodating the modern industrial order while maintaining his public image as slayer of the trusts.
  9. Roosevelt was convinced that the railroads' rates and bookkeeping needed firmer oversight, so he pushed through the Elkins Act (1903) and the Hepburn Railway Act (1906), achieving a landmark expansion of the government's regulatory powers over business.
  10. Although Roosevelt was not a **preservationist** like John Muir, he did advocate a **conservationist** position regarding the West's natural resources. He believed in efficient use and sustainability. He utilized the Public Lands Commission (1903) to preside over the public domain for purposes of efficient management.
  11. An expanded Forest Service headed by expert forester Gifford Pinchot helped Roosevelt to reverse a century of heedless exploitation and imprint conservation on the nation's public agenda.
  12. Influenced by Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906), Roosevelt authorized a federal investigation into the stockyards. Soon after, the Pure Food and Drug and the Meat Inspection Acts were passed and the Food and Drug Administration was created.
  13. During Roosevelt's campaign he called his program the Square Deal, meaning that when companies abused their corporate power, the government would intercede to assure Americans a fair arrangement.
- C. The Fracturing of Republican Progressivism
1. William Howard Taft had served Roosevelt loyally as governor-general of the Philippines and as secretary of war. He was an avowed Square Dealer, but he was not a progressive politician.
  2. Taft won the election against William Jennings Bryan in 1908 with a mandate to pick up where Roosevelt left off; however, this was not to be.
  3. Progressives felt that Roosevelt had been too easy on business, and with him no longer in the White House, they intended to make up for lost time.

4. Although Taft had campaigned for tariff reform, he ended up approving the protectionist Payne-Aldrich Tariff Act of 1909, which critics charged sheltered eastern industry from foreign competition.
  5. After the Pinchot-Ballinger affair, in which he fired Pinchot for whistle-blowing on a conspiracy to hand public land to a private syndicate, the progressives saw Taft as a friend of the “interests” bent on plundering the nation’s resources.
  6. Galvanized by Taft’s defection, the reformers in the Republican Party became a dissident faction, calling themselves the “Progressives” or “Insurgents.”
  7. Roosevelt knew that a party split would benefit the Democrats, but he was driven to set aside party loyalty when he clashed with Taft over the question of trusts.
  8. Unlike Roosevelt, Taft was unwilling to pick and choose trusts for prosecution; he instead relied on the letter of the Sherman Act.
  9. In the *Standard Oil* decision of 1911, the Supreme Court once again asserted the rule of reason, which meant that the courts, not the president, would distinguish between good and bad trusts.
  10. Taft’s attorney general brought suit against U.S. Steel, basing the antimonopoly charges in part on an acquisition approved by Roosevelt. Anxious to reenter politics, Roosevelt could not ignore what appeared to be a direct attack on his honor.
  11. Roosevelt made the case for what he called the New Nationalism, its central tenet being that human welfare had priority over property rights. The government would become “the steward of the public welfare.”
  12. Roosevelt added to his proposed program a federal child labor law, regulation of labor relations, a national minimum wage for women, and, most radical perhaps, proposals to curb the power of the courts based on his insistence that they stood in the way of reform.
  13. Roosevelt was too reformist for party regulars who handed Taft the Republican presidential nomination for the 1912 election, so Roosevelt led his followers into a new Progressive Party, nicknamed the “Bull Moose” Party.
- D. Woodrow Wilson and the New Freedom
1. As Republicans battled among themselves, Democrats made dramatic gains in 1910, taking over the House of Representatives and capturing a number of traditionally Republican governorships.
  2. Governor of New Jersey, Woodrow Wilson, compiled a sterling reform record; he then went on to win the Democratic presidential nomination in 1912.
  3. Wilson warned that the New Nationalism represented a future of collectivism, whereas his own New Freedom policy would preserve political and economic liberty.
  4. Wilson and Roosevelt differed over *how* government should restrain private power.
  5. Wilson won the election of 1912 because he kept the traditional Democratic vote, while the Republicans split between Roosevelt and Taft. Wilson’s New Freedom did not receive a clear mandate from the people in that he received only 42 percent of the popular vote.
  6. However, the election did prove decisive in the history of economic reform; Wilson attacked the problems of tariff and banking reform.
  7. The Underwood Tariff Act of 1913 pared rates from 40 percent to 25 percent; the trust-dominated industries were targeted to foster competition and reduce prices for consumers.
  8. The Federal Reserve Act of 1913 gave the nation a banking system that was resistant to financial panic, delegating financial functions to twelve district reserve banks. This strengthened the banking system and placed a measure of restraint on Wall Street.
  9. To deal with the problem of corporate power, the Clayton Antitrust Act of 1914 amended the Sherman Act; the Clayton Act’s definition of illegal practices was left flexible to distinguish whether or not an action stifled competition or created a monopoly.
  10. The Federal Trade Commission was established in 1914, and it received broad powers to investigate companies and issue “cease and desist” orders against unfair trade practices.
  11. Steering a course between Taft’s conservatism and Roosevelt’s radicalism, Wilson

carved out a middle way that brought to bear the powers of government without threatening the constitutional order and curbed abuse of corporate power without threatening the capitalist system.

12. The labor vote had grown increasingly important to the Democratic Party; before his second campaign, Wilson championed a host of bills beneficial to American workers—a federal child labor law, the Adamson eight-hour law for railroad workers, and the landmark Seamen’s Act, which eliminated age-old abuses of sailors aboard ship.
13. In 1916 Wilson also approved the Federal Farm Loan Act, which provided the low-interest rural credit system long demanded by farmers.
14. Wilson encountered the same dilemma that confronted all successful progressives: how to balance the claims of moral principle with the unyielding realities of political life. Progressives prided themselves on being realists as well as moralists.
15. Progressives made presidential leadership important again, they brought government back into the nation’s life, and they laid the foundation for twentieth-century social and economic policy.

## Key Terms

**pragmatism** Philosophical doctrine developed primarily by William James that denied the existence of absolute truths and argued that ideas should be judged by their practical consequences. Problem solving, not ultimate ends, was the proper concern of philosophy, in James’s view. Pragmatism provided a key intellectual foundation for progressivism. (613)

**muckrakers** Journalists in the early twentieth century whose stock-in-trade was exposure of the corruption of big business and government. Theodore Roosevelt gave them the name as a term of reproach. The term comes from a character in *Pilgrim’s Progress*, a religious allegory by John Bunyan. (614)

**welfare state** A nation that provides for the basic needs of its citizens, including such provisions as old-age pensions, unemployment compensation, child-care facilities, education, and other social programs. Major European countries began to provide such programs around 1900; the New Deal of the 1930s brought them to the United

States. In the early twenty-first century, aging populations and the emergence of a global economy (the transfer of jobs to low-wage countries) threatens the economic foundation of the European and American welfare systems. (615)

**feminism, feminist** Doctrine advanced in the early twentieth century by women activists that women should be equal to men in all areas of life. Earlier women activists and suffragists had accepted the notion of separate spheres for men and women, but feminists sought to overcome all barriers to equality and full personal development. (617)

**voluntarism** The view that citizens should themselves improve their lives, rather than rely on the efforts of state. Especially favored by Samuel Gompers, voluntarism was a key idea within the labor movement, but one gradually abandoned in the course of the twentieth century. (622)

**common law** Centuries-old body of English law based on custom and judicial interpretation, not legislation, and evolving case by case on the basis of precedent. The common law was transmitted to America along with English settlement and became the foundation of American law at the state and local levels. In the United States, even more than in Britain, the common law gave the courts supremacy over the legislatures in many areas of law. (622)

**direct primary** The selection of party candidates by a popular vote rather than by the party convention, this progressive reform was especially pressed by Robert La Follette, who viewed it as an instrument for breaking the grip of machines on the political parties. In the South, where it was limited to whites, the primary was a means of disfranchising blacks. (624)

**trusts** A term originally applied to a specific form of business organization enabling participating firms to assign the operation of their properties to a board of trustees, but by the early twentieth century, the term applied more generally to corporate mergers and business combinations that exerted monopoly power over an industry. It was in this latter sense that progressives referred to firms like United States Steel and Standard Oil as trusts. (627)

**preservationist, preservation** Early-twentieth-century activists, like John Muir, who fought to protect the natural environment from commercial exploitation, particularly in the American West. (629)

**conservationist, conservation** Advocates for the protection of the natural environment for sustained

use. As applied by Theodore Roosevelt at the start of the twentieth century, conservation accepted development of public lands, provided this was in the public interest and not wastefully destructive. In contrast, preservationists valued wilderness in its natural state and were more broadly opposed to development. (629)

### Lecture Strategies

1. What factors contributed to the emergence of progressivism? Write a lecture describing how concentrated power was used to corrupt or oppress segments of American society. Specific readings from the muckrakers about political corruption or corporate excesses can help. Trace the development of the progressive movement over time, emphasizing the major trends, patterns, themes, and key players that drove the movement.
2. Form a lecture examining the influence of academics on progressive policy during this period. The ways in which social science and philosophy meshed with the progressive politicians' need for objective social analysis should be explored, with concrete examples given. The importance of this development for the subsequent work of public intellectuals can be pointed out. A comparison with the contemporary role of academic intellectuals and think tanks in developing policy can also be made.
3. Write a lecture exploring the impact of women on events during the Progressive Era. Perhaps biography is the most effective way of exploring the achievement of female reformers; fortunately, extensive material is available. The stories of Jane Addams of Hull House and Florence Kelley of the National Consumers' League, as well as the family planning activities of Margaret Sanger, illustrate the areas to which progressive women gravitated. Students should also be aware of the important ways in which first-wave feminists differed from other activist women. This understanding might assist students in sorting out future rifts within the women's movement.
4. Create a lecture tracing the process by which the urban political machine shifted its emphasis from the ward to the state. The failure of traditional machines to protect workers and regulate conditions in the workplace forced urban Democratic politicians to seek state intervention on behalf of their constituents. This common cause allowed progressive politicians to be assisted by the machines. Students should also understand how organized labor, after deliberately avoiding political involvement, found it necessary to engage in partisan politics. The process by which organized labor became a major constituency in the Democratic Party can be seen in the development of urban liberalism and events such as the Triangle Shirtwaist fire.
5. Although several lectures could be given on the careers of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, a comparison of their personalities and the implications of their personal styles on their policies will interest students. In your lecture, focus on Roosevelt as an outgoing, charismatic, enthusiastic individual who personalized his policies. Wilson was, in sharp contrast, reserved, scholarly, and well suited to direct a bureaucracy. Students should consider the effects of their personalities on their policies; for example, Roosevelt jawboned corporate leaders, whereas Wilson established the Federal Trade Commission in order to deal with corporate abuse. Other themes, such as Roosevelt on consumers and Wilson on banking, could be used in your comparison.
6. Focus on the intrinsic limitations of the progressive movement by writing a lecture examining the urban reform impulse with a critical eye. The middle-class base of the progressive movement accepted the system, both economic and political, in which it operated to the detriment of the poor. In contrast to socialists, progressives had no desire to overturn or drastically reshape the economic system but wanted only to make it equitable. In exploring this issue, a concrete comparison between progressivism and socialism can be instructive. The question of whether reform in America can or should go beyond progressivism should provoke a lively discussion among students. Some attention might also be paid to progressivism's top-down emphasis. Students should be encouraged to think of other limitations.

### Reviewing the Text

These questions are from the textbook and follow each main section of the narrative. They are provided in the Computerized Test Bank with suggested responses, for your convenience.

#### *The Course of Reform (pp. 612–626)*

1. How do you account for the revival of the woman's suffrage movement during the Progressive Era?
  - Woman's suffrage revived during the Progressive Era in response to the rise of moral reform and its connection to women as the "social house-

keepers” of society. Middle-class women began to agitate to improve social ills, one of which was the lack of rights for women. Give more rights to women, the argument went, and society will be reformed within a generation.

- Key women reformers like Jane Addams breathed new life into the suffrage movement by forming organizations that catered to women’s interests. They argued that if women held leadership roles in progressive organizations and institutions, why were they prohibited from voting?
2. In what ways did political reformers of the Progressive Era (like Robert La Follette) differ from the Mugwump reformers of the late nineteenth century?
    - They more adeptly and aggressively fought corrupt rule by political parties because they understood the levels of power they were fighting, and made their reforms more permanent through legislation.
  3. What is the relationship between progressive reform and the struggle for racial equality?
    - Influential black leaders gained inspiration and organizational tactics and energy from the progressive movement. They channeled this energy to foment racial uplift through black economic and political self-help efforts.
    - Progressive reform implied fixing social ills, but racism was not an accepted social problem by the white community in 1900. Most white progressives were racists who did not believe in black equality, though some did assist the cause of black uplift. For example, whites assisted blacks in forming the NAACP in 1909, but insisted on being its leaders.
    - In alliance with black civil rights advocates, white progressives defined the issues and established the organizations that would spur the struggle for a better life for African Americans.
2. Why did William Howard Taft encounter so much trouble following in the footsteps of Theodore Roosevelt?
    - Taft was not by nature a progressive politician and was more of a conservative lawyer; William Jennings Bryan moved the Democratic party into the Progressive camp in 1908; reform politics had unsettled the Republican party by the time Taft took office in 1909; and disputes over land transfers by the forest service in Alaska occupied center stage of the Taft administration.
  3. Although historians describe the decades following William McKinley’s election in 1896 as an age of Republican domination, the Democrat Woodrow Wilson won the presidency in 1912. How do you account for that?
    - Wilson won in 1912 because Theodore Roosevelt ran for president in the Progressive Party, splitting the Republican vote and throwing the election to Wilson and the increasingly progressive-leaning Democratic Party.
    - William Jennings Bryan had stepped down and made way for a new generation of progressive leaders.
    - Wilson possessed a moral certainty common among progressive leaders and appealing to voters.
    - Wilson campaigned on a platform of New Freedom, focusing on the slavish collectivism of the New Nationalism of the Progressive Party that would be replaced by political and economic liberty for individual and business enterprise.

### *Progressivism and National Politics* (pp. 627–638)

1. Why did some consider Theodore Roosevelt an antibusiness president? Do you agree?
    - During the era, Roosevelt could be conceived as antibusiness because of his conservation platform to protect the natural resources of the nation, his antitrust stance and actions, his regulation of the railroads, his support of consumer protection and regulation, and the Square Deal.
1. Class matters in America. But in what specific ways did class matter in the development of progressivism?
    - Class mattered in the development of progressivism in that the movement was led by middle-class white Americans who solicited money from elite white Americans to fix the social problems experienced mainly by working-class and poor Americans, many of them immigrants.
    - Middle-class progressives attempted to reform industry and the lives of the working class through programs that were middle class in origin, like Hull House, where middle-class values

### Chapter Writing Assignments

These questions appear at the end of Chapter 20 in the textbook. They are provided in the Computerized Test Bank with suggested responses, for your convenience.

of cleanliness, the Protestant work ethic, and Christianity were imposed on people regardless of their traditional working-class culture.

2. Why was it that the women's movement was so central to social reform during the Progressive Era?
  - The women's movement was central to social reform during the Progressive Era in that women, since the Second Great Awakening, were seen as the reformers of home and church. As the natural mothers of society, women took on a greater role during these progressive times to improve society.
  - The women's movement, to gain greater political rights for women, meshed with the Progressive Era focus to improve the working conditions of the nation's children and female labor force.
3. Define the Square Deal, the New Nationalism, and the New Freedom, and explain why these programs are keys to understanding national politics during the Progressive Era.
  - *Square Deal*: During the 1904 presidential campaign, Roosevelt created this platform, focusing on increasing government power to regulate the business community. When companies abused their powers, the government would intercede to assure ordinary Americans a "square deal." The Square Deal set the tone for active reform of industry. It also shaped the development of election campaigning by adding catchy slogans to party political platforms as a way of persuading voters.
  - *New Nationalism*: After Roosevelt left the White House, he developed a plan that would balance the breaking up of big business against submission to corporate rule. The federal government would be empowered to oversee the nation's industrial corporations to make sure they acted in the public interest. They would be regulated by the Federal Trade Commission as if they were natural monopolies or public utilities. Roosevelt later added a federal child labor law, regulation of labor relations, and a national minimum wage for women. The New Nationalism influenced the rise of Woodrow Wilson's New Freedom agenda.
  - *New Freedom*: "If America is not to have free enterprise, then she can have freedom of no sort whatever." In the struggle to regulate industry by the government, Wilson championed political and economic liberty and criticized the collec-

tivism of Roosevelt's more activist New Nationalism. Wilson believed that the existing powers of government were adequate to reform industry and restrain big business. This ideology would dominate the Democratic Party platform in the election of 1912.

- During the election of 1912, the New Freedom and New Nationalism ideologies split public opinion evenly, though after Wilson won the presidency he would get many of the New Freedom policies he wanted from a Democratic-controlled Congress. The election debate between adherents of the two positions helped to resolve the decade-long crisis over federal regulation of industry.

### Class Discussion Starters

#### 1. What were the hallmarks of the Progressive Era?

*Possible answers*

- a. Reform became a major, self-sustaining phenomenon.
- b. The old order was challenged and changed both politically and economically.
- c. Reformers believed that problems could be addressed through scientific investigation and that people had the ability to master their environment.
- d. Educated women found a congenial intellectual environment in which to play an active public role.
- e. Religion played an underlying role in much reform activity.
- f. There was a drive for information gathering and a high degree of confidence in academic expertise.

#### 2. What impact did the muckrakers have on American society?

*Possible answers*

- a. Inexpensive general-circulation magazines containing exposés became popular reading material.
- b. Investigative journalism established itself as a legitimate enterprise.
- c. Muckraking publications attracted new converts to progressive reform.
- d. Exposure of municipal corruption gave rise to reform on the local level.

- e. Exposés, such as Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle*, spurred federal regulation of dangerous industrial practices.

### 3. What role did religion play in the Progressive Era?

*Possible answers*

- a. Most reformers had been raised in Christian families and had strong Christian ethical principles.
- b. Leaders of the Social Gospel movement helped to formulate progressive principles.
- c. Some urban churches opened centers that served as settlement houses.

### 4. How did women capitalize on, or participate in, the progressive movement?

*Possible answers*

- a. Women’s organizations became powerful lobbies for the rights of women and children.
- b. The nature of the work of those organizations made women’s public activities more acceptable in a patriarchal world.
- c. The prominence of certain women progressives allowed them to serve as role models for the younger generation.
- d. The movement for woman suffrage was reinvigorated by progressive activists.
- e. The feminist movement for complete gender equality was founded.
- f. Women made concrete improvements in labor safety, family planning, and other significant fields.

### 5. What critical events in African American history occurred during the Progressive Era?

*Possible answers*

- a. The adoption of the white primary in southern states completed the process of disfranchisement.
- b. Blacks migrated in increasing numbers from the rural South to northern cities.
- c. The all-black Niagara Movement of African American intellectuals was organized in 1906 to seek racial equality.
- d. White progressives joined black activists to form the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1909.

- e. The National Urban League was organized in 1911 by black and white social workers in order to assist black migrants who relocated to the cities.

- f. Southern black women worked for progressive reform through civic organizations, filling the vacuum left by the disfranchisement of black men.

### 6. In what ways did Theodore Roosevelt’s progressivism express itself?

*Possible answers*

- a. He sought to protect wilderness areas from inappropriate development so that they would be available for use by the public.
- b. He threatened a government takeover of coal mines if their owners refused union recognition.
- c. He personally intervened to control the abuses of what he called bad trusts.
- d. He supported the passage of the Hepburn Railway Act, which empowered the Interstate Commerce Commission to curb discriminatory railroad rates.
- e. He helped to enact consumer-protection legislation such as the Pure Food and Drug and Meat Inspection Acts.

### 7. What were the elements of Woodrow Wilson’s New Freedom?

*Possible answers*

- a. There was a determination to avoid the social legislation favored by Roosevelt.
- b. The Federal Trade Commission was established in order to regulate corporate behavior.
- c. Tariffs were lowered to reduce consumer prices.
- d. The Federal Reserve System was established in order to reduce the likelihood of financial panics.
- e. A number of bills were passed that benefited labor, such as workers’ compensation, child labor restrictions, and the eight-hour workday.

### 8. How did progressivism lead to an increase in the intervention of state power in economic, political, and social affairs?

*Possible answers*

- a. Corporate influence had become too powerful to be restricted without state authority.

- b. Voluntary associations such as labor unions were not effective in protecting their interests.
- c. Political corruption was too widespread and entrenched to be controlled by citizens' groups.
- d. The state was able to call on expert scientific testimony in order to reveal the existing system's failure to protect the public interest.

### Classroom Activities

1. Select a few key images from the time period, and distribute copies to each student. Then ask the students a series of questions to discern historical content and the perspective of the document-maker. You may wish to bring in a series of images that are related to the same theme.
2. Create the conditions for a debate between Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson over the issue of progressivism in American society.

### Working with Documents

#### COMPARING AMERICAN VOICES

#### The Triangle Fire (p. 620)

1. The hardest task of the historian is to conjure up the reality of the past—"this is what it was really like." That's where eye-witness evidence like the reporter Shepard's comes in. What is there in his account that you could not reasonably expect a historian to capture?
  - Shepard reveals that people fell from the building and hit the sidewalk with a loud thud, the policemen placed tags on the dead bodies, and the water from fire hoses ran red with blood.
2. Both Rabbi Wise and Rose Schneiderman are incensed at the Triangle carnage. Yet their speeches are quite different. In what ways? And with what implications for alternate paths to progressive reform?
  - The rabbi's speech is less passionate and more reasoned, while Rose speaks with an angry tone defiant of the police state that quells labor agitation for better working conditions.
  - The rabbi suggests using the legislature to pass new laws to improve working conditions; Rose suggests that workers strike to improve working conditions.
3. Max Steuer and Rose Schneiderman came from remarkably similar backgrounds. They were

roughly the same age, grew up in poverty on the Lower East Side, and started out as child workers in the garment factories. So consider how differently they ended up! That of course speaks to the varieties of immigrant experience in America. But is there anything in their statements that helps account for their differing life paths? Would Steuer have been as effective had he been questioning Schneiderman?

- Max appears callous to individual suffering as a result of his success at individualism, while Rose wants to stop suffering through collective labor action.
- Rose would have been better able to deal with Max's legal manipulations since she was an adult and hardened to the callousness of industry owners and their lawyers.

#### VOICES FROM ABROAD

#### James Bryce: America in 1905: "Business Is King" (p. 628)

1. In what ways does it seem to Bryce that America's economic development stands in contrast to Europe's?
  - America has attained massive wealth, an increase of corporate power, and a decrease of individualism over time compared to Europe.
2. How does he explain the "paradox" that the Americans—"the most individualistic of peoples"—should be leaders in developing business forms that will stifle individualism?
  - He states, "Now it is the power of wealth which enables the few to combine so as to gain command of the sources of wealth."
  - Bryce argues that "the amazing keenness and energy, which were stimulated by the commercial conditions of the country, have evoked and ripened a brilliant talent for organization. This talent has applied new methods to production and distribution and has enabled wealth, gathered into a small number of hands, to dominate even the enormous market of America."
3. Do Bryce's observations as a foreigner shed any particular light on why an antitrust movement was building up in the country?
  - His comments reveal that wealth, corporate power, and the loss of individualism were increasing in the United States, to the detriment of the life of the average American. In this context, many Americans began to want the trusts broken up.

## Reading American Pictures

### Reining in Big Business? Cartoonists Join the Battle (p. 630)

1. Historians value political cartoons in part because they are a gauge of what the public knows; the cartoonist's assumption is that readers will understand the content without being told. If that's so, what does the *Puck* cartoon reveal about the public's familiarity with the great tycoons of the time?
  - The public was aware of the names, reputations, and controversial public careers of the great tycoons, whose names also grace each image in the cartoon to ensure that all viewers could identify them.
2. Why is the location important? If the issue is business power, why are we being shown Wall Street rather than, say, the headquarters of U.S. Steel in Pittsburgh?
  - One of the progressives' central complaints was the domination of big industrialists over the entire U.S. economy, as depicted by the Wall Street setting, and by implication, over the U.S. government.
3. Cartoons are also a kind of shorthand, stripping an issue to its barest elements and saying: "This is what it's really about." So in this cartoon, with Jack (Theodore Roosevelt) confronting the Wall Street Giants (Morgan, Rockefeller, the railroad tycoon James J. Hill), what's regulating big business really about?
  - The cartoon depicts the uneven and uphill fight between government and the giant industrialists who did not want to alter their mode of making money in the interest of public service.

## Electronic Media

### Web Sites

- *President Roosevelt's Inaugural Address of 1904*  
<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/president/inaug/troos.htm>  
This site, sponsored by Yale Law School, provides the text of Roosevelt's inaugural address.
- *President Roosevelt and the Media*  
<http://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9909/tr.html>  
This Library of Congress site depicts Roosevelt as our first media president, and features clips from movies and sound recordings.

- *Eugenics Archives*  
[www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/](http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/)  
An archive containing information related to the eugenics movement.

## Films

- *One Woman, One Vote* (1995, PBS documentary, 120 minutes)  
A documentary on the seventy-year struggle for woman suffrage.
- *TR: The Story of Theodore Roosevelt* (1997, PBS documentary, 120 minutes)  
This documentary from the American Experience series chronicles the life and times of the "cowboy" president.

## Literature

- Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (New York: Macmillan, 1910)  
Addams's autobiography and explanation of her work.
- Frank Norris, *The Octopus* (New York: Doubleday, 1901)  
A muckraking exposé targeting the corruption of big business and collusion with local, state, and federal levels of government.

## Additional Bedford/St. Martin's Resources for Chapter 20

### FOR INSTRUCTORS

#### Transparencies

The following maps and images from Chapter 20 are available as full-color acetates:

- Reba Owen, Settlement-House Worker
- Map 20.1 Woman Suffrage, 1890–1919
- "Jack and the Wall Street Giants," *Puck*, January 13, 1904
- Map 20.2 National Parks and Forests, 1872–1980
- Map 20.3 Presidential Election of 1912

#### Instructor's Resource CD-ROM

The following maps, figures, and images from Chapter 20, as well as a chapter outline, are available on disc in both PowerPoint and jpeg formats:

- Map 20.1 Woman Suffrage, 1890–1919
- Map 20.2 National Parks and Forests, 1872–1980

- Map 20.3 Presidential Election of 1912
- Figure 20.1 The Federal Bureaucracy, 1891–1917
- Reba Owen, Settlement-House Worker
- The Triangle Tragedy
- Robert M. La Follette
- Colored Women’s League of Washington, D.C.
- “Jack and the Wall Street Giants,” *Puck*, January 13, 1904
- Campaigning for the Square Deal

### Using the Bedford Series with *America’s History*, Sixth Edition

Available online at [bedfordstmartins.com/usingseries](http://bedfordstmartins.com/usingseries), this guide offers practical suggestions for incorporating volumes from the Bedford Series in History and Culture into the U.S. History Survey. Relevant titles for Chapter 20 include

- *Black Protests and the Great Migration: A Brief History with Documents*, by Eric Arnesen, *University of Illinois at Chicago*
- *TWENTY YEARS AT HULL-HOUSE* by Jane Addams, Edited with an Introduction by Victoria Bissell Brown, *Grinnell College*
- *LOOKING BACKWARD: 2000–1887* by Edward Bellamy, Edited with an Introduction by Daniel H. Borus, *University of Rochester*
- *Muckraking: Three Landmark Articles*, Edited with an Introduction by Ellen F. Fitzpatrick, *University of New Hampshire*
- *Talking Back to Civilization: Indian Voices from the Progressive Era*, Edited with an Introduction by Frederick E. Hoxie, *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*
- *A TRAVELER FROM ALTRURIA* by William Dean Howells, edited and with an introduction by David W. Levy, *University of Oklahoma*
- *THE REBUILDING OF OLD COMMONWEALTHS and Other Documents of Social Reform in the Progressive Era South*, Edited with an Introduction by William A. Link, *University of North Carolina at Greensboro*
- *Childhood and Child Welfare in the Progressive Era: A Brief History with Documents*, by James Marten, *Marquette University*
- *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair, edited and with an introduction by Christopher Phelps, *The Ohio State University at Mansfield*
- *OTHER PEOPLE’S MONEY AND HOW THE BANKERS USE IT* by Louis D. Brandeis, Edited with an Introduction by Melvin I. Urofsky, *Virginia Commonwealth University*
- *MULLER V. OREGON: A Brief History with Documents*, by Nancy Woloch, *Barnard College*

## FOR STUDENTS

### Documents to Accompany *America’s History*

The following documents and illustrations are available in Chapter 20 of the companion reader by Kevin Fernlund, *University of Missouri-St. Louis*:

1. John Dewey, My Pedagogic Creed (1897)
2. Walter Rauschenbusch, The Church and the Social Movement (1907)
3. Lincoln Steffens, Tweed Days in St. Louis (1902)
4. Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (1910)
5. Margaret Sanger, *The Case for Birth Control* (1917)
6. Progressivism and Compulsory Sterilization (1907)
7. Robert M. La Follette, Autobiography (1913)
8. Theodore Roosevelt, The Struggle for Social Justice (1912)
9. Woodrow Wilson, The New Freedom (1912)
10. Louis D. Brandeis, In Defense of Competition (1912)
11. Hetch-Hetchy Debate, Sweeping Back the Flood (1909)

### Online Study Guide at [bedfordstmartins.com/henretta](http://bedfordstmartins.com/henretta)

The Online Study Guide helps students synthesize the material from the text as well as practice the skills historians use to make sense of the past. The following map, visual, and documents activities are available for Chapter 20:

#### Map Activity

- Map 20.1 Woman Suffrage, 1890–1919

#### Visual Activity

- Reading American Pictures: *Reining in Big Business? Cartoonists Join the Battle*

#### Reading Historical Documents Activities

- Comparing American Voices: *The Triangle Fire*
- Voices from Abroad: James Bryce: *America in 1905: Business is King*

### Critical Thinking Modules at [bedfordstmartins.com/historymodules](http://bedfordstmartins.com/historymodules)

These online modules invite students to interpret maps, audio, visual, and textual sources, centered on events covered in the U.S. history survey. Relevant modules for Chapter 20 include

- Jane Addams and Hull-House

