**The Progressive Era Webquest**

*“I belong to a class who have been robbed exploited, and plundered down through many long centuries, and because I belong to that class I have an instinct to go and break the chains.” – Mary “Mother” Jones, Labor Organizer 1830-1930*

**Background:** In the late 1800s and early 1900's, America was plagued by a multitude of societal ills and injustices.  From the abuses of the working class and their poor working and living conditions, to the excesses of the wealthy, to the denial of women and minority rights, many people demanded reform.  During this time Americans began working to fight corruption in local government, reduce the power of big business and improve society. To bring about change, reformers first had to ignite public outrage.  A newer and more investigative journalistic style known as “muckraking” emerged and exposed for the public many of our nation's problems.  These “muckrakers” used the press as a weapon to change public opinion. They visited slums and described the horrible conditions that existed there. They also photographed shocking images of slum life.  Ultimately, these investigative journalists aided the reform movement greatly by educating Americans to the nation's social and political problems.

After years of effort, American women finally won the right to vote. African Americans and other minorities also took action against discrimination during the Progressive Era. In spite of many setbacks, they laid the groundwork for future progress in civil rights. In today’s world, we see remnants of the Progressive Era in almost every facet of society. For example, women’s rights groups are still in effect, newspapers attempt to uncover political corruption in almost every level of government, and organizations such as MADD and SADD lobby for the enactment of legislation that will limit drunk driving. With this in mind, it is obvious that the Progressive Era has had a lasting impact on American society.

**Task:**  You and your group’s task will be to investigate key issues of the Progressive era by completing the following:

1. Research and define some background information on the Progressive Era itself

2. Each member of your group will research a different aspect of the progressive era and complete the assigned tasks for each topic.

3. As a group you will come together and discuss/ debate the following essential questions. Together you will discuss and answer the following questions:

A. Of the many reform movements occurring during the Progressive Era, which reform movement had the most positive, lasting impact on society to this day?

B. What evidence exists in today’s society to support your opinion?

Phase 1 - Background Information on the Progressive Era – Something for Everyone

In this phase, look at the links below and combine it with our classroom discussion to get a general overview of the period. This is to give you some information on the Progressive Era and to ensure that each of you begins this quest with the same amount of background knowledge. You should answer these questions individually in the spaces provided.

1. Progressive Era to New Era, 1900 – 1929 (Library of Congress Webpage)

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/progress/>

Mainpage:

A). What were the stated goals of the progressives? (create a list of issues that the progressives sought to address)

B). How did Progressives seek to expand democracy both domestically and in foreign affairs?

C). How did the economy in America change during the 1920s?

Automobiles in the Progressive and New Eras

D). According to Robert and Helen Lynd, what effect did Automobiles have on society?

Cities During the Progressive Era

E). By 1900 how many Americans were living in cities and what had drawn them there?

Conservation in the Progressive Era

F). How did President Roosevelt attempt to put an end to the ‘tradition of waste’ that America developed in the 19th century?

Prohibition: A Case Study of Progressive Reform

G). Define what the temperance movement was.

Women’s Suffrage in the Progressive Era

H). What were the goals of women’s organizations during the late 1800s and early 1900s?

**Phase 2 – Looking at the Movements**

**Each member of your group should pick one of the following movements (there are 4 in all) and complete the assigned tasks for each movement.**

**1. The Women’s Rights Movement**

The struggle for women’s rights goes back many years. Prior to the American Civil War, women began to organize protests, marches, and conventions in an attempt to promote women’s rights. At the turn of the century, women made some progress for their cause but many Americans were still unprepared to recognize women as equals.

Use the internet information listed on the website to complete these tasks specifically related to the Women’s Rights Movement:

1. Use one of the linked websites to examine the issues that women faced in the 20th century (1900s). Find one issue and write a brief summary of it that includes:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Issue: |  |
| How did women want the issue resolved?  (what did women want to change and why?) |  |
| What actions did women undertake to try to produce change? |  |
| Who were the people involved in this movement? (Groups or prominent individuals?) |  |

2. Create a timeline listing 10 historic events or people related to women’s rights. Be sure to keep each event or person in chronological order. For each item write a brief summary (1-3 sentences) that elaborates on the significance of the event or person.

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3. Find a political cartoon to the Women’s Rights Movement. Write an analysis of the image.

**2. Muckraking: Exposing the Ills of Society**

To bring about change, reformers first had to ignite public anger. A major weapon was the Press. Newspaper reporters visited the slums and described the horrible conditions that existed there. They photographed shocking images of slum life. They wrote novels revealing gruesome details of the meatpacking industry. Muckrakers worked to change public opinion with the hope that the public would force the government to take action against the ills of society.

Use the Internet information linked below to complete these tasks specifically related to Muckrakers: Espousing the Ills of Society:

1. Write down a list of the issues that Muckrakers were exposing and the government needed to address in the early 1900s. Also, include any key personalities, “rags” or events related to this. (create a chart)

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| --- | --- |
| Issue | Key People/ Event |
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|  |  |
|  |  |
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|  |  |

2. Pick one of the issues from above using the links on the webpage your guide:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Issue: |  |
| Describes how modern public interest groups currently think the issue should be resolved |  |
| Describes how the public interest groups will attempt to bring about change with regard to this issue. |  |

3. Find a political cartoon related to the Muckrakers. Write an analysis of this image.

**3. The Fight for Equality**

After the end of Reconstruction, African Americans in the South lost their own hard won political rights through Jim Crow laws. These laws led to segregation in schools, on trains, and in other public places. In the 1880s, life became progressively worse for African-Americans. The Depression of 1893 caused many people to lose their jobs. Consequently, in some areas (mainly the South), unemployed whites took their anger out on blacks. In the 1890s, white lynch mobs were responsible for the murders of more than 1,000 blacks.

Use the Internet information on the webpage to complete these tasks specifically related to the Fight for Equality.

1. Compare and Contrast Booker T. Washington’s views on equality to those of W.E.B. Du Bois.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Booker T. Washington | Similiarities | W.E.B Du Bois |
|  |  |  |

2. Create a timeline of at least 10 major events and people over the last 100 years that were instrumental to the Civil Rights Movement.

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3. Find a political cartoon related to the Fight for Equality. Write an analysis of this image.

**4. Prohibition: The Temperance Movement**

The Temperance Movement was formed in opposition to the consumption of alcoholic beverages. It began in the early 1800s. By the end of that century, the Temperance Movement was gaining strength. Women, in particular, recognized alcohol as a threat to their families. Drinking was a frequent cause of violence and added to economic hardships within the home. As our nation grew in population and cities swelled with impoverished people, alcohol surfaced as the root of society’s evils. Before long, political leaders would be pressured to debate the prohibition of alcohol in the country.

Use the internet information linked on the webpage to complete these tasks specifically related to Prohibition – the Temperance movement:

1.

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| --- | --- |
| Define Temperance: |  |
| What people were important in the temperance movement? |  |
| What were the arguments in favor of temperance? |  |
| What was the outcome of the Temperance movement? |  |

2. Create a timeline of at least 10 events for the Temperance Movement.

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3. Find a political cartoon related to Prohibition and the Temperance Movement. Write an analysis of this image.

**Phase 3: Debating, Discussing and Reaching Consensus**

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| --- | --- |
| **Women’s Rights Movement**  **Goals:**  **Achievements:** | **Muckraking**  **Goals:**  **Achievements:** |
| **African American Equality**  **Goals:**  **Achievements:** | **Prohibition**  **Goals:**  **Achievements:** |

**Answers the following questions:**

**A. Of the many reform movements occurring during the Progressive Era, which reform movement had the most positive, lasting impact on society to this day?**

**B. What evidence exists in today’s society to support your opinion?**