

Section 1

The Roots of Progressivism

Guide to Reading

Big Ideas

Group Action The progressives sought to improve life in the United States with social, economic, and political reforms.

Content Vocabulary

- muckraker (p. 521)
- direct primary (p. 522)
- initiative (p. 523)
- referendum (p. 523)
- recall (p. 523)
- suffrage (p. 524)
- prohibition (p. 527)

Academic Vocabulary

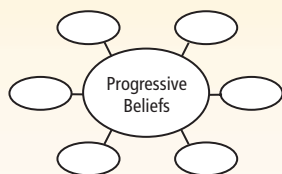
- legislation (p. 523)
- advocate (p. 527)

People and Events to Identify

- Jacob Riis (p. 521)
- Robert M. La Follette (p. 522)
- Carrie Chapman Catt (p. 525)

Reading Strategy

Organizing As you read about the beginnings of progressivism, complete a graphic organizer similar to the one below by filling in the beliefs of progressives.



The Progressive Era was a time when many Americans tried to improve their society. They tried to make government honest, efficient, and more democratic. The movement for women's suffrage gained more support, as did efforts to limit child labor and reduce alcohol abuse.

The Rise of Progressivism

MAIN Idea Progressives tried to solve the social problems that arose as the United States became an urban, industrialized nation.

HISTORY AND YOU What areas of public life do you believe need to be reformed? Read on to learn about a movement that tried to fix many of society's problems.

Progressivism was a collection of different ideas and activities. It was not a tightly organized political movement with a specific set of reforms. Rather, it was a series of responses to problems in American society that had emerged from the growth of industry. Progressives had many different ideas about how to fix the problems they saw in American society.

Who Were the Progressives?

Progressivism was partly a reaction against laissez-faire economics and its emphasis on an unregulated market. Progressives generally believed that industrialization and urbanization had created many social problems. After seeing the poverty of the working class and the filth and crime of urban society, reformers began doubting the free market's ability to address those problems.

Progressives belonged to both major political parties. Most were urban, educated, middle-class Americans. Among their leaders were journalists, social workers, educators, politicians, and members of the clergy. Most agreed that government should take a more active role in solving society's problems. At the same time, they doubted that the government in its present form could fix those problems. They concluded that government had to be fixed before it could be used to fix other problems.

One reason progressives thought they could improve society was their strong faith in science and technology. The application of scientific knowledge had produced the lightbulb, the telephone, and the automobile. It had built skyscrapers and railroads. Science and technology had benefited people; thus, progressives believed using scientific principles could also produce solutions for society.

The Photojournalism of Jacob Riis

Photography offered a new tool in combating injustice. One of the most famous early photojournalists was Jacob Riis, whose book, *How the Other Half Lives*, helped stir progressives to action:

PRIMARY SOURCE

"Look into any of these houses, everywhere the same piles of rags, of malodorous bones and musty paper. . . . Here is a 'flat' or 'parlor' and two pitch-dark coops called bedrooms. Truly, the bed is all there is room for. The family teakettle is on the stove, doing duty for the time being as a wash-boiler. By night it will have returned to its proper use again, a practical illustration of how poverty in 'the Bend' makes both ends meet. One, two, three beds are there, if the old boxes and heaps of foul straw can be called by that name; a broken stove with crazy pipe from which the smoke leaks at every joint, a table of rough boards propped up on boxes, piles of rubbish in the corner. The closeness and smell are appalling. How many people sleep here? The woman with the red bandanna shakes her head sullenly, but the bare-legged girl with the bright face counts on her fingers—five, six!"

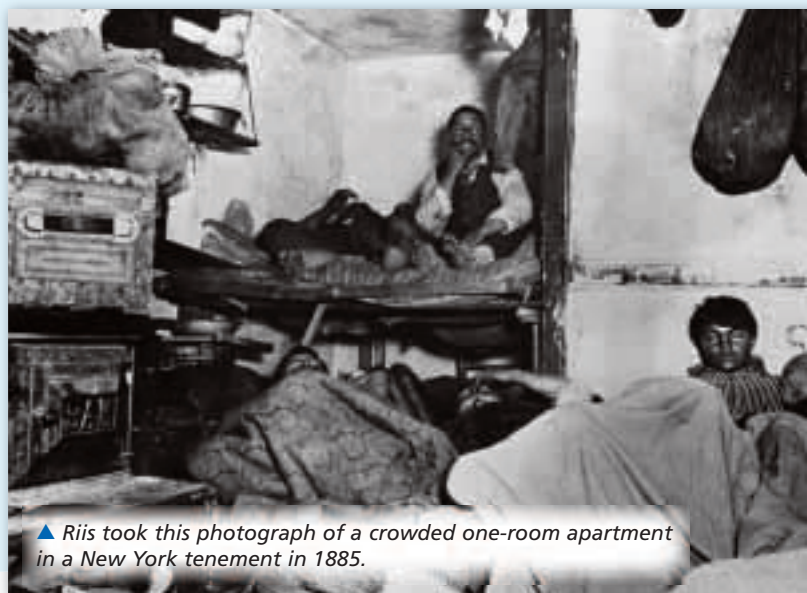
—from *How the Other Half Lives*

DBQ Document-Based Questions

- Analyzing Visuals** What effect do Riis's photos convey?
- Making Inferences** Based on the quotation above, how could you summarize Riis's views on changing life in the slums?



▲ New York slum dwellers in this Jacob Riis photograph, taken about 1890, lived in wooden shacks in a city alley.



▲ Riis took this photograph of a crowded one-room apartment in a New York tenement in 1885.

The Muckrakers

Among the first people to articulate progressive ideas was a group of crusading journalists who investigated social conditions and political corruption. President Theodore Roosevelt nicknamed these writers "**muck-rakers**." The term referred to a character in John Bunyan's book *Pilgrim's Progress*, who single-mindedly scraped up the filth on the ground, ignoring everything else. These journalists, according to Roosevelt, were obsessed with scandal and corruption. Widely circulated, cheap newspapers and magazines helped to spread the muckrakers' ideas.

Muckrakers uncovered corruption in many areas. Some concentrated on exposing the unfair practices of large corporations. In *Everybody's Magazine*, Charles Edward Russell

attacked the beef industry. In McClure's, Ida Tarbell published a series of articles critical of the Standard Oil Company. Other muckrakers targeted government and social problems. Lincoln Steffens reported on vote stealing and other corrupt practices of urban political machines. These articles were later collected into a book, *The Shame of the Cities*.

Still other muckrakers concentrated on social problems. In his influential book, *How the Other Half Lives* (1890), **Jacob Riis** published photographs and descriptions of the poverty, disease, and crime that afflicted many immigrant neighborhoods in New York City. By raising public awareness of these problems, the muckrakers stimulated calls for reform.

✓ Reading Check **Describing** How did the muckrakers help spark the Progressive movement?



Read literature from the era on pages R72–R73 in the **American Literature Library**.

Reforming Government

MAIN Idea Progressives tried to make government more efficient and more responsive to citizens.

HISTORY AND YOU How do you use your time and resources wisely? Read on to learn how progressives tried to make the government more efficient.

Progressivism included a wide range of reform activities. Different issues led to different approaches, and progressives even took opposing positions on how to address some problems. They condemned corruption in government but did not always agree on the best way to fix the problem.

Making Government Efficient

One group of progressives focused on making government more efficient by using ideas from business. Theories of business efficiency first became popular in the 1890s. Books such as Frederick W. Taylor's *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911) described how a company could increase efficiency by managing time, breaking tasks down into small parts, and using standardized tools. In his book, Taylor argued that this "scientific method" of managing businesses optimized productivity and provided more job opportunities for unskilled workers. Many progressives argued that managing a modern city required the use of business management techniques.

Progressives saw corruption and inefficiency in municipal government where, in most cities, the mayor or city council chose the heads of city departments. Traditionally, they gave these jobs to political supporters and friends, who often knew little about managing city services.

Progressives supported two proposals to reform city government. The first, a commission plan, divided city government into several departments, each one under an expert commissioner's control. The second approach was a council-manager system. The city council would hire a city manager to run the city instead of the mayor. In both systems, experts play a major role in managing the city. Galveston, Texas, adopted the commission system in 1901. Other cities soon followed.

Democratic Reforms

Another group of progressives focused on making the political system more democratic and more responsive to citizens. Many believed that the key to improving government was to make elected officials more responsive and accountable to the voters.

La Follette's Laboratory of Democracy

Led by Republican governor **Robert M. La Follette**, Wisconsin became a model of progressive reform. La Follette attacked the way political parties ran their conventions. Party bosses controlled the selection of convention delegates, which meant they also controlled the nomination of candidates. La Follette pressured the state legislature to pass a law requiring parties to hold a **direct primary**, in which all party members could vote for a candidate to run in the general election. This and other successes earned Wisconsin a reputation as the "laboratory of democracy." La Follette later recalled:

PRIMARY SOURCE

New Types of Government

The most deadly hurricane in United States history slammed into Galveston, Texas, on September 8, 1900, killing about 6,000 people. Because the political machine running the city was incapable of responding to the disaster, local business leaders convinced the state to allow them to take control. The following April, Galveston introduced the commission system of local government, which replaced the mayor and city council with five commissioners. Sometimes referred to as the Galveston Plan, its constitutionality was confirmed and took effect.

Four of those commissioners were local business leaders. Reformers in other cities were impressed by the city's rapid recovery. Clearly, the city benefited from dividing the government into departments under the supervision of an expert commissioner. Soon, other cities adopted either the commission or council-manager systems of government.

► A house sits on its side after a hurricane ripped through Galveston, Texas, in September 1900.



PRIMARY SOURCE

"It was clear to me that the only way to beat boss and ring rule was to keep the people thoroughly informed. Machine control is based upon misrepresentation and ignorance. Democracy is based upon knowledge. It is of first importance that the people shall know about their government and the work of their public servants."

—from La Follette's *Autobiography*

Wisconsin's use of the direct primary soon spread to other states, but to force legislators to listen to the voters, progressives also pushed for three additional reforms: the initiative, the referendum, and the recall. The **initiative** permitted a group of citizens to introduce **legislation** and required the legislature to vote on it. The **referendum** allowed citizens to vote on proposed laws directly without going to the legislature. The **recall** provided voters an option to demand a special election to remove an elected official from office before his or her term had expired.



Analyzing VISUALS

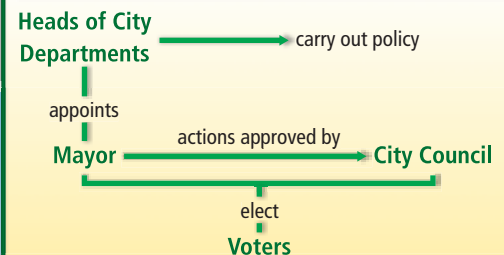
- Differentiating** In what form of government do voters elect the City Council?
- Analyzing** In a mayor-council form of government, who is responsible to carry out policy?

Direct Election of Senators Progressives also targeted the Senate. As originally written, the federal constitution directed each state legislature to elect two senators. Political machines and business interests often influenced these elections. Some senators, once elected, repaid their supporters with federal contracts and jobs.

To counter Senate corruption, progressives called for direct election of senators by the state's voters. In 1912, Congress passed a direct-election amendment. Although the direct election of senators was intended to end corruption, it also removed one of the state legislatures' checks on federal power. In 1913 the amendment was ratified and became the Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution.

Reading Check Evaluating What was the impact of the Seventeenth Amendment? What problem was it intended to solve?

Mayor-Council Form



Source: *The World Book Encyclopedia*.

Commission Form



Source: *The World Book Encyclopedia*.

Council-Manager Form



Source: *The World Book Encyclopedia*.



For an example of the early woman suffrage movement read “The Seneca Falls Declaration” on page R48 in **Documents in American History**.

Suffrage

MAIN Idea Many progressives joined the movement to win voting rights for women.

HISTORY AND YOU Do you remember reading about the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848? Read about the momentum of the women’s rights movement in the 1910s.

At the first women’s rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848, Elizabeth Cady Stanton convinced the delegates that their first priority should be the right to vote. Decades later, universal woman **suffrage**—the right to vote—still had not been granted. It became a major goal for women progressives.

Early Problems

The woman suffrage movement got off to a slow start. Some people threatened women suffragists and said they were unfeminine and immoral. Many of its supporters were abolitionists, as well. In the years before the Civil War, abolishing slavery took priority.

After the Civil War, Congress introduced the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to grant citizenship to African Americans and voting rights to African American men. Leaders of the woman suffrage movement wanted these amendments to give women the right to vote, as well. They were disappointed when Republicans refused.

The debate over the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments split the suffrage movement into two groups: the New York City-based National Woman Suffrage Association, which Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony founded in 1869, and the Boston-based American Woman Suffrage Association, which Lucy Stone and Julia Ward Howe led.

The first group wanted to focus on passing a constitutional amendment. The second group believed that the best strategy was convincing state governments to give women voting rights before trying to amend the Constitution. This split weakened the movement, and by 1900 only Wyoming, Idaho, Utah, and Colorado had granted women full voting rights.

THE Woman Suffrage Movement

1848

The first women’s rights convention is held in Seneca Falls, New York, and issues a “Declaration of Rights and Sentiments”

1872

Susan B. Anthony votes illegally in the presidential election in Rochester, New York, claiming the Fourteenth Amendment gives her that right; she is arrested and found guilty



▲ Susan B. Anthony

1850

1870

1890



▲ Women voting in Cheyenne, Wyoming, 1869

1869

Territory of Wyoming becomes the first state or territory to grant women the right to vote



▲ Elizabeth Cady Stanton

1890

Elizabeth Cady Stanton becomes president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association

Building Support

In 1890 the two groups united to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) but still had trouble convincing women to become politically active. As the Progressive movement gained momentum, however, many middle-class women concluded that they needed the vote to promote the reforms they favored. Many working-class women also wanted the vote to pass labor laws protecting women.

As the movement grew, women began lobbying lawmakers, organizing marches, and delivering speeches on street corners. On March 3, 1913, the day before President Wilson's inauguration, suffragists marched on Washington, D.C.

Alice Paul, a Quaker social worker who headed NAWSA's congressional committee, had organized the march. Paul wanted to use protests to confront Wilson on suffrage. Other members of NAWSA who wanted to negotiate with Wilson were alarmed. Paul left NAWSA and formed the National Woman's Party. Her

supporters picketed the White House, blocked sidewalks, chained themselves to lampposts, and went on hunger strikes if arrested.

In 1915 **Carrie Chapman Catt** became NAWSA's leader and tried to mobilize the suffrage movement in one final nationwide push. She also threw NAWSA's support behind Wilson's reelection campaign.

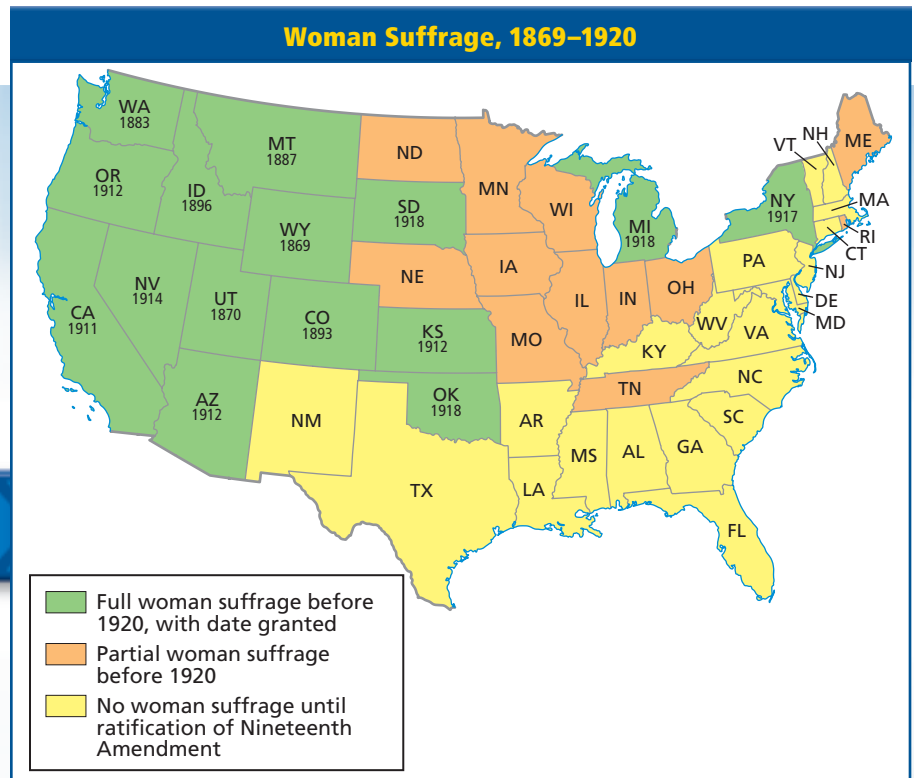
As more states granted women the right to vote, Congress began to favor a constitutional amendment. In 1918 the House of Representatives passed a women's suffrage amendment. The Senate voted on the amendment, but it failed by two votes.

During the midterm elections of 1918, Catt used NAWSA's resources to defeat two antisuffrage senators. In June 1919 the Senate passed the amendment by slightly more than the two-thirds vote needed. On August 26, 1920, after three-fourths of the states had ratified it, the Nineteenth Amendment, guaranteeing women the right to vote, went into effect.

Reading Check Evaluating How successful were women in lobbying for the Nineteenth Amendment?



▲ Women and children march in a 1912 suffrage parade in New York City.



1910

1920

1913

Alice Paul and Lucy Burns found the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage (later the National Woman's Party), which uses civil disobedience to promote women's suffrage

1920

Nineteenth Amendment, granting women the right to vote, is ratified

Analyzing TIME LINES

- Identifying** In what state or territory were women first granted the right to vote?
- Analyzing** What region of the nation seemed most willing to grant woman suffrage without a national amendment?

Reforming Society

MAIN Idea Many progressives focused on social welfare problems such as child labor, unsafe working conditions, and alcohol abuse.

HISTORY AND YOU Have you heard of companies using “sweatshop” labor in foreign countries? Read on to learn how progressives tried to ban child labor and make factories safer for workers.

While many progressives focused on reforming the political system, others focused on social problems. These social-welfare progressives created charities to help the poor and disadvantaged. They also pushed for new laws they hoped would fix social problems.

Child Labor

Probably the most emotional progressive issue was the campaign against child labor. Children had always worked on family farms, but mines and factories presented more dangerous and unhealthy working conditions. Muckraker John Spargo’s 1906 book, *The Bitter Cry of the Children*, presented detailed evidence of child labor conditions. It told of coal mines that hired thousands of 9- or 10-year-old

“breaker boys” to pick slag out of coal, paying them 60 cents for a 10-hour day. It described the way that the work bent their backs permanently and often crippled their hands.

Reports like these convinced states to pass laws that set a minimum age for employment and established other limits on child labor, such as maximum hours children could work.

Health and Safety Codes

Many adult workers also labored in difficult conditions. When workers were injured or killed on the job, they and their families received little or no compensation. Progressives joined union leaders to pressure states for workers’ compensation laws. These laws established insurance funds that employers financed. Workers injured in accidents received payments from the funds.

In two cases, *Lochner v. New York* (1905) and *Muller v. Oregon* (1908), the Supreme Court addressed government’s authority to regulate business to protect workers. In the *Lochner* case, the Court ruled that a New York law forbidding bakers to work more than 10 hours a day was unconstitutional. The state did not have the right to interfere with the liberty of

History ONLINE
Student Skill Activity To learn how to create and modify a database, visit glencoe.com and complete the skill activity.

PRIMARY SOURCE

A Tragedy Brings Reform

Fire broke out on the top floors of the Triangle Shirtwaist Company on March 25, 1911. Young women struggled against locked doors to escape. A few women managed to get out using the fire escape before it collapsed. The single elevator stopped running. Some women jumped from windows on the ninth floor to their death, while others died in the fire. Nearly 150 of the 500 employees lost their lives in the blaze.

The Triangle factory was a nonunion shop. Health and safety issues were a major concern for unions. The disaster illustrated that fire precautions and inspections were inadequate. Exit doors were kept locked, supposedly to prevent theft. As a result of the fire and loss of life, New York created a Factory Investigating Commission. Between 1911 and 1914, the state passed 36 new laws reforming the labor code.



▲ Firemen fight Triangle Shirtwaist fire, March 25, 1911.



▲ Trade union members march in support of the women who died.

Analyzing VISUALS

- 1. Analyzing** What do you observe about the efforts at fighting the fire in the photo at left?
- 2. Interpreting** What clues in the photo at right suggest that at least some of the women who died were immigrants?

employers and employees. In the case of women working in laundries in Oregon, however, the Court upheld the state's right to limit hours. The different judgments were based on gender differences. The Court stated that healthy mothers were the state's concern and, therefore, the limits on women's working hours did not violate their Fourteenth Amendment rights.

Some progressives also favored zoning laws as a method of protecting the public. These laws divided a town or city into zones for commercial, residential, or other development, thereby regulating how land and buildings could be used. Building codes set minimum standards for light, air, room size, and sanitation, and required buildings to have fire escapes. Health codes required restaurants and other facilities to maintain clean environments for their patrons.

The Prohibition Movement


Many progressives believed alcohol explained many of society's problems. Settlement house workers knew that hard-earned wages were often spent on alcohol and that drunkenness often led to physical abuse and sickness. Some employers believed drinking hurt workers' efficiency. The temperance movement—which **advocated** that people stop, or at least moderate, their alcohol consumption—emerged from these concerns.

For the most part, women led the temperance movement. In 1874 a group of women formed the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). By 1911 the WCTU had nearly 250,000 members. In 1893 another group, the Anti-Saloon League, formed. When the temperance movement began, it concentrated on reducing alcohol consumption. Later it pressed for **prohibition**—laws banning the manufacture, sale, and consumption of alcohol.

Progressives Versus Big Business

Many progressives agreed that big business needed regulation. Some believed the government should break up big companies to restore competition. This led to the Sherman Antitrust Act in 1890. Others argued that big business was the most efficient way to organize the economy. They pushed for government to regulate big companies and prevent them from abusing their power. The Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), created in 1887, was an early example of this kind of thinking.

Some progressives went even further and advocated socialism—the idea that the government should own and operate industry for the community. They wanted the government to buy up large companies, especially industries that affected everyone, such as utilities. At its peak, socialism had some national support. Eugene V. Debs, the former American Railway Union leader, won nearly a million votes as the American Socialist Party candidate for president in 1912. Most progressives and most Americans, however, believed the American system of free enterprise was superior.

 **Reading Check** **Comparing** How well did women organize to fight for voting rights and against alcohol abuse?

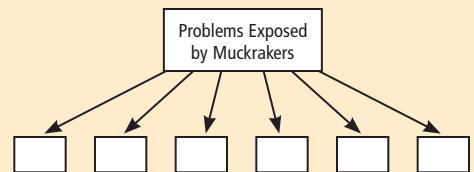
Section 1 REVIEW

Vocabulary

1. **Explain** the significance of: muckraker, Jacob Riis, Robert M. La Follette, direct primary, initiative, referendum, recall, suffrage, Carrie Chapman Catt, prohibition.

Main Ideas

2. **Organizing** Use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to list the kinds of problems that muckrakers exposed.



3. **Summarizing** How did initiative, referendum, and recall change democracy in the United States?
4. **Stating** What key provision did the Nineteenth Amendment make?
5. **Describing** Explain the various zoning laws and codes favored by progressives.

Critical Thinking

6. **Big Ideas** Identify the different social issues associated with progressives. How do these ideals influence society today?
7. **Analyzing Visuals** Study the charts on page 523. Which system gives voters the most control over department heads? How?

Writing About History

8. **Expository Writing** Create a database of progressive ideas of the period. Then write a one-page report using a word processor to summarize the progressive ideals.



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